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Event marketing plan to Japan

Finding ways to market ice fishing event to Japanese customers

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this thesis is to provide insights into event marketing strategies, specifically tailored to the Japanese market, for the promotion of the ice fishing event organized by Wadessa Oy in Oulu, Finland. As an event organization company, Wadessa Oy has participated in numerous events in Oulu, Finland, and their latest focus is on the ice fishing event. Although the ice fishing event is a relatively new addition to their repertoire, Wadessa Oy aims to expand their market by promoting the event to other countries, particularly now to Japan.

To achieve this aim, this thesis will explore the marketing strategies that can be employed by Wadessa Oy to attract Japanese customers to the ice fishing event in Oulu. Specifically, the thesis will identify the key factors that influence Japanese customers' decision-making process when considering ice fishing activities in Oulu. The thesis will also develop a comprehensive marketing plan that leverages digital and traditional marketing channels to reach potential Japanese customers and promote the ice fishing event.

As a result, this thesis will provide valuable insights for Wadessa Oy and other event organizers interested in expanding their business to the Japanese market. Furthermore, this study will contribute to the existing literature on event marketing strategies by focusing on a specific market, namely the Japanese market, and offering practical recommendations for event organizers seeking to promote their events to international customers.

Keywords: Marketing, event, Ice fishing, Oulu, Japan

ABSTRACT

Oulun ammattikorkeakoulu
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Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoitus on antaa tietoa tapahtuma markkinointi strategioihin sekä Japanin markkinoihin Wadessa Oy:lle, jotta he voivat mainostaa pilkki tapahtumaansa Oulussa Japanilaisille turisteille. Wadessa Oy on oululainen tapahtuman järjestäjä organisaatio, joka on ottanut osaa useisiin tapahtumiin Oulussa. Heidän tämänhetkinen tarkoituksensa on parantaa näkyvyyttä heidän olemassa olevalle pilkki tapahtumalle. Tämä tapahtuma on kohtalaisen uusi heidän firmallensa mutta heidän tavoitteensa on saada tapahtumasta kansainvälisempi markkinoimalla ja kohdentamalla tapahtumaa muihin maihin ja tässä tapauksessa Japaniin.

Tavoitteen saavuttamiseksi tämä opinnäytetyö tarkastelee hyödyllisiä markkinointi menetelmiä, jotta Wadessa Oy voisi tavoittaa japanilaisia asiakkaita heidän tapahtumaansa. Tarkemmin sanottuna opinnäytetyö määrittelee avain kohdat, jotka vaikuttavat japanilaisten asiakkaiden päätöksen tekoon valitessaan kohdetta matkoilleen. Opinnäytetyössä tehdään myös selkeän ja ymmärrettävän markkinointi suunnitelman, joka käyttää digitaalisia sekä perinteisiä markkinointi kanavia houkuttellakseen mahdollisia japanilaisia asiakkaita ja mainostaa tapahtumaa.

Tuloksena opinnäytetyö tuo tärkeää tietoa Wadessa Oy:lle ja muille yhteistyössä toimiville tapahtuman järjestäjille jotka ovat kiinnostuneita laajentamaan toimintaansa Japanin markkinoille. Työ käyttää hyväkseen olemassa olevia tutkimuksia keskittyäkseen tarkemmin Japanin markkinoihin ja tarjoamaan mahdollisia ehdotuksia tulevaisuuden laajennuksia varten.

Avainsanat: Markkinointi, tapahtuma, pilkkiminen, Oulu, Japani

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	6
2	SITUATION ANALYSIS	9
	2.1 SWOT	9
	Strengths	9
3	MARKETING PLAN	13
	3.1 Market	13
	3.2 Target market	14
	3.3 Marketing objectives and tactical implementations	16
	3.4 Marketing strategies	18
	3.5 Marketing metrics and evaluation	21
	3.6 Interview information and results	23
	3.7 Marketing Timeline	31
	3.7.1 Year 1	31
	3.7.2 Year 2	32
4	FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION	34
5	DISCUSSION	36
	REFERENCES	37
	ANNEX	39

1 INTRODUCTION

Finland is a popular tourist destination, known for its natural beauty, cultural attractions, and outdoor activities. One such activity is ice fishing, which offers a unique and unforgettable experience for visitors, particularly during the winter months. Wadessa Oy commissioner of this thesis is an event organizer based in Oulu, Finland, specializes in organizing events, catering to both domestic and international tourists. Commissioners aim for this thesis is to market their event to Japanese customers because of growing number of travellers from other countries to Finland after pandemic. First aim is to gain more Japanese customers and later widen their aim to other countries travellers also. There is already some number of foreign tourists who has taken part in their ice fishing event but as it is event is still small compared to other similar events in Finland and that is why Wadessa aims to grow their event in future years.

This thesis topic was chosen from interest to Asian market and especially for Japanese market. Also, recent developments to world politics and resent pandemic was reasons why this topic was aimed for Japan to find possibilities to boost travellers from Japan to travel to Oulu.

This thesis has been made using existing data of Japanese travellers and their habits. Also using literature review has been used to gain information about already made research to see if there is something that could be improved or add to gain best possible outcome. Lastly use of questionnaire that will be executed in Japan to see what Japanese opinions about Finland are and what they want to experience while they stay here to be able to focus events aspect also for them.

This thesis focuses on the development of a marketing plan for Wadessa Oy to promote its ice fishing event in Oulu to the Japanese market. According to the Japan Market Report by Visit Finland, Japan is a significant market for Finnish tourism, with an increasing number of Japanese tourists seeking unique experiences that cannot be found in their home country. The report notes that "Japanese travellers are looking for authentic experiences and are willing to pay a premium for it" (Visit Finland, 2018).

Furthermore, the report highlights that "there is a growing trend towards activities in nature, such as trekking, fishing, and kayaking" (Visit Finland, 2018). This trend presents a unique opportunity

for Wadessa Oy to promote its ice fishing event in Oulu to Japanese tourists who are interested in outdoor activities.

This thesis aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Japanese tourism market and identify the best strategies for Wadessa Oy to promote its ice fishing event in Oulu. The thesis will include a market analysis, target audience identification, and a marketing plan that leverages digital and traditional marketing channels to reach potential customers.

As noted by Visit Finland, "Japanese travelers are looking for unique experiences that they cannot find in their home country" (Visit Finland, 2018). By promoting the ice fishing event in Oulu, Wadessa Oy can attract more Japanese tourists to Finland and contribute to the growth of the Finnish tourism industry. This thesis will provide valuable insights and recommendations for Wadessa Oy and other Finnish tour operators looking to expand their business in the Japanese market.

When thinking of results of this thesis and what it should find out there is few things as biggest expectations. First to find out why and how these kinds of events should be marketed and sold to Japan market. Second to help Finnish company to get advantage to use Japanese customers interest to Finland's market and travel. Lastly to get results through interviews and questionnaire on how Japanese customers see Finland and what they are looking for from their travel to Finland.

In this thesis aim like mentioned earlier is to grow Wadessa Oy's ice fishing event to gain more customers from other countries and in this specific case to Japanese tourists because of rising number of travellers from Japan to Finland but also because their interest in Finnish culture, nature and hobbies is high.

First objective is to find out what factors influence Japanese tourists' decisions to participate in ice fishing event in Oulu, Finland. This will help company to see what decisions making process they should try to influence to gain more customers. Next questions are about marketing and how to do it. Thesis will try to find out answer to questions about what most effective marketing strategies for Wadessa Oy are to promote their event to Japanese tourists. Last research question is to find out what Japanese tourists are looking from their travels when they come to Finland that is it shopping, nature, culture, or maybe multiple different reasons.

Objectives of this thesis can be directly converted from questions early mentioned. First to identify the key factors that influence Japanese tourists decision-making process when considering ice fishing event in Oulu. Second is to develop comprehensive marketing plan for Wadessa oy to target the Japanese market and effectively promote the ice fishing event for Japanese tourists. Lastly to find out preference and motivations of Japanese customers when it comes to ice fishing events that are they interested on that and what age groups would like to try that. Also, to gain insight of the needs, preference and motivation of Japanese tourists. This also would help to gain information that what location in Finland would they like to travel and that are they interested to try other places than for example Rovaniemi while their travels. This last objective will also directly correlate to which marketing channels and promotion strategies are most effective in research and engaging the Japanese target audience for the ice fishing event. From this it would be easy to evaluate effectiveness of various marketing channels and promotional strategies in reaching and engaging the target audience like social media platforms, influencer marketing, online advertising, or local community partnership.

2 SITUATION ANALYSIS

Assessment of the current market environment, including a SWOT analysis and an analysis of the competitive landscape. SWOT analysis of this topic has been trying to take into account Japanese customers and market Wadessa Oy is trying to penetrate in Japan. Also, it has taken into account Ice fishing event's unique aspect and all its possibilities. This chapter will investigate SWOT analysis and what Wadessa Oy need to consider while they try to promote their new event to foreign countries.

Right now, Wadessa Oy has not that much relationship with Japan's markets and their event on Finnish ice fishing events is new and small compared to some of their competition and already existing events. SWOT analysis is trying to help Wadessa to prepare their event for possible co-operations and how to avoid some mistakes. At the meetings with Wadessa oy it came clear that in their event there has been some foreign participants, but their event has not at it current state targeted them any specific way.

Possible competition but also at the same time opportunities are these already existing event organisers especially in Rovaniemi region where during winter season lots of Asia tourists' visits. In Rovaniemi there is one significant organization that causes competition for Wadessa Oy and that is Lapland group. They organize safaris and tours around the Rovaniemi during winter and, they offer similar activities like ice fishing. They are also present in Oulu region with their hotel and that is why there could be possibility to promote together with them about housing and these events.

2.1 SWOT

Strengths

First of report is going to investigate strengths of marketing ice fishing event to Japan. This event has unique aspect on experience it is offering for the customers. It has made to give authentic Finnish cultural experience, and this should attract Japanese customers while travelling Finland if they are aware of the event.

Nature is also playing big part of this events strengths. Oulu has image of frozen lakes and sea which is offering ideal place for ice fishing event. Lastly on strengths there is all the time growing interest in nature tourism. Like mentioned earlier on the report Japanese customers have high interest for Finnish culture and nature. This has been growing more during past years and it will give advantage for Wadessa over other companies around Europe and in Japan.

Weaknesses

When thinking of weaknesses of this event can be seen that one side is marketing and other is natural barrier that is harder to overcome. On this kind of event when it is about ice fishing there could be a change that Japanese customers have limited awareness of this kind of activities. It may cause less understanding of this event and its appeal. Still probably biggest weakness is probably language barriers like mentioned by Hosoki that there has been uproar that Japanese high school graduates can hardly do simple daily tasks or conversation in English (Hosoki, 2011).

For the event it would mean hindered communication and promotion efforts. To overcome this company is required effective translation and strategy for localization to be able to reach more Japanese customers.

Opportunities

On the opportunities side ice fishing event opportunities offer multiple good ways to grow and market this event. First when thinking with collaboration there is possibility to work together with different travel agencies. On this case for example partnering with some Japanese travel agencies would help to market and promote ice fishing event through their ready-made network to help customers who are looking for unique experience to find this event more easily. Marketing side opportunities have something that many other countries do not have in same way than Japan. When working with Japanese market companies should remember that in Asian market social media influencers are one of the best ways to get your product or service to known with other people. When looking to Japanese social media influencers there is multiple high-volume influencers that could serve good way to promote the event. For example, from top 10 Japanese travel influencers already top 3 has more than 3 million followers ("The JapanBuzz team," 2023).

This is why good opportunity for this event would be to ask some Japanese influencers who do content about traveling or outdoor activity to visit this event. This way events reputation would spread through them in online. This usually is expensive for individual company so in this part company should be in contact with Visit Finland and develop together possible and more affordable option because of Visit Finland's already existing database and contacts in the Japanese Market. Last opportunity for this event is about cultural immersion. What meant by that is to position ice fishing event in a way that customers can have real Finnish culture experience and to show them traditions of Finnish ways could appeal for the Japanese customers.

Threats

Last part of the swot is about threats, and it is mostly focused on competition and factors that give disadvantage for ice fishing event. First competition from other winter activities and events. In Finland many of the competition will come for other winter destinations and activities that could be targeting Japanese customers. But this problem could be fixed by bringing up unique aspects of the event and how deeply this activity is connected to culture.

This part of the threats is also possibility for the company to gain more customers to work with their competition and other similar events by for example selling so called dual tickets for both events or for multiple events. Also organizing transportation and maybe housing with local companies would make event more appealing for the Japanese tourists because for example they do not have drivers' licence in Europe and it is also not so easy to gain that for short visits.

Lastly obvious threat is seasonal factors like unpredictable weather conditions during the event and extreme temperatures will need to be taken in account. These kinds of factors are hard to predict and difficult to fight against but planning shelters and warm drinks and food would be one way to try to solve this problem.

Most of these threats would be able to solve by working together with other companies and to prepare gear for the worst-case scenario to be able to make event happen. When working with other companies it would help Wadessa to gain access to gear or possible indoor spaces or tents for participants to get shelter for unexpected situations.

All and all when looking into this swot analysis this event can be developed to leverage events unique aspects and target and effectively engage customers from Japan.

3 MARKETING PLAN

On this part of the thesis will take a brief look on marketing plan that is going to be made during this process, its goals of the marketing plan for the company, target market and major strategies. Marketing plan for Wadessa Oy was decided by the company and student because of the marketing plans benefits on the topic. First marketing plan will focus on situation analysis and on that part SWOT analysis will be implemented.

Next on the marketing plan are target market and marketing objectives to better give understanding of the customers Wadessa Oy is trying to reach for their ice fishing event and what goals they have.

After this marketing strategies and tactical implementation will give more information about the topic. These two topics will give more information on how their event has been priced and what kind of channels for example is going to be used while marketing the event.

Lastly budget of the event and their future marketing will be estimated for better preparation in the future and also timeline for future goals will be implemented.

3.1 Market

For this topic, market for the company has been chosen to be Japan and Japanese tourist in Finland and here is general information about Japanese market focused on Ice fishing event.

The Japanese market offers significant potential for marketing ice fishing events to Japan and Japanese customers. Japan is well-known for its deep appreciation of nature, outdoor activities, and unique cultural experiences. This makes it an ideal target market for ice fishing events, which provide a combination of outdoor recreation, tranquil environments, and cultural immersion. Japanese consumer behavior is characterized by a preference for high-quality, authentic experiences with meticulous attention to detail. Japanese consumers value activities that offer a sense of tranquility, harmony with nature, and personal growth. Ice fishing events can leverage these preferences by highlighting the pristine natural environments, the serene atmosphere, and the opportunity for participants to engage in a traditional Finnish activity.

Outdoor recreation and nature tourism are popular in Japan, with activities like hiking, camping, and fishing deeply ingrained in the culture. Ice fishing events can tap into this existing interest and position themselves as a unique and captivating winter experience. Emphasizing the natural beauty of Finland's frozen lakes, the excitement of catching fish, and the chance to immerse oneself in breathtaking winter landscapes can be highly appealing to Japanese tourists seeking authentic outdoor experiences.

Cultural experiences and education also play a significant role in the Japanese market. Japanese consumers are often drawn to activities that provide opportunities to learn about different cultures and traditions. Ice fishing events can offer Japanese tourists a chance to engage in a distinctive cultural activity while fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. Incorporating elements of Finnish culture, such as traditional clothing, music, and food, can enhance the overall experience and resonate with Japanese consumers seeking meaningful cultural immersion.

In conclusion, marketing ice fishing events to the Japanese market requires an understanding of the unique preferences of Japanese consumers. By tailoring marketing efforts to highlight the serene natural environments, winter landscapes, and cultural aspects of ice fishing events, businesses can effectively target and engage Japanese customers who are looking for high-quality, authentic experiences that blend outdoor recreation and cultural immersion.

3.2 Target market

Detailed description of the ideal customer profile or target market segment that marketing efforts will focus on. This includes demographic, psychographic, and behavioural characteristics of the target audience.

On this Thesis target market of the topic like said earlier in the text is going to be Japanese travelers. Wadessa Oy said that their ice fishing event has always been for families and for bigger groups so that is one aspect where this thesis is going to aim. Wadessa really does not have one specific age group because they wanted to aim for as large as possible group of tourists, so age group is going to be from 20 to 60 years old and those who travel in groups. This do not still mean all people

from these age groups. Mostly it is divided with those who are interested with outdoor activities but also those who do not fall into those target age groups like younger generations and kinds who travel with their parents to Finland. From personal experience Japanese elderly people are more virile compared to most of their comparison partners in Europe. In Japan senior citizens are really interested in outdoor activities and will use their free time to hike, fish or do sports. In Japan many people devote themselves to some sports or hobby since early age and their physical condition will stay high for much longer than in western countries. Still when thinking elderly people from Japan they do not travel as much as younger generations but like mentioned earlier Japanese traveller like many other Asian tourists travel as family so there could be customers from all age groups.

When thinking Japanese tourists, they have one clear difference when compared to other countries tourists and that is that they like to travel in groups. Those groups might be students or friend groups but also families with not only just mother, father, and children but also grandparents are important part of this group. When looking into Japan's demographics profile their population is aging fast and their death rate is higher than their birth rate. In Japan during year 2022 birth rate was 6,4 births/1,000 population and compared to more higher death rate that was 12.6 deaths/1,000 population ("Demographics of Japan," 2023.)

Psychographic characteristics in Japan are important because they are one of the politest people in the world when looking from outside. They respect their elderly people what is important when thinking their more and more aging population. Also, one thing for them is punctuality and this is good to remember when trying to attract Japanese tourist. They need to have everything done carefully. Like also mentioned earlier in the report and as according to Santander Trade, "Japanese consumers have long tended to prefer quality consumption over mass consumption". As this quote tells from Santander Japanese tourists are not looking for mass consumption in their life or travels but they look for something special that they do not have tried and they are more willing to pay more for that experience than others.

All these sides need to be taken carefully into account when thinking marketing and hosting Japanese tourists. Like said earlier their behaviour and nature is all focused on respecting other people and especially older generations. In Japan tourists are highly respected because for them they are like king's who they want to show how good they are and how amazing their country is. When thinking how to use this in Finland is to have polite ways of handling tourist and when thinking of respect, it would be good idea to translate something from English to Japanese when knowing that

there is Japanese tourists coming because that would mean a lot to them, and it shows also our respect to their country and language and to them as customers.

3.3 Marketing objectives and tactical implementations

Clear, measurable goals that align with overall business objectives. These objectives should be specific, achievable and time bound. Objectives of this marketing plan like mentioned earlier are to attract Japanese customers to ice fishing event in Oulu during spring. When thinking of the objectives this thesis needs to take into account multiple different aspects that company must do to make all these to happen.

First this thesis will help to make marketing plan for the company. This thesis will be ready during end of the summer of year 2023. After getting this thesis ready for the company it needs to evaluate budget for marketing of this event.

Collecting partners and marketing channels comes after this and like mentioned in earlier chapter using social media and its influencers for marketing this event in Japan would be best idea to get more people interested to the event. When thinking how long this would take it seems best to give almost a half a year to market this event in different channels. When thinking how Japanese social media travel influencers are one of the best ways to gain more customers and to get more Japanese tourists interested of this event. In Japan there is multiple social media travel influencers like Bilingual-girl Chika who are travelling around the world and showing new and interesting places and events for their followers there would be good idea to contact few of them who are interested travelling in Finland ("The JapanBuzz team," 2023). Also offering them free ticket to take part in this event for exchange of their promotion in their channel also there could be good promotion in the event for their channels. They would also like to inform in their photo bio to tell that this was paid promotion for Wadessa Oy.

Same time with this promotion there would be chance to make contact with visit Finland that Japanese travellers use a lot to gain information about their destination and this is because Visit Finland is in charge of foreign travellers coming to Finland (Visit Finland, 2018). With these two promotions would make difference for marketing this event to Japan. Next event is going to be in year

2024 spring so these promotions would make difference for year 2025 especially in case of social media because these influencers would need to visit event before it would go to knowledge of the possible customers.

While thinking of Japanese customers coming already next year as in form of social media influencers there should be wise to take in account the language barrier. There would be possibility that even if Japanese customers come in year 2024 there should be way for them to communicate with event organizers because even though they might be social media influencers who travel a lot their English language skills might not be sufficient to understand rules and how event is working. This is why event rules and what the event is should be sent to them in advance in English so they could be able to translate it to Japanese before coming to event. Also, possibility to translate text to Japanese should not be considered out so that with this visitor would be able to fully enjoy the event. During this marketing time also would be wise to contact Japanese travel agencies to promote this event in their channels but this comes already partly when working with visit Finland company.

During years 2025 and 2026 when marketing would start taking effect after the event visits would be wise to start considering making more connections in travelling event world. For example, to visit Japan's one of the largest travel events called Japan tourist expo. It is one of the largest in the world where travel organizers and event organizers from all over the world visits. Like mentioned their web page that "Osaka-Kansai region is scheduled to host the Japan International Exposition in 2025" (Tourism EXPO Japan, 2023). For this reason, year 2025 would be good time to aim for this event to gain more spread for the event.

Lastly after seeing positive comings of new tourists from Japan deepening co-operation with Liikekeskus ry would give more chances for both sides for Wadessa and Liikekeskus but also for the tourists because Finnish products and cuisine are something that interest Japanese tourist as noted by Visit Finland, "Japanese travellers are looking for unique experiences that they cannot find in their home country" (Visit Finland, 2018).

This would open chances for businesses of Oulu to prepare during Pilkki-fest to direct their marketing and sales towards Japanese customers in form of stalls and info about their shops during the event.

Lastly when customers would come more, and event would get bigger it should be time to start changing the budget of the event to be prepared to host more customers but also be able to widen marketing of the event and find new partners. In this case take example of promoting event in Oulu's international co-operation city in Japan by offering some kind of deals for travellers for their city to come to the event. In this case like mentioned in Finland abroad that place would be Sendai city (Finland Abroad, 2023). Even though this is mainly for industrial co-operation there could be chance to gain partners and get for example industrial partners to visit with their higher personnel.

3.4 Marketing strategies

The board approaches and tactics that will be used to achieve the marketing objectives. This includes product positioning, pricing strategies, distribution channels and promotion activities. On this chapter thesis will go through about Wadessa Oy's products that is ice fishing event marketing objectives, how to position their product, pricing strategies, channels they will use to distribute and promote their event for Japanese customers.

First about the product positioning and what it means for the company. Product positioning in marketing is important for the company because it will tell how well your product will fit already existing market and why it is better than some other like in this case events. This is why it is important to conduct market research for your product and market you are aiming at like mentioned "You need to know what alternatives customers have to your product so you can highlight what sets your offering apart." (Aha! Labs Inc, 2023) in their explanation about best ways to develop product positioning.

Wadessa Oy need to carefully think how to position their event compared to other similar events because when thinking how important place let's say Rovaniemi is to Asian and Japanese tourists it is clear that Oulu is behind in for example at overnight visitors. This has been mentioned in picture Visit Finland's representative market report that Oulu's position in as overnight stay place is in state of Importance growing so it is not yet that highly stayed place than Rovaniemi (Noto & Numata, 2018). When thinking product position there is three main points that company needs to understand and evaluate. Those are already mentioned conducting market research, understand the customers and their needs but also lastly to assess the product or service company is offering. On this last part SWOT analysis is in important role to know what company needs to take into the consideration.

As a conclusion for the product positioning company needs to take into the account customers and how to attract them from already existing stronger locations to Oulu region and on this helps to know your customers what they are looking for from their travels to Finland. Also, Wadessa need to look into their competition that are direct and indirect to take example how and what they are giving for their customers to be able to do the same. Also, Wadessa has some selling point that all other events do not have and that is their events location. They hold their event in Oulu's sea area when other ice fishing event or competition organizers have their Ice fishing events in lakes. This is important part of positioning that could attract customers from their competition. For these surveys are one good way to get information about their competitions offering and why those are attracting customers from targeted countries.

When looking into next part that is pricing their products Wadessa Oy event is not expensive one but on this one need to take into consideration they are only offering ice fishing event and some gear to rent. When you compare that to similar events in Rovaniemi they offer at the same time guide for their ice fishing, snowmobile and some snacks during their trip to ice fishing. This part is not that big a problem for Wadessa because their event is much more affordable, but problem lies in their location that does not attract that many customers from Japan. This could be so solved with proper marketing like mentioned in multiple parts earlier to attract and get Japanese tourists know more about Oulu and its events as a travel destination. This is why contacting Visit Finland is in so important role to gain access to their already existing marketing channels to be able to offer this event to Japanese tourists more.

Distribution channels for this kind of event is one of the most complex topics in this marketing strategy chapter. Karen A. Smith mention in her journal of distribution channels for event that "The complexity of event distribution channels is influenced by the event's target market, capacity, partnership relationships, and other factors." (Smith, 2007). From here we can see that for event's distribution channels it is not that easy to define because there are multiple factors that affect in this field. When opening little those parts Smith mentioned first is events target market that needs to be taken in consideration. For Wadessa Oy's Ice fishing event their target customers are mainly families at this point and when thinking early mentioned target audience in Japan this fits well for the Japanese tourists. This is because Japanese tourists like many other Asian tourists' groups like to travel with their family maybe not in same way we think family in Finland. Japanese tourists travel to Finland for honeymoons but also with their whole family that includes grandparents.

Next, we need to take into the consideration Wadessa Oy's events capacity and is there possible way to extend that amount of customers they are able to host. Wadessa Oy's ice fishing event like mentioned earlier is still young and small event but in the future their goal is to grow larger than they are now. Place where this event is held is in Oulu and earlier in this chapter thesis talked about unique aspect of their event compared to Wadessa Oy's competition. Their event has big possibilities to grow large because of the sea where it is hold. Their competition mainly holds their ice fishing in lakes and event though Finland is country with thousands lakes this gives advantage to Wadessa in case of amount people they could host during event. But even though there is advantage of the location to grow with amount of the customers Wadessa Oy need to take into account amount of workforce they can get for their event. When customers amounts are rising it also means more workforce is needed. This also brings us back to pricing because when event is growing larger and is needing more workforce price of the event is also growing larger. For this solution would be not to aim to grow too much too fast but by keeping existing workforce with few increases to aim for maximum number of customers with that workforce.

Last part of distribution channels is about partnerships that is also directly affected by earlier parts. When thinking of target market, capacity and now partnerships those all are tied together but partnerships and sponsors are something that needs to be considered carefully because that could affect directly with customers and results of the event. When thinking possible partnerships there is multiple options like fishing gear companies, restaurants, hotels, and travel agencies but one that this thesis would like to pick up to higher role is hotel and travel organizer Lapland group that has Lapland hotel in Oulu. Lapland group is one of the largest tourists' organizations in northern part of Finland and when they could be seen as competition there could be way to use their knowhow with Japanese tourists and that would be to try to make partnership with them. They hold similar events or should actually say tourist attractions in Rovaniemi and Levi area so if possible, working with them would help Wadessa Oy to get access to their customers. This is important because they have hotel in Oulu also so there would be possibility to offer day trip from Rovaniemi's or Levi's hotels to Oulu to take part in Wadessa Oy's ice fishing event.

Last part of marketing strategy is promotion activities and those have been already talked multiple times during this thesis in earlier chapters but to conclude those also in here is important for the company because those cannot be left out in any circumstances. This thesis has talked about

multiple promotion activities like social media promotions, Japan's travel expo events and so on. When taking into consideration Wadessa Oy's existing events and size of the topic of this thesis ice fishing event two best possibilities comes to highest priority and those are Visit Finland and Business Finland. Even though mentioned separately they are both part of the same business because Visit Finland is part of Business Finland with just little different objectives. Business Finland offers their customers that are companies help to grow globally and help to find solutions for their future but also, they offer co-operations with other companies for example earlier mentioned Lapland group or some other relevant companies. In their website they say that "We are developing Finland into the most attractive and competitive innovation environment and the most enticing investment and travel destination in the world" (Huittinen, Business Finland, 2023). When again Visit Finland is more about promoting Finland as travel destination to international travellers and they have mentioned in their page that "The main task of Visit Finland is to promote international travel to Finland in cooperation with the Finnish travel industry" (Visit Finland, *About us: Visit Finland* 2023). With help of visit Finland and business Finland Wadessa oy would gain valuable information and promotion for their event but also gain possible partners for their event. Channels that they would be offered for marketing and publicity would help to skip steps that otherwise Wadessa would need to do all by themselves.

As to conclude this chapter for event companies marketing strategies are not as easy as it might seems because there is important to consider multiple aspects that could affect their business and to how to solve those problems company needs to look into all sides together and not only focus in one part.

3.5 Marketing metrics and evaluation

The key performance indicators that will be used to measure the effectiveness of the marketing activities. This may include metrics like sales revenue, customer acquisition cost, website traffic, conversion rates and customer satisfaction. In this chapter like mentioned above, thesis will investigate how Wadessa Oy can measure their success on their new field and how to keep track on the success of their work.

When thinking of marketing event and in this case ice fishing event marketing metrics and evaluations are harder to measure than some other business markets. There are still few ways to evaluate their marketing effectiveness and those are like mentioned by assistant professor, Mudra institute of communications Seema Gupta “measuring awareness or attitude changes, quantifying in terms of sales results and comparing the value of sponsorship generated media coverage to the cost of equivalent advertising time or space” (Gupta, 2003). This means that in the moment when people visit your event, and you gather their customer satisfaction you will see in their answers on how they react to the event. This would be good for Wadessa Oy to do right now to gain existing data on how their customers feel about their event and how those attitudes change over the years.

Second part was about quantifying sales results, and this is one of the most normal actions when thinking marketing and its metrics and how to evaluate your performance. On this right now Wadessa Oy’s ice fishing event has not been that large and probably in next few years when they start to grow larger their sales results start to grow. However, at this point company need to keep in mind that when those numbers grow it is important to keep track on those that if numbers start to fall rapidly there should be done something. For example, see if there are changes in customer satisfaction or is some of the marketing or advertising going to wrong place to see why there is not coming as many people than before that is company missing something. That is not the only reason why that might happen but also there could be reason on how much company is using money to prepare for the event that is there more money going out than coming in.

Lastly about the comparing the value of sponsorship generated media coverage to the cost of equivalent advertising time or space. This means that company needs to look on their sponsorships or in their partners that what kind of coverage they are getting for their investment with the other companies. Is there enough coverage for their event and are they getting enough space for them to advertise properly for their event. Even when thinking partnerships and sponsors are good idea there is always for company important to look what they are getting from those. If what they get is not covering their needs that sponsor or partnership is not profitable. Event marketing is hard on marketing side because smaller events do not have funds to get large advertisement for their event or their profit for the event will fall under profitable.

3.6 Interview information and results

This part of the thesis will go through interview and its results that author made and was conducted in Japan with possible customers for Wadessa Oy. Interview questions were made in simple manner but also deepening questions were made during the interview to make sure to gain most of the answers and to access even more data than just interview questions would have provided. Basic questions can be found in annex part end of the thesis. Questions there were just guidelines for the interviewer deepening questions were planned together with author and are presented on chapter below always after question presented.

Interview for this report is going to be conducted for Japanese market during the period of summer 2023 by the author. Interview is done in form of questionnaire that includes questions about interest of the Japanese customers in different age groups about their interest of Finland and regarding of the event. Ice fishing event has been event for all age groups and focused on families also and this is why questionnaire will focus target of the questionnaire for Japanese university students to forward to ensure wide range of results. In Japan adult age is little different that in Finland because adults are considered to be people for 20 years old forward when in Finland it is for 18 years old. This said one important factor in Japanese society is that many university students travel during their holiday period at school with their friends and this could be considered one important group for the event. Also, Japanese society is way more work oriented than Finland is and many people will travel when they are older because of the lesser holidays per year than in Finland. Japanese workers get roughly around 20 days of holiday per year but that is also after you have gathered experience and years at your work place but also Japanese companies has right to question these paid holiday and when you want to hold them. That means that if work has something important or company thinks your job needs to be done more before you can take holiday, they can ask you to move this holiday (Japan Dev Team, 2023).

Also, in Japanese society there is difference in ways to have holidays because of the peer pressure that event though working age Japanese have got holidays that they could use there is high chance that they are not using those at all. This comes from fear that people at workplace would see them

as lazy or not focused on their work and many people just take those holidays as monetary compensation. For this reason, interview is trying to get as much as possible data from different age groups as possible to get answer to question that which groups are travelling the most so that marketing can be focused on those target groups. This said Japanese society is starting to change because of the higher retiring rate because of the aging population and new workforce starts to consist of younger generations who values their free time more than previous generations. These younger generations are more eager to resist these long working hours and after work drinking parties with their bosses (Nae, 2017). This said it is important to consider also younger generations in questionnaire because of this changing society.

This interview was chosen as way to gather information because it will give important data and insight from Japanese perspective on how they will travel and how they want to travel. Still at the same time this kind of questionnaire could be find out from online, but this was wanted to conduct right now by author because of current world situation with not so long ago pandemic and current war in Europa. Also, because this kind of information when find in online is sometimes hard to focus on right topic so that is why questionnaire was made by the author of this thesis.

For this part thesis will now go through interview and questionnaire answers and what was able to find out about Japanese market from that. Questionnaire was conducted by person interviewing people with readymade questions but also to ask more detail for the questions but also to see what groups are willing to answer to the questionnaire and what groups are interested in travels.

First questionnaire was asking peoples age and gender to identify what groups are willing to travel. Information revealed that people who were willing to travel and were interested are mainly males of answer rate of 81,8% and only 18,2% were female. When asking people who were not willing to answer the questionnaire why they do not like to answer females said that they usually do not travel that much because of their lower pay at work and in families they usually take care of the family and house in Japan. Also, one answer that came up regularly was that usually when they travel males of the family makes decisions of travel plans. Females who were willing to answer said that they travel because they are single and can make their decisions by themselves.

Age groups of the questionnaire spread for wide scale, but all answers came from people who were adults in Japan scale so over 20 years old. Most of the answers came from people who were between 21 to 30 years old and interestingly there was gap between 30 and 40 years old because

there were no answers at that age group. Rest of the answers came from people between 40 and 50 years old and like said earlier on the thesis target groups were from 20 years old to 60 years old. Reason for these two groups between 30 to 40 and from 50 to 60 years old not answering were two simple reasons. People from 30 to 40 said that they do not have time to travel because of just finishing school and getting job so free time was limited for them to travel and they wanted to focus on their job and family at that point. Second age group from 50 to 60 years old said reason being that they would like to travel but their language skills and family situation was not good enough to give them courage to travel. Still, this does not mean that these age groups do not travel at all but their travels focus mainly inside of Japan and circumstances need to be just right for them to travel outside of Japan. 30 to 40 years old were still more willing to think travelling outside of Japan than people between 50 to 60 years old so this part will give Wadessa Oy information that their marketing and target audience should focus on people between 20 to 50 years old.

Next part of the questionnaire was asking that have people travelled to Finland before or do they know the country and what it is famous. 91% of people answering to questionnaire and also people who were not willing to answer the questionnaire had not before travelled to Finland but all of them knew Finland because of Santa and northern lights. Other 9% of people answering to questionnaire and who did not had travelled to Finland before because of the easy access before Ukraine war and because many people use Finland as connection point to other European countries. This part will give information that Finland is well known in Japan and people has interest on it but they would need something to encourage them to travel to Finland. Most of the answers why they have not travelled to Finland was because of covid and also right now because of the war in Europe but one of the biggest reason was financial problems Japanese people is facing for multiple year in row. In Japan working hours are long and pay might not be that great but also because Japan has been struggling with weak money for past years. Their money's value is really low compared to other currencies like last year Yen's value was that with 1 euro you got 150 yen. This is not only past few years trend because even though Japan is one of the largest economies in the world but yen's value has been low for some time already. People also use lot of money on rent in Japan especially if you live in Tokyo area and this is making travelling hard for them.

Next questionnaire wanted to find answer to that do people in Japan often travel outside of Japan or is main focus of travel inside of Japan. 82% of people answered that they do not travel outside of Japan that often and only 18% answer that they travel outside Japan often. People who were travelling lot outside of Japan was because of work or because their financial situation was better

that others. 82% who were not travelling lot outside of Japan states reasons for that were same than answered earlier about busy schedule at work, life situation or financial situation. Also, one answer that came up multiple times was earlier mentioned fear and incompetence on their language skills. At the same time when asking that in how many countries people had visited answers showed clear pattern that 36,4 % of people had never visited outside of Japan and only few percentages of people had visited some other countries few times. Interesting factor was found from one person who is originally from Europe but had been living in Japan for past 20 years was that they had travelled in 20 countries before, but they said that after moving to Japan travelling slowed down because of their work and money situation. This information was valuable to see that even though they had travelled lot before moving to Japan while living there most of their time is consumed by work and still pay is not sufficient to travel outside of Japan. This person's data has been included in questionnaire as verbal data because purpose of this questionnaire was to get data of Japanese tourists but also it was added here on text because it gives better understanding on how Japanese work and financial situation is hindering free time.

Last question was about how many time people had travelled outside of Japan and there were only small percentage who had done that next questionnaire wanted to see that of those people who had travelled outside Japan has anyone of them travelled to Europe or has travelling been to other Asian countries like Korea or China. Answers showed that only 18% had travelled to Europe before and other had not. When asking what countries, they had travelled if not to European countries answers were mainly focused on Asia but also few to norther America. When asking for reason to that was that other Asian countries money value is similar than Japan and it is therefore cheaper to travel inside of Asia. For north America reason was that it is closer than European countries and language they are using is English. When asking that they were afraid of their English language skills why still country where people are speaking English reason was that compared to north America there is higher population of Asia people there and in European countries they are speaking their native language so they worried that even though people in European countries speak English there is bigger chance that they do not understand or speak English as much as in north America.

Next target groups were asked about how they like to travel is it going to be alone or in groups and like stated earlier in the thesis 73% of people answered they prefer to travel in groups. When defining answer on how many people they usually travel or want to travel answers were more than 2 but less than 6 people. Reason for that was easy access, family reasons and safety because people felt that travelling alone or with 2 people expenses were higher and it was not feeling safe to travel

in foreign country with so small numbers. Reasons for larger groups were that they like to travel with their families and at the same time they might not have other option because of kids or that their parents want to travel but they need younger generations to help with their language skills. Also because of their preference on booking their holiday from travel agency with larger groups they get more discount on their travels.

Next people were asked about their travelling habits that what kind of things interest them when they travel or if they would travel at some point of their life. Most of the answers on this one was focused on culture, nature, and food and when asked to define why these reasons people answered that Japan has one of the most amazing foods and for Japanese people food is important part of their life it is more like lifestyle, so they want to try new foods they have not tried before. Culture was interesting for Japanese people because they felt that when they travel or would travel is not that often they would like to know and learn more of those countries culture as much as possible because they never know when they would have opportunity to travel again. Lastly nature was one of the largest factors for their choice to travel or what they would like to see on their travels. They were asked why nature plays so big factor on their travels even though Japan has one of the unique nature in the world answer was that they want to combine nature and culture because some countries has so many different cultural and nature related things that they would be able to get most out of their travels with that, but also because some countries nature is so different than Japan with extreme weather conditions like Finland's winter or summer of Finland with night less summer.

This leads us to our next question that was about if they would have a chance would they travel to Finland and what time of the year they would do that. Like said earlier people knew Finland and its famous aspects but many people had not travelled here. 72% of answerers said that they would like to travel to Finland during summer and 18% said that during winter they were also opportunity to say two seasons to come to Finland and those who were answering summer first said winter for another option and winter travellers said summer for second option. Reasons for those time were that they were little afraid of Finland's winter because how cold it gets but they were still interested to see northern lights and Santa but also because they know there is so many cultural reasons during winter to travel to Finland. Main reason for summer travels was because they wanted to see night less summer and they would not be needing that much luggage for travelling during summer. At the same time when asked season they would like to travel to Finland answers were divided between summer visitors and winter visitors to Helsinki for summer and for winter to Rovaniemi to see Santa.

Next questionnaire wanted to establish that if Japanese people would travel to Finland what would be their preference on staying in same city or visiting multiple places at same time. This was one of the topics earlier in thesis how to attract customers to Oulu that would it be possible to get some partnerships with hotel companies or other travel companies that travellers would be able to visit Oulu even when they would stay in different city. Biggest issue on that was to know would travellers be up for that or would they rather stay in one city. Most of the people answered to questionnaire and who were interviewed verbally said that they would rather visit multiple cities on their stay. For them problem was that how that would be possible easily to move around in Finland and for that partnership with other travel companies, hotels or transport companies would make it possible for them. Of course, there is needed to remember that this scale of large transportation co-operation is not possible right away but for future reference this piece of information gives important data for Wadessa Oy. Main reasons for Japanese tourists to visit multiple cities was that they are interested seeing cultural differences in different cities and regions. When asked why it is so they said that like in Japan all regions have their unique aspects and it is same in Finland, so they want to experience not only Helsinki areas cultural aspects but also how it is in northern parts of Finland. Also like they has answered earlier that food, culture and nature play big parts in their travels they are interested to see as much as possible during their stay.

Next thesis wanted to find answers to questions where to market ice fishing event in Oulu and how people in Japan are used to look for information for their travels. 90% of answers said that they are looking for information about their destination from internet from countries official website and one interesting factor came up and that was that even though many of them have not travelled to Finland they had looked for information in visit Finland web page. Also, even though people said earlier in questionnaire they use travel agencies they did not use them as main source of information about the country but rather find out themselves from official website. Earlier in thesis co-operation with visit Finland and business Finland would be one possible opportunity for Wadessa Oy this questionnaire has provided more weight for that decision to promote Wadessa Oy's ice fishing event through those channels and work with them to have access to Japanese customers because they are using those web pages to decide when travelling.

Earlier there came up information about the financial situation in Japan and with Japanese tourists so next question was about expenses that how much people are willing to spend on their travel for travelling and hotels. Answers on this part varied most in the questionnaire and it was needed to take into account on where people would like to travel. Those who were more willing to travel

somewhere inside Japan or in other Asian countries amounts were rather small. In Asian area travellers wanted to spend around 60-100 euros on hotels per night and for flights they were willing to spend 200-400 euros on flights. When comparing to people who were willing to travel to Europe answer was that they know that flight is expensive more than 1000 euros so if they would travel to Europe they would need large amount of money but at the same time they were willing to spend also more money for hotels to make sure that their stay would be as memorable as possible. And they were willing to spend almost same amount of money for hotels than people travelling inside Asia for flight which was 200-400 euros. This information was able to tell that when and if Japanese would travel to Europe, they are more willing to spend more money just for the experience but also need to consider that usually hotels in Asia are cheaper than in Europe.

Amount for souvenirs and this kind of extra things did not variate that much and both cases in Asia travel and travels in Europe were between 150 euros to 350 euros. Interesting factor came up at spending money on events or trips where they would be able to try new cultural things both travellers in Asia and in Europe were willing to pay biggest amount of money when not including flights. Most of them were willing to pay almost 600 euros on those activities and when asked why it was so answer was same than earlier that they wanted to experience as much as possible was it then in Asia or in Europe while they travel. Also, they answered that when travelling inside of Asia they do not want to spend that much money on hotels and flights because they want to use that money on those experiences, when again people who wanted to travel to Europe said that because they are already using lot of money to travel there it is best idea for them to take all out of that trip.

When asking about money situation questionnaire and interview included at same time question on what flight companies, they like to use on their travels inside Asia but also if they would travel to Europe. This question was just to give little more inside on their money spending. There were 3 companies that came up on this part and those were ANA, Japan airlines, Jetstar. When asked why these companies answer was that using ANA and Jetstar were easy and cheap ways to travel inside Japan and in Asia to get their travel location and why to use Japan airlines even though it is expensive answer was that they do not need to worry about on their travel to for example to Europe when their crew on board is Japanese speaking and for this reason they are willing to spend more money on flight to Europe on Japanese company than using Finnair or some other companies. Those people who were more confident about their English skills said they would use Finnair be-

cause it is safe, and Finnair also offers some services in Japanese for their customers. Also, customer service was one big factor for them to choose Japan airlines because if some problems would happen, they were more confident to find solution with that company.

Lastly in questionnaire wanted to find out answer to one question that would be one of the important questions for the Wadessa Oy and that was would Japanese people be interested on trying out ice fishing in Finland. For this part questionnaire was one way to answer but also for the thesis purpose there was conducted separate interview where more answers were gathered just by telling what ice fishing is and asking if people would be interested on that. First people were just asked that would they be interested to try ice fishing in Finland and many people said that they do not know what that is so with this information they would not be interested but when they were told what it is and it would be possible to fish on top of the sea ice 85% of the people answered that they would be interested to try that kind of activity. With this question thesis wanted to find out that is ice fishing familiar for Japanese people but also it gave important insight that marketing for this ice fishing event would be playing important role to let people not just know that there is this kind of event but also to inform them what ice fishing is because like said people were not familiar but after hearing what ice fishing is their interest woke up for that.

To conclude the interview and questionnaire chapter there is some problems in Japanese society on how people are able to travel because of their financial situation, family situation and work but people would be interested on travelling also to Finland. From marketing side this part gave important information on what would be good co-operation companies like visit Finland and how important it is to market ice fishing event in a way that it would explain not only where event is but also clearly what it is. Also, possible multi city stays for tourists and co-operation with other travel and event companies are offering important peace for Wadessa Oy's ice fishing events future.

3.7 Marketing Timeline

A timeline or schedule outlining the proposed timing of each marketing initiative and milestone to be achieved. On this chapter thesis will dive deeper into timeline of the marketing plan and future of the event so that it will give more specific information for the Wadessa Oy. This timeline has been planned for next two years already during working of thesis because some of the information is already done for this work. This method had been chosen in mind of future expansions of Wadessa's event marketing to other countries so that company can use this timeline in new countries. Like already on the marketing objectives mentioned for different plans for marketing in overall scale this part will give more specific timeline divided for three months periods.

3.7.1 Year 1

Month 1-3:

During this period conduct market research for Japanese market by also including consumer preference, different travel trends and analysis of competition. After getting these parts done it is important to remember to develop strategy for marketing and to do research for the target segment in Japanese market. During this period company should start establishing partnerships with travel agencies and influencers. Also, important would be to take contact with Visit Finland's Japan specialist to gain help with marketing and they might have existing campaigns coming that could be useful for the company. Also, it would be possible to gain information for travel agency contacts from them but this should be made as soon as possible because it might take around a year to get it all done.

Month 4-6:

For this period there should be already existing bilingual website where customers can find event information, registration, and insight of culture in Finland. With help of this bilingual website company should start planning to launch social media channels that are targeting Japanese customers

and create content for the event. By combining both online advertising campaigns company should build awareness among tourists from Japan.

Month 7-9:

In this part after done online marketing and finished website for the event it is crucial to start collaborating with influencers from Japan to work with them to promote ice fishing event in social media and in content creation. When thinking other ways to do promotion there should be in some scale of participation in different kinds of travel trade shows and exhibitions in Japan to be able to attract potential attendees. Need to remember on this part that these suggestions are given in mind of bigger popularity of the event so some parts of this timeline can be sided for now and take these into consideration after event has grown more.

Month 10-12:

During this period before event, it is important to start selling tickets for the event in the bilingual website for easy access for the Japanese customers. Also, at this point it would be good to have made partners with travel agencies and companies to ensure wider spread of information about the event. When thinking to use social media influencers in marketing and promotion of the event there should be during this period contact period for possible participants via email or social media to get more influencers to attend the event and to include those who are already contacted to ensure easy and pleasant event for them. Many of the Japanese travel influencers are well known around the Japan and reaching out for their social media could cause so called buzz within their followers.

3.7.2 Year 2

Month 1-3:

At this point event has already passed with hopefully positive results and for this reason continuing social media engagement, showcasing, content creation and promoting next year's event for early planners with for example early planners ticket sales is crucial. Also monitoring website with analytics and to adjust company's online advertising should not be forgotten during this period.

Month 4-6:

Like said earlier this timeline offers not only for this case information but also it gives reference for the future expansions of the event. That is why on this period it is important to ensure next events positive results by for example making cultural activities like Finnish food tastings and traditional music performances during the event to enhance the event experience.

Collaboration with local accommodation providers should consider at this point to ensure more inviting factors for the tourists like offering special packages for those who take part in the event. Also, possible thing to do during this period is to make loyalty program to ensure and encourage repeat attendees for the future event by offering different prices or for example special spot at the event.

Month 7-9:

For this period would be wise to implement new advertising campaigns that are targeted during peak times of travel booking periods in Japan to ensure more spread of the event in tourist communities. Feedback for event makers is important and this is why at this point after one successful event collecting data of event through surveys is important to ensure fine-tuned event in future based on participants preference.

Month 10-12:

Analysing indicators of key performance like ticket sales, website traffic and social media engagement would be important to measure success of the marketing effort and to think positively about growing the event or reach out to get other tourist from different countries.

In case of possible success in the event marketing and execution of the event following this timeline should effectively build awareness, attract Japanese participant, and create customers memorable and successful experience at the event. It also allows company to ensure comprehensive marketing initiative in various stages. This timeline should also ensure targeted way to approach and to consistent engage in the Japanese market.

4 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Finding and conclusion part will sum up all the findings of the thesis to main points and to open results of the thesis. This thesis results have come from multiple different sources and information amount is wide because of the interview results also. Interview results gave more insight on Japanese customers perspective then existing data was able to do and possible recommendations for future are given also on this part.

This thesis has focused on making marketing plan to Japanese customers for Finnish event company Wadessa Oy located in Oulu and for their ice fishing event. This part of thesis will focus on overall findings of the topic.

Thesis has gone through all the relevant data to make marketing plan as wide as possible for the company. When talking about results of this marketing plan thesis has been able to find reasons that will help Wadessa to improve their event to gain more customers from Japan. Also, at the same time thesis will give information on what to avoid during this process.

On earlier chapters of this thesis there was clear implementation that accessing to Japanese market is not easy to do alone. This is why company should use help of visit Finland to gain access to their vide database on Japanese market and customers. Also, at the same time need to remember that Asian market are completely different compared to European markets and especially Japanese customers and their norms in country are important to take into account during when planning marketing and the event for them.

Most important data for the thesis could be said to come from interviews that was conducted in Japan with Japanese possible customers from different social standings and age groups. What these interviews were able to find was interesting on habits how Japanese travel. Japanese people like to travel on groups more than alone. That is not only because of safety but also because it will save on fees. There is one other reason also and that is because many Japanese have not travelled outside Japan and are more focused on travelling inside Japan, they feel that when they have chance to travel outside Japan, they need to have people who are able to handle situations also in English because Japanese do not have best English skills, or they are not confident to use that. Also, what was interesting to find out was how they use their money while they travel because when they travel close to Japan or inside Japan, they like to use small amount of money for flights and

hotels and so on. Difference comes on when they travel somewhere far from Japan because they are willing to spend way larger amounts of money to make their trip more memorable for them.

For Japanese potential customers Finland is something that they dream of visiting because of famous Santa and northern lights but they are afraid that they do not manage during the stay but at the same time they are interested to stay in Finland for longer time and are willing to visit other destination cities other than Helsinki and Rovaniemi. This is good for the Wadessa Oy and for their future partnership planning. For example, for Wadessa there would be good idea to do partnership with Lapland group who are planning events and to do for tourists in Lapland area but also they have wide range of hotels around Finland where Japanese tourist would be able to stay during their visit.

Wadessa Oy has good base for their event in terms of execution and concept but also, they have potential location and interesting event for the Japanese tourists visiting Finland. For Wadessa competition could be most challenging for them because of large number of already existing event groups and winter and Lapland events. But like mentioned earlier in thesis covering their basics and making sure not to try to reach too high right away to try to beat all competition would be wise to do. Mainly focus on making their event lasting and well known before trying to grow it to the same level as competition because that always needs lots of money and resources.

In overall conclusion of this marketing plan there is huge potential customer base for Wadessa in Japan if marketing and targeting for the event has been done properly. Wadessa Oy does not need to start with large scale of modifications at first for their event, but their best solution is to make their core of their operation as solid as possible by contacting visit Finland and their partners to make sure that their marketing efforts would go to right place and they are able to contact relevant travel companies in Japan.

5 DISCUSSION

Lastly on this thesis will go through some of the journey of making this thesis and about topics that could have been done differently for the future reference.

This topic has been interesting to search for information and data, but the problem is to be able to find real and reliable information of how Japanese tourists feels because in Japan people do not tell their real feelings so easily. Also amount of the data that is available can sometimes be overwhelming especially data in Japanese. Most of the data you find is in Japanese and writers really need to look for English data of same topic because you can find same topic data, but it is from American or European perspective, but Japanese sources and data is more on point when writing so writer need to be careful when trying to find important information.

There were multiple new factors that I was about to learn during this thesis like for example Japanese tourists travelling behaviour while they travel inside Asia and outside of it. This helped tremendously to define how Wadessa Oy would be able to attract tourists for their ice fishing event. Reason for that is that when people travel, they have some amount they are willing to use while travelling and do not go over that but what interviews were able to find out was that Japanese tourist are willing to spend lots of money to experience Finnish culture and are willing to stay in multiple locations.

Lastly managing this thesis was not easy task because writing and doing information research needed to be timed during summertime and timed with my Japanese friends who were helping on doing the interview in Japan. This is why all the time was important to stay on top of your schedule to make sure that in thesis there is ready parts you need for next days and have ready searched resources for the next writing moment. Also making sure that all topics match each other and at the same time looking into previous parts was important. Because of the topics personal interesting aspects writing this thesis was more comfortable than before.

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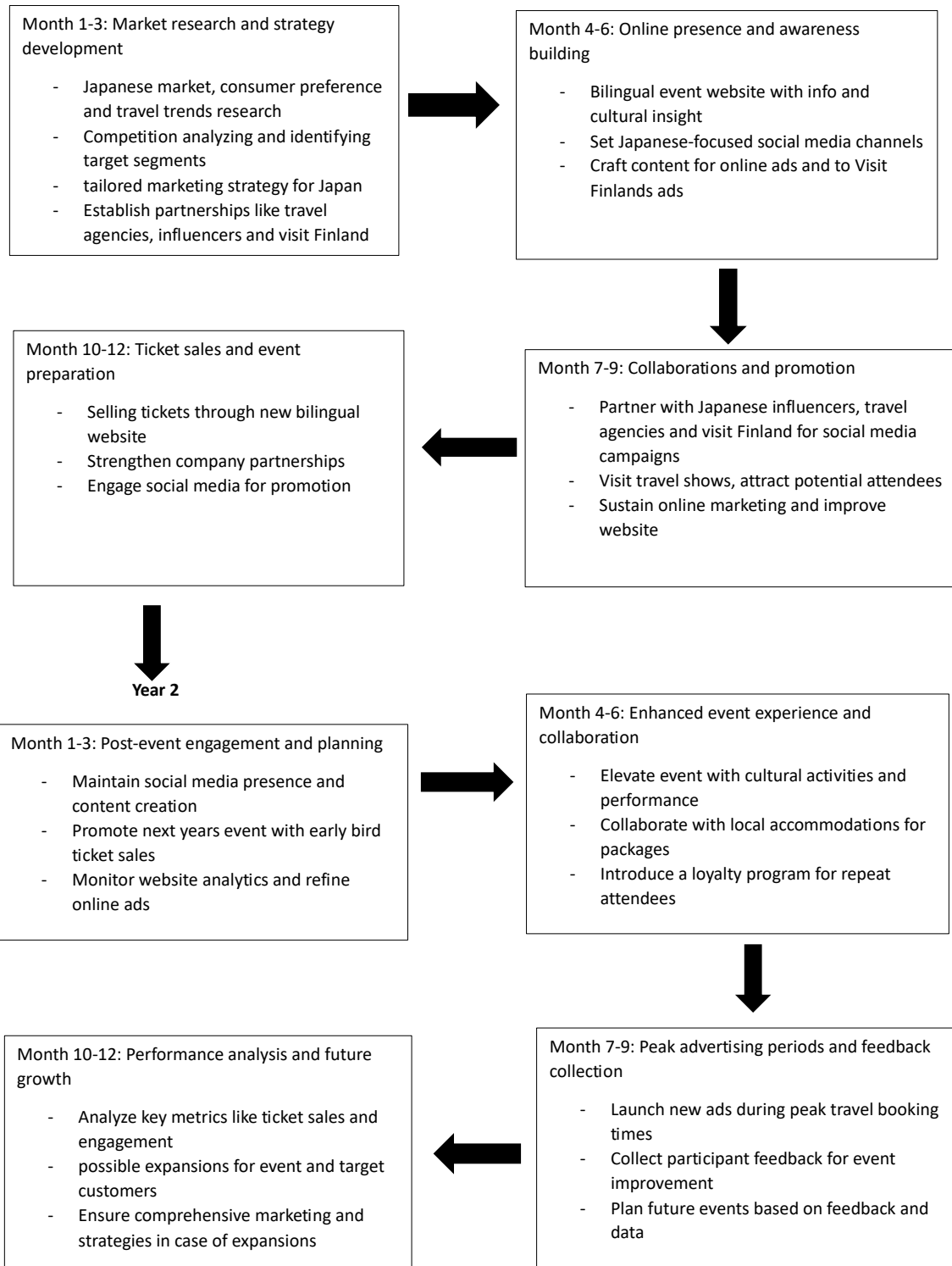
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ANNEX

Annex 1



10. If you would travel to Finland what time of the year you would do it?

- a. Spring
- b. Summer
- c. Fall
- d. Winter

11. What city in Finland you would like to travel?

12. Would you stay only in one location in Finland or visit some other cities also?

Yes No and why?

13. How would you book your trip to Finland or to some other countries?

- a. travel agency
- b. yourself
- c. Something else? How:

14. Where would you look for information about things **to do** in your travel destination?

- a. Travel agency
- b. internet (if this add website here)
- c. From someone who has travelled that location before
- d. Social media

15. Where do you usually look for information about the countries you like to travel?

- a. Internet (if this add website here)
- b. Social media
- c. Travel agency

16. Lets say you would travel to Finland would you be interested to try ice fishing during spring?

Yes No

17. How much money you are willing to spend while you travel?

- a. For hotel amount:
- b. souvenirs amount:
- c. Flight amount:
- d. museums, events etc. amount:

18. What flight company you are usually using when you travel? Company:

19. What is your favorite or dream country you have travelled or want to travel?

Name of the country:

Strengths:

Strengths
- Unique Finnish cultural experience
- Ideal natural setting in Oulu, known for frozen lakes and sea
- Growing interest in nature tourism among Japanese

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses
- Limited awareness of ice fishing among Japanese customers
- Language barriers and communication hurdles

Opportunities:

Opportunities
- Collaboration with Japanese travel agencies
- Leveraging the influence of Japanese social media influencers
- Positioning as a cultural immersion experience for customers
- Collaboration with VisitFinland for cost-effective marketing

Threats:

Threats
- Competition from other winter activities and destinations
- Seasonal factors like unpredictable weather and extreme temperatures
- Dependence on gear and shelter for handling unexpected weather conditions