

Creating a Marketing Plan for an Event

Narvan Markkinat 2015

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Abstract <p>The aim of the thesis was to create a functional and realistic marketing plan for an event called "2015 Narvan Markkinat". The event, whose organization relied solely on voluntary work, did not have an existing marketing plan, which meant that the plan was started from the beginning. The thesis was assigned by the event's organizer "Tähti" Nuorisoseura ry.</p> <p>The thesis was implemented as a project instead of a traditional study. The theoretical foundation of the thesis discusses marketing, event marketing as well as marketing planning, and it was used for drafting the actual marketing plan. During the thesis process, the importance of efficient communication and cooperation was highlighted, and the flow of information was ensured by means of meetings and continuous contact.</p> <p>As a result of the process, a marketing plan serving the needs of Narvan Markkinat was created. The plan includes a situation analysis, market segmentation, marketing objectives and the strategies for achieving these objectives. The plan eases and structures the marketing efforts of the event organizers, but due to its early formulation, the plan needs updating from the organizers' side when the marketing progresses, and the details become clear. The plan provides all those involved in the organization of the event with a better understanding of its current situation, its goals and what to do in order to achieve them. The plan can also be utilized after the 2015 edition of the event, which means that the thesis has created long-term benefits for Narvan Markkinat.</p> <p>The marketing plan for Narvan Markkinat is as an appendix to the thesis, and it is not published.</p>		
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Tiivistelmä <p>Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli luoda vuoden 2015 Narvan Markkinat –tapahtumalle toimiva sekä realistinen markkinointisuunnitelma. Kokonaan vapaaehtoistyöllä sekä talkoolaisilla toteutettavalla tapahtumalla ei ollut ennestään olemassaolevaa markkinointisuunnitelmaa, jolloin markkinointia helpottavan sekä jäsentävän suunnitelman laatiminen aloitettiin tyhjästä. Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantajana toimi tapahtuman järjestäjä "Tähti" Nuorisoseura ry.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyö toteutettiin projektina perinteisen tutkimuksen sijasta. Työn teoreettisena pohjana käytettiin markkinointia, tapahtumamarkkinointia sekä markkinointisuunnitelmia käsittelevää kirjallisuutta, joiden pohjalta varsinainen markkinointisuunnitelma laadittiin. Suunnitelman laatimisprosessin aikana toimivan kommunikaation sekä yhteistyön tärkeys korostui ja tiedonkulusta huolehdittiin tapaamisten sekä jatkuvan yhteydenpidon avulla.</p> <p>Prosessin lopputuloksena syntyi Narvan Markkinoiden tarpeita palveleva markkinointisuunnitelma, joka sisältää tilanneanalyysin, segmentoinnin, markkinoinnin tavoitteet sekä strategiat näiden tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi. Suunnitelma helpottaa ja jäsentää tapahtuman järjestäjien markkinointitoimia, mutta aikaisesta laatimisajankohdasta johtuen toimeksiantajan tulee päivittää suunnitelmaa markkinoinnin edetessä ja yksityiskohtien tarkentuessa. Laadittu markkinointisuunnitelma antaa kaikille tapahtuman järjestämiseen osallistuville paremman ymmärryksen tapahtuman tämänhetkisestä tilanteesta, sen tavoitteista sekä siitä, mitä tulee tehdä näiden tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi. Suunnitelmaa voidaan hyödyntää myös vuoden 2015 jälkeen järjestettävien Narvan Markkinoiden markkinoinnissa, jolloin opinnäytetyöstä on koitunut toimeksiantajalle pitkäaikaista hyötyä.</p> <p>Narvan Markkinoiden markkinointisuunnitelma on opinnäytetyön liitteenä, jota ei julkaista.</p>		
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1 Introduction

The event industry is a highly competitive line of work with new and innovative events being organized every year. In order for an event to distinguish itself from its competitors and to succeed, it needs effective marketing in the form of a marketing plan. The aim of this thesis was to create a functional and realistic marketing plan for a country fair festival called Narvan Markkinat. The event has been organized since 1965 by a youth association called "Tähti" Nuorisoseura ry in order to celebrate the village of Narva and its history. The next Narvan Markkinat will be organized on the 8th -12th July 2015 and it will offer several types of activities for those who are interested in tradition and manual skills.

Due to its nature, the thesis was implemented as a project instead of a research study. Therefore the theoretical basis of the thesis was collected only by means of desk research. It concentrates on marketing theories, event marketing and different traditional and digital marketing activities, and it was used as a foundation for the marketing plan itself. The main part of the thesis was divided between traditional and digital marketing, and many of the marketing activities covered in the theoretical part are used in the marketing of Narvan Markkinat as well. Furthermore, the structure of a marketing plan is discussed in the theoretical part but the actual marketing plan for Narvan Markkinat is attached as an appendix to the thesis.

The marketing plan for Narvan Markkinat drafted to suit their needs so that unnecessary parts, which were not seen as useful for the event, were deleted and useful parts were added. As a result, the plan finally included a situation analysis, market segmentation, marketing objectives as well as the marketing strategies. The situation analysis covered a SWOT analysis, target groups, a PEST analysis as well as a competitor analysis. The objective of the event is to attract more visitors as well as generate profit, and, therefore, several marketing channels from traditional to digital were planned to be used with more emphasis on social media marketing than before. The tradition and the beautiful surrounding of the event distinguish it from its competitors, and they were, therefore, highlighted in the marketing efforts.

The event did not have an existing marketing plan which meant that the process of drafting the marketing plan was started from nothing. The goal of the thesis was to ease and structure the event's marketing efforts since the event is organized with voluntary work and without professionals. The devised marketing plan serves as a foundation and a guideline for the event's marketing actions but due to its early formulation, it is still missing many necessary details. Therefore it needs continuous updating from the organizer's part when decisions are made and plans become clearer.

2 Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation of the thesis discusses marketing theories as well as different means of traditional and digital marketing. The information gathered through desk research was used for planning the marketing activities of Narvan Markkinat as well as drafting the marketing plan.

2.1 Marketing Events

Marketing of events uses mainly the same principles of marketing as any other product or service. The four Ps of price, product, place and promotion, also referred to as the marketing mix, play the key role in successful marketing. However, according to Blythe (2005, 138.), Booms and Bitner's additional three Ps of people, process and physical evidence become more emphasized when marketing services instead of tangible products. The *people* part of the Ps is crucial in services since the producer and customer are usually in direct contact whereas in the *process* the customer is present during the process of providing the service. Due to the fact that a service is not a tangible product, the importance of *physical evidence* is emphasized and the customer wants something to refer to, such as a receipt or a ticket. (Blythe 2005, 138.)

In addition to the marketing mix, Hoyle (2002, 2-3.) highlights the importance of the three E's of event marketing in order to create successful events. These three elements are entertainment, excitement and enterprise.

Nowadays *entertainment* is available everywhere at any time, which has made it far more important for events to emphasize the different and unique entertainment that they are offering in order to make the audience leave home and pay for the entertainment instead of staying at home and, for example, watching TV. *Excitement*, no matter how intangible it seems, is a key point in making the event memorable. Therefore, it is crucial to incorporate excitement as part of the promise of the event and to ascertain that the promise is delivered. *Enterprise* means the readiness to take risks or try something untried, to think of something unprecedented and to create new marketing spectacles that others have not thought of before. (Hoyle 2005, 2-3.)

Marketing Mix

According to Kotler, Armstrong, Harris and Piercy (2013, 53.), the marketing mix includes all the marketing tools which the organization uses in order to produce a desired response in the target market and what can be done to influence the demand for the product. These variables are grouped under four categories of product, price, place and promotion which are also known as the four Ps (see Figure 1). (Kotler, Armstrong, Harris & Piercy 2013, 53.)

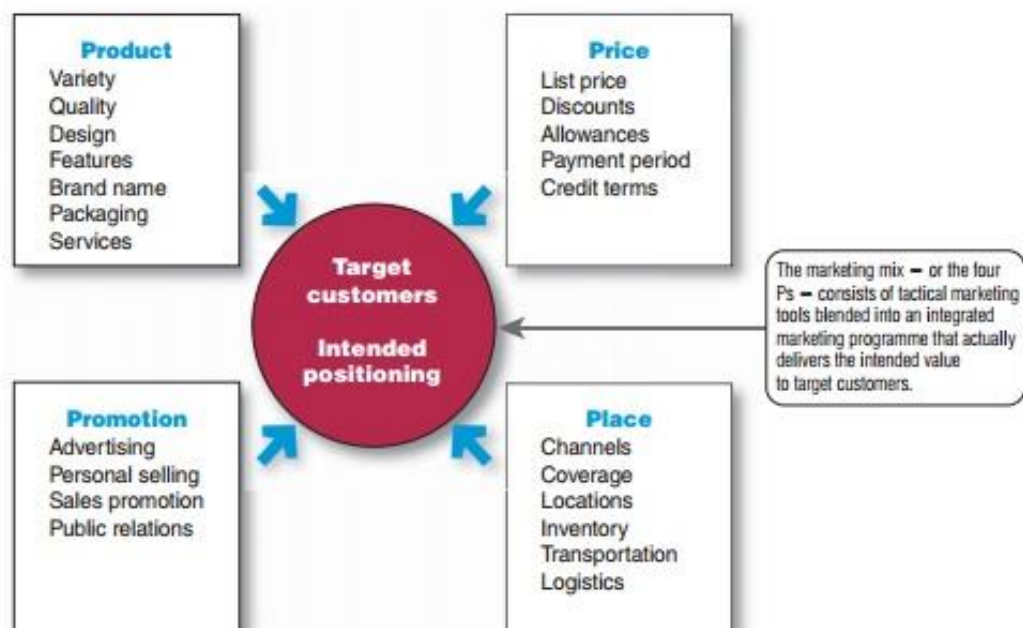


Figure 1 The Four Ps of Marketing Mix (Kotler, Armstrong, Harris & Piercy 2013, 53.)

Product: In order to create successful marketing for an event, one must first know the product completely. It is important to know the history of the product since the event marketer can choose in which way to interpret it to the audience and thus use it as a part of the marketing. It is also crucial to carefully consider what the value of the product is and what makes it unique. The marketing of an event should emphasize in which way the consumer benefits from attending the event, be it receiving new information or having a great time, and what makes it different from its competitors and worth investing money and time into. (Hoyle 2002, 12-13.)

Price: When making decisions concerning the pricing patterns of an event, it is crucial to research on the prices of similar services as well as the demand for the product. It is also important to take the financial philosophy of the event into consideration and decide whether the goal is to generate profit, break even or offer free entertainment for the audience. In addition to this, the finances of the target audience should be kept in mind when determining the pricing strategies, since the ability and willingness of the attendees to pay for the ticket plays a key role in the success of the event. (Hoyle 2002, 13-15.)

Place: Place is concerned with the activities that make the product available for the target market (Kotler etc. 2013, 53.). According to Blythe (2005, 7.), the product should be available in those places where the target market finds it easiest to buy from whether it is a high street shop or an online store. When it comes to events, the organizer should determine whether the tickets are sold beforehand or only at the gate, and which means of distribution are used, such as the event's own website or an external service provider.

Promotion: Promotion includes those activities that communicate the value of the product to the target market and persuade the customers to buy it (Kotler etc. 2013, 53.). These activities can include, for instance, advertising, public relations, personal selling and sales promotion, and they should convey the organization's message in a way that is suitable to the target customers (Blythe 2005, 7.).

The Five W's of Marketing

According to Hoyle (2002, 33.), the five W's of marketing help the organizer to determine whether or not the event itself and its marketing plan are feasible, viable and sustainable. The five W's are crucial in determining the marketing messages and developing promotional strategies. No matter what the promotional activities are and may include, the five W's of why, who, when, where and what are crucial to be kept in mind throughout the process.

Why: Why should be thoroughly considered since it relates to all marketing strategies and materials used before, during and after the event. Due to the heavy competition in entertainment, it is important to emphasize why the potential attendees should use their time and money for a specific event. Therefore, the organizers of the event must be clear on the overriding reasons for the event itself in order to attract the target group's attention and make them see the benefits of attending the event. Thus all the marketing materials should also include why the consumer should attend and what is in it for them. (Hoyle 2002, 33-35.)

Who: Who answers to the question of who the event is being marketed to. In order to implement successful marketing, it is critical to know the target audience and what their needs and wants are, and how to reach them. All the marketing materials and strategies should be carefully crafted to fit and serve the target audience, no matter who they are. (Hoyle 2002, 35-36.)

When: It is often said that timing is everything. This applies to event production in general and in the marketing of events as well. During the planning phase, the timing of the event should be carefully considered, and certain issues should be kept in mind. Depending of the event and its attendees, the time of the year, week and day should be thought of. In addition to this, local, ethnic and religious holidays should be remembered, since they can tremendously affect, both positively and negatively to, the number of attendees. (Hoyle 2002, 36-39)

Where: As already stated earlier, the chosen location and venue for an event can determine the success of the event. The location should suit the purposes of the event, and any event organizer should do thorough research on the

location in order to be able to emphasize its unique selling points. The marketing materials should bring out the strengths of the location, since it can become an essential part of the brand itself. (Hoyle 2002, 39-40.)

What: Every event is unique in a one way or another. Therefore, it is the marketer's job to find the unique selling points and to communicate them to the audience. It is important to completely know the event that is being organized in order to create successful marketing. No matter what the content of the event is, it should be presented to the public as refreshing, exciting and as something that benefits the attendee. (Hoyle 2002, 40-41.)

2.2 Traditional Marketing

Traditional marketing is a broad category which involves several types of advertising and marketing. It is the most recognizable form of marketing since it involves the advertisements that people see and hear in their everyday life through newspapers, television and radio. Print is the oldest form of traditional marketing, but also broadcasting and direct mail fall under the same category. (Traditional Marketing: Explore the Strategy of Traditional Marketing) Even though digital and web marketing have become more and more popular and widely used, traditional marketing is still alive and well as long as one knows where to look for it (Lavinsky, 2013).

Print

When it comes to today's marketing, print usually refers to advertisements in newspapers, magazines, newsletters, brochures as well as other printed materials. Moreover, it is especially used by many small-sized companies due to their limited marketing budgets (Traditional Marketing: Explore the Strategy of Traditional Marketing). According to Lavinsky (2013), however, many newspapers and magazines do not have the same circulation numbers as they used to, which has affected print advertising as well.

In the marketing of events, posters and flyers are widely used in addition to other printed media. According to Paananen (2009, 4.), a poster is an inexpensive and easy way to give information, and it differs from other

advertisements due to the different relation between the text and image. In posters, the image has a more value than the text, whereas in other advertisements it is usually vice versa. As in all marketing efforts, a carefully defined target group is essential in posters because without proper segmentation even an excellent poster can be unavailing. (Paananen 2009, 4-5.)

Broadcast and Direct Mail

Marketing through broadcasting includes mainly advertisements on the radio and television. Broadcasting has quite a long history in marketing since the first radio program supported by on-air advertisements aired in 1920 and the first television commercial in 1941. Midsized and large companies often use broadcasting in their marketing due to their higher marketing budgets and since the radio and television give the opportunity to reach wide audiences. (Traditional Marketing: Explore the Strategy of Traditional Marketing)

Direct mail marketing includes sending printed materials such as postcards, brochures, letters, catalogues and fliers directly to consumers through mail. This is usually practiced by larger companies since the designing, printing and mailing can add up to significant amounts. (Traditional Marketing: Explore the Strategy of Traditional Marketing) According to Lavinsky (2013), direct mail is one of the most visible proofs of traditional marketing still being alive and effective, and all people need to do is to check their mailbox in order to see this.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship contracts are a widely used marketing tool in organizations' marketing strategies. In Finland, sports are the most common object of sponsoring with 55% of all sponsoring in 2013, whereas culture received 17% of all sponsoring. Traditionally sponsoring is seen as exchange of money to a logo in posters or flyers, but nowadays it has become more essential to create cooperation that truly benefits both parties and creates win-win situations. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2014, 79.)

There are different types of sponsoring depending on the needs and wants of both parties. The event can, for example, offer the sponsor visibility in its marketing materials or the sponsors can use the event's logo in their own marketing. The sponsors can have their advertisements present at the event itself or the sponsors can become a crucial part of organizing the event through cooperation. It is also common for a sponsor to have its name included in the event's name or have its own event as a part of the main event. However, it has become more and more popular to have partners in cooperation who help in marketing as well as the organizing of the event in other ways as well instead of just by financial sponsoring. (Vallo & Häyriinen 2014, 79-80.)

2.3 Digital Marketing

Since the 1990's the importance of the Internet in marketing has increased significantly. One notable reason for this is that the threshold for marketing activities online is low due to reasonably low starting costs and that the Internet is open to everybody. In the spring of 2011, 89 percent of 16-74-year-old Finns had used the Internet during the past three months, and of from all the users $\frac{3}{4}$ used it every day. Still, many companies do not fully utilize the power of the Internet in their marketing. One reason for this is that the importance and opportunities of the Internet in marketing communications are not fully understood from the consumers' perspective. Digital marketing is also regarded in many corporate cultures as quite a new phenomenon, which is why the planning and implementation processes are not well-known. (Pullinen 2012, 16-17, 22.) According to Charlesworth (2012, 211-212.), other reasons for companies not taking the full advantage of digital marketing are the reluctance to adjust to the new medium, the fact that there are no fixed pricing policies as in traditional marketing and that the web is fragmented with its millions of websites.

In Finland, the Internet reaches people above the age of 15 the most comprehensively out of all other media. People spend over 100 minutes per day online, which is why it has become the largest medium in Finland. Therefore, it is not surprising that the digitalization of the media is changing

marketing as well. The change is happening in how we process and produce information as well as in consumer behavior. For example, the relevance of the Internet is emphasized when purchasing high commitment products such as cars, houses and electronics, in which cases the consumers want to research the product before making decisions. In low commitment products, such as food and public transportation, the consumers usually do not conduct research before buying but the Internet can still be used as a mass medium in order to impact the emotions of a large number of target group members at once. (Laaksonen & Salokangas 2012, 33-38.)

Web Pages

Even though the Internet offers nowadays several opportunities to inform the public about an organization and its products or services, the organization's own websites has not lost its importance. The website is almost the only digital service that is totally in control of the organization regarding to its design, content and functionality. The website is a perfect place for the organization to show their brand in a desired form but it also needs to be reliable, clear and informative. (Kalliola 2012, 175.)

The content of the website should be carefully considered. All the necessary facts and information, including contact information, should be easily available. Moreover, a description of the product or service should be present. The content should proceed from the most important information to the less important, and all the essential facts should be presented in a condensed form at the beginning of a page. (Kalliola 2012, 176.) According to Charlesworth (2012, 74.), it is also important to keep in mind to design the website for the visitors and target group instead of the designer himself.

The usability of a website is an essential, but regrettably a seldom acknowledged issue when designing a website even though a frustrated visitor, who is unable to find what he is looking for, might leave the site and not return again (Kalliola 2012, 182.). Usability means the easiness for visitors to achieve their objectives for visiting the website (Charlesworth 2012, 81.). According to Kalliola (2012, 182.), usability emphasizes how easy it is to find information in the website as well as the functionality of different control elements, such as navigation, in relation to the skills of the visitors.

Furthermore, nowadays when mobile devices have become more and more popular, it is important to make the website with responsive design which ensures that the site can be easily used with mobile devices as well (Kalliola 2012, 181.).

Display Advertising

Display advertising, also known as banners, are visible notifications or advertisements on websites and different mobile devices. It is one of the most commonly known and presumably oldest forms of advertising online. Banners can either be present on the organization's own website or as a paid advertisement on other website and when clicked, navigates the visitor to a website with more information. Even though banners are a widely used form of advertising in Finland, its effects are still not commonly known. Before the banner is clicked, it serves and functions mainly in the same way as any other advertising medium. Therefore, it is important to remember that functionality of an advertisement campaign should not be measured solely based on the amount of clicks, since also those who have seen the banner but did not click it, have been exposed to the message. (Järvilehto 2012, 97-99.)

According to Järvilehto (2012, 99.), the best results in display advertising are achieved with certain characteristics. These characteristics include using both text and images instead of just text, having a competition or other activities, banners where the brand is easily recognizable, prices and offers as well as large banners or banners that take over the site. In addition to these characteristics, the success of display advertising is largely dependent upon the visual execution and its attractiveness to the target group. (Järvilehto 2012, 99-100.)

Search Engine Marketing

Google has exceptionally strong market position in Finland, and its market share climbs over 90%. Therefore, it is important for an organization to be seen high up on Google's search results in order to get the attention of consumers. In order to achieve this, the organization can either buy search engine advertising or to implement their website in such a manner that it

naturally rises high up in the search results (also called as search engine optimization). (Pullinen 2012, 25.)

According to Larvanko (2012, 85-86.), the purpose of search engine marketing is not to communicate to as a large group of people as possible, but to communicate to potential clients just when they have announced their interest towards the marketer's product through their searches. Therefore, search engine marketing functions best when it is targeted as clearly as possible.

Search engine advertising is essentially an auction over searches where everyone can compete over the same clients. The idea is to select which search words the company wants to link to itself, what type of advertisement is shown, how much the company is willing to pay for one click and what is the maximum budget for one day. The most expensive advertisements are shown first in the search results whereas less expensive ones do not get as much exposure. However, the advertisement only costs money for the company when it has been clicked, but the visibility in search results itself does not cost for the company. (Larvanko 2012, 86-87.)

Organic results, i.e. search engine optimized results, bring 75-90% of the traffic to a website, and is, therefore, more effective than search engine advertising. The purpose of search engine optimization is to help search engines to bring users, who are interested in specific topics, to the organization's website. The process is usually started by setting goals, defining resources and conducting research on keywords. After this, the idea is to affect the source codes and link structures on the site, how the content of the site is targeted to desirable searches and how the site collects links and mentions elsewhere in the web in order to move the site up in search results when using certain search words. (Larvanko 2012, 89-93.)

Social Media

Kortesuo (2014, 123.) defines social media as such applications, software and services where users can create content, comment previous content or even modify content someone else has created. Several of such platforms exist nowadays including, for example, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram as well as various blog portals and wiki sites.

Since texts in social media are mainly created for fast consumption, the text should be compact, short and easy to read and browse but not too thorough. The essence of social media is in its interactiveness which emphasizes specific qualities; short and compact texts ensure that readers have time and energy to read the text whereas not too thorough texts leave the others room to discuss and comment the topic. It is important to pay attention to this when posting in social media due to the fact that if the text is not interesting, it is easy to stop reading, and there are always better and more interesting texts available online. (Kortesuo 2014, 15-18.)

According to Auramo and Parjanen (2012, 250.), organization's social media strategy should always follow the organization's main strategy, and especially crisis communications has an essential role in it. The presence in social media is not only the decision on creating a Facebook page or a Twitter account, but requires its own rules, responsibilities, schedules and goals. Organization's social media strategy should include the goals, who is responsible of what and how much resources are reserved for social media. It can be a rough and broad plan or document very detailed instructions covering all from pictures to text styles. (Auramo & Parjanen 2012, 250-253.)

There are several reasons why an organization should invest in social media. Firstly, social media allows the organization to understand its customers better than ever before, since it gives a new approach to understanding the customers' buying behavior. Social media has also created new marketing possibilities that are based on recommendations, made organizations more personal as well as quickened the communication. (Auramo & Parjanen 2012, 259-260.)

Facebook: According to Agresta (Bough & Agresta 2011, 194.), an organization wanting to market their brand should always create a Facebook page for the organization. The only exception to this is if the organization is not willing to take the time to maintain the page, since then it can even make the brand look worse. Even though the organization should use the page actively and post relative information, such as upcoming events, specials and promotions, one thing to keep in mind is not to be a spammer. Consumers want to get updates and interact with the organization, but do not appreciate

their personal walls being taken over with too many posts. Therefore, it is also important to make sure the content being posted is relevant and valuable. (Bough & Agresta 2011, 194-200.) Kortesuso (2014, 37.) states that when creating a Facebook page for an organization, it is important to set rules of interaction for the followers. This allows the organization to moderate the conversations afterwards and, for example, delete inappropriate comments. However, the organization should not delete all negative comments towards the organization itself, but should allow criticism. (Kortesuso 2014, 37-38.)

Twitter: Within the recent years, Twitter has gained popularity significantly and according to Bough and Agresta (2011, 172.), the unique visitors in Twitter increased 1 382 percent in a year from 2008's 475 000 visitors to 2009's seven million. Therefore, it is clear that Twitter's impact on social media marketing has increased as well. When using Twitter as a part of organizations communication strategy, the organization should remember to be authentic and transparent. This can be done through using Twitter's tools for customizing the background as well as writing a descriptive bio, so that users can easily find more information. The organization should also avoid using any automated direct messages as well as to add value to the content by being positive and giving useful information. (Bough & Agresta 2011, 172-173.) The reason why Twitter is such an important marketing channel is due to hashtags which can be used in a similar way as keywords in search engine optimization (SEO). The organization can build their brand and SEO around critical keywords just by tweeting effectively and using appropriate hashtags. Hashtags are used to gather conversation around a specific topic and help people to search tweets about subjects they are interested in. Therefore, they are also an excellent way for an organization to measure if a Twitter campaign is successful or not. (Bough & Agresta 2011, 187.)

Wiki: Wikis are a collaboratively produced and constantly changing terminology and encyclopedia sites. The most commonly known site is Wikipedia, but several other wikis, which are, for example, concentrated on specific topics, exist. Anyone can create or update content on Wikipedia, and it is recommended that an organization creates a Wikipedia profile and updates information about itself on the site. (Kortesuso 2014, 42.) Auramo and Parjanen (2012, 254.) also recommend that the organization regularly views

the amount of visitors on their Wikipedia article. The organization can also get a notification on the changes made on their article through RSS-feed, which allows the organization to be informed if someone is updating the article. (Auramo & Parjanen 2012, 254.) Compared to other marketing channels, the Internet is in many ways beyond compare due to its easy and accurate ways of measuring success. Still, in past years only around 20 percent of FI-ending domains used some measuring system where javascript measuring code is set on every page of the online service. At present, most of the web analytics solutions are based on tag-based measuring in the browser. A great example of this is Google's own system Google Analytics, which can be used free of charge, thus transforming the market completely. The most commonly used web analytics solutions in Finland are Google Analytics as well as Snoobi. (Kokko 2012, 51-61.)

3 Case and Implementation

The goal of this project-based thesis was to create a realistic marketing plan for an event called Narvan Markkinat. The event did not have an existing marketing plan, and the process was, therefore, started from the beginning. During the process, continuous and efficient communication had a vital part in the success of the thesis. This chapter gives background information concerning the event, the thesis process as well as what the final marketing plan included. The marketing plan is attached to this thesis as an appendix, and is not published.

3.1 The Event

Narvan Markkinat is a large country fair and a home village festival organized every five years in the village of Narva in Vesilahti. The event has been organized since 1965 and the next fair is to be held on the 8th – 12th July 2015 celebrating its 50-year-old traditions. Market sales have always been an essential part of the fair, but numerous other cultural and entertainment happenings are held on the side varying from children's fairs to historical parades and to a tar-burning pit. The exact number of the visitors in 2010 is unknown, but presumably around 20 000 people attended the four-day

celebration. In addition, over 100 quality market stands were present during the fair. (Narvan Markkinat web site) The next edition of the event will last for five days instead of the previous four days. As always in the past, the market itself is the center of the event, but several other happenings will take place during the five days. The traditional tar-burning pit will be lit already on Wednesday the 8th of July, and in addition to this, a running race, a historical parade, children's fairs, balls and concerts are organized.

The village of Narva has a long history starting from the Stone Age which is clearly visible and reflected to the event itself. The region has been continuously inhabited since the Stone Age when it served as a trading and handling place for leather and fur. Due to its central positioning, a market has been organized in the area since the 1720. However, the market was relocated to Tampere in 1788 until 1965 when the youth association "Tähti" – nuorisoseura ry. vivified the market to be organized every five years in its original location of Narva. (Punkari, 1995)

The organization behind Narvan Markkinat is the youth association "Tähti" Nuorisoseura ry. The organization, like the event itself, has a long history, since it was founded already in 1905. Since its establishment, the association has played a vital role in the village by organizing and supporting a myriad of activities in the village. The activities, for example, include the association's own band, plays, courses and clubs as well as several events such as Perinnepäivä, Talon juhla, Lasten juhla, Kyläjuhla and Narvan Markkinat. (100-vuotias "Tähti" Nuorisoseura ry.) The board of the association includes ten people, but during the preparations of Narvan Markkinat, other local residents join the different working committees, and in the end around 400 voluntary workers are needed to organize the whole festival.

3.2 The Process

The thesis process was started in early October after the first meeting with the event organizers was held. During this meeting, the subject of the thesis was discussed and decided on, and the author was introduced to the event and its location. In addition, the date and the preliminary content for the next meeting were agreed upon. After the meeting, the gathering and examination of

resources and theoretical foundation was started. The next meeting was held in mid-November with most of the marketing committee members present. During the meeting, a SWOT analysis was produced, and the marketing objectives, the event program, ticket prices as well as marketing tools to be used were discussed. After this, the marketing plan was finished based on the information gathered during the meeting, and was sent to the organizers in the beginning of December for approval.

During the thesis process, continuous and efficient communication with the organizers was crucial, and was ensured through meetings and emails. The cooperation worked fluently due to having one contact person, and getting information was easy because of rapid responses to emails. As a result, a realistic and functional marketing plan was created for the event, and, thus, the aim of the thesis was reached. However, the marketing plan did not become as detailed as the author would have hoped for. This was due to the early formulation of the plan when several details concerning the event had not been yet agreed upon.

3.3 The Marketing Plan

Marketing planning is a structured process which leads to a compatible set of marketing decisions and actions based on an analysis of the current internal and external situation. It also leads to setting marketing objectives, strategies and programs as well as managing the marketing activities through implementation and evaluation. The course of action resulting from the marketing planning process is then recorded in a marketing plan which allows marketers to examine suitable opportunities for achieving the goals as well as the potential threats for the company. The plan should also allow measuring progress based on the set objectives and making adjustments if needed. (Wood 2007, 3-4.)

Several different resources were used to get a comprehensive idea about what the marketing plan for Narvan Markkinat should include. As a result, unnecessary parts of a marketing plan were deleted and useful parts were added to create a plan that best suits the needs of the event. For instance, budgeting was not regarded as an essential part of the plan for Narvan

Markkinat, but more emphasis was put on detailing marketing strategies, tactics and schedules. The final marketing plan for Narvan Markkinat included executive summary, situational analysis, market segmentation, marketing objectives, marketing strategies and tactics as well as short mentioning of the budgeting issues.

Executive Summary

According to Westwood (2013, 115.), an executive summary should “present the key points of the plan in a clear and concise form”. It should not be too long, and it should highlight the essence of the plan and be understandable for anyone who has not read the plan itself. It should also always include the objectives of the plan as well as the timescale and the underlying assumptions on which the plan is based. (Westwood 2013, 115.)

Situation Analysis

Situation analysis is a detailed examination into a company’s marketing environment, specific marketing activities as well as its internal marketing system. The analysis helps the company to consider where it stands in the strategic markets, compare the company to its competitors as well as to take into consideration the strengths and weaknesses it possesses and the opportunities and threats it faces. (Westwood 2013, 13 & 34.) The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of an organization are often presented in the form of a SWOT analysis. The analysis is used for monitoring the internal and external environment and the organization’s position within them (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman & Hansen 2009, 101). Figure 2 (see below) shows the structure of a SWOT analysis.

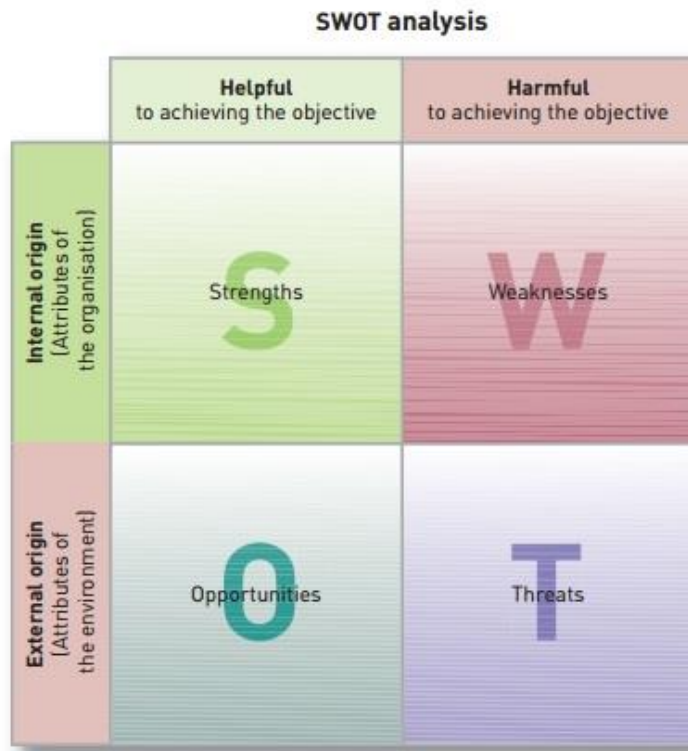


Figure 2: The Structure of a SWOT analysis (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman & Hansen 2009, 101)

In the marketing plan for Narvan Markkinat 2015, the internal analysis concentrated on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the event in the form of a SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis was produced together with the event organizers during a meeting. The analysis revealed that the event had several strengths, such as its long history and beautiful surroundings, but weaknesses were found as well. Furthermore, several opportunities and threats were discovered. In addition to the SWOT analysis, the target group and customer base of the event were analysed in the internal analysis of Narvan Markkinat. The external analysis of Narvan Markkinat examined the political, economic, socio-cultural and technological factors (PEST) that impact the event. In marketing, PEST analysis is used to scan the macro-environment in which the organization operates (Strategic Management). In addition to the PEST analysis, the potential competitors and their impact on the event were analyzed as well.

Market Segmentation

Since the needs and wants of people differ, during the marketing planning process it is essential to group the customers into segments based on similar needs. The different segments can be divided based on several characteristics such as socio-economic factors, age, sex, occupation or region. These groups then presumably have similar behaviors, needs and wants that affect their demand of the product being marketed. Therefore the marketer must next decide on the targeting approaches to these groups and for example decide if only one or more of the segments are focused on. (Wood 2007, 7; Westwood 2013, 21-22.)

During the marketing planning process, the customers of Narvan Markkinat were segmented into four different groups: people of Narva, out-of-towners in Pirkanmaan and the rest of Finland as well as the vendors. The characteristics of the people were described and the best marketing channels for reaching them were listed for the marketing plan.

Marketing Objectives

According to Wood (2007, 86.), the objectives of a marketing plan are short-term objectives that, when achieved, bring the company closer to achieving its long-term goals. A long-term goal can, for example, be doubling the attendance in five years whereas a short-term objective is gaining 1000 likes on Facebook. No matter what the objectives of the company or organization are, they should always be SMART. This means that the objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. (Westwood 2013, 36.)

The marketing objectives for Narvan Markkinat were listed in the plan, and the main objective of Narvan Markkinat was set to be gaining more visitors as well as profit. Other specific objectives concerning the amount of visitors as well as social media objectives were listed for the marketing plan in addition to the main objective.

Marketing Strategies and Tactics

In order to achieve the set objectives, the company must define the marketing strategies and tactics used. There is a considerable difference between strategies and tactics even though they are often mixed up. Strategies are the

chosen methods to achieve specific objectives in the required timescale, whereas tactics detail the individual courses of action on daily bases. (Westwood 2013, 56.)

Westwood (2013, 57.) states that there are three main types of strategies: defensive, developing and attacking. Defensive strategies are designed to prevent the loss of the existing customers, developing strategies offer the existing customers a wider range of products or services and attacking strategies are designed to generate business through new customers. After one of these strategies is chosen, the individual strategies concerning the marketing mix, product, price, place and promotion should be listed. (Westwood 2013, 127.)

The marketing strategies and tactics for Narvan Markkinat are presented in the marketing plan. However, one of the main strategies was to utilize digital and social media marketing more than before. The marketing tactics to be used were listed and included several marketing tools from traditional and digital marketing. In addition to this, the plan included the schedule for implementing the marketing activities.

Budget

Usually the budget section of a marketing plan defines the reserved sum for marketing activities. However, since the budget was not considered an essential part of the marketing plan for Narvan Markkinat, this section was kept short and not specific. During the previous years the organizers of the event had decided that a specific budget was unnecessary. Therefore a specific budgeting was not regarded as essential when drafting the marketing plan for Narvan Markkinat 2015.

4 Results

The aim of the thesis was to create a functional and realistic marketing plan for Narvan Markkinat 2015. This aim was fulfilled since the devised marketing plan eases and helps to structure the marketing activities of the event and serves as a guideline for the organizers. However, the early formulation of the thesis means that the plan is missing some important details since the

organizers have not yet made final decisions concerning all marketing activities. Therefore, the plan requires updating on the organizer's behalf as the process proceeds, the event gets closer and decisions are made. Even though the plan is not as detailed as the author would have hoped, it serves as a necessary, easily updateable foundation for the organizers. In addition to this, the plan ensures that all the members of the marketing committee, as well as other organizers, are on the same page when it comes to marketing and that they know the general direction of the marketing efforts as well as gain a better understanding on the current situation of the event through a situational analysis covered in the plan. The marketing plan also ensures that all the organizers are aware of the main objectives of the event and that they can, therefore, work towards achieving them.

The theoretical basis of the thesis was successfully selected in a sense that it helped in the drafting of the marketing plan and brought out new insights. It gave new ideas for the marketing activities and helped to take into consideration marketing channels of which the author had little or no knowledge before. This was true especially with digital marketing one example of which is search engine marketing. The author would not have taken it into consideration if it had not emerged during the desk research. The theoretical basis also helped in drafting the marketing plan itself and gave an idea of what a marketing plan is and what it should include. The author had no prior experience in drafting marketing plans which made research on the subject even more important. Furthermore, the event did not have an existing marketing plan either, so the process was started from the beginning. In the end, the marketing plan for Narvan Markkinat 2015 included a situational analysis, target groups and segmentation, marketing objectives as well as the strategies for achieving those objectives.

The drafting of the marketing plan resulted in a better understanding of the event's current situation as well as its objectives and suitable marketing activities. During the SWOT analysis it became clear that the event had several strengths. The greatest one of them was its long history and beautiful surroundings that suit this type of event perfectly. Even though the event had some weaknesses as well, including being organized solely through voluntary work, it still had great potential to increase its recognizability as well as the

number of visitors. Even though the event pursues to attract visitors from the whole of Finland, the main target groups of the event are people living in the nearby area, families with children from the Pirkanmaa area as well as people living in Pirkanmaa, Satakunta and Häme who are interested in markets and tradition. The main objective of the event is to gain more visitors and profit which is pursued through successful marketing. Therefore the marketing of Narvan Markkinat uses several different marketing channels from traditional and digital marketing and utilizes social media marketing more effectively than before.

Since the next edition of Narvan Markkinat is organized in July 2015, the results of the marketing, and the true benefits of the marketing plan, cannot be evaluated and analyzed in this thesis. Therefore, it is the organizers responsibility to evaluate these matters after the event and reflect on whether the goals were reached, and which parts of the marketing were successful and which ones were not. After this, the organizers can utilize the marketing plan also for the future editions of the event through updating to suit the future needs and situations. Therefore, this thesis and the compiled marketing plan can be utilized in the future as well and has created a long-term benefit for the event.

5 Conclusion

The marketing of events mainly follows the same rules as marketing of any other product or service. It is crucial to know the product completely, set appropriate objectives and to carefully consider the best strategies to achieving the goals in order to succeed in the marketing. The qualities of the product determine the best channels of marketing within traditional and digital marketing. The drafting of a marketing plan then helps to compile all the necessary information into a cohesive whole, and ensures that everybody is on the same page and knows where the organization is heading. This was achieved through the thesis and the marketing plan for Narvan Markkinat, since it helps the event to structure the marketing activities, and serves as a guideline ensuring everyone involved know what the objectives are and what to do to achieve them.

Even though the main objective of the thesis was reached, the marketing plan did not turn into as detailed as hoped for. This was due to the fact that the plan was drafted so early that not all marketing decisions were yet made. Therefore, the plan requires updating from the organizers' behalf as decisions are made. In addition to this, the results of the marketing and its success cannot be analyzed in this thesis since the event does not take place until the summer of 2015. However, the thesis has created long-term benefit for the event and its organizers, since it can be used for years to come for future editions of the event as well, as long as it is kept up to date.

The process of drafting the thesis proceeded quite quickly and without any major problems. The process was started when the first meeting with the event organizers was held in the beginning of October. During this meeting, the subject of the thesis was decided on and the author was able to hear more about the event itself as well as to see the surroundings where the event is held. Another meeting took place in mid-November where most of the marketing committee members were present. During this meeting, the author was able to get answers to many questions that had arose during the thesis process and ,for instance, a SWOT analysis was made as well as the marketing activities to be used and marketing objectives were set and considered during the meeting. The cooperation with the event organizers worked quite well since the author had one contact person to work with, and it was easy to get answers to questions that arose. During the process, the importance of efficient communication became clear, since in the beginning, the author had very little knowledge on the event and what the organizers' plans were.

Altogether the process was quite fluent, but some aspects of it worked better than others. The author was able to receive answers to questions and e-mails quickly since the organizers' were genuinely interested in the thesis and were actively involved in the process. The cooperation worked quite seamlessly and the meetings played a big part in this. There was also a myriad of information about the event and village of Narva, which gave a better understanding of Narvan Markkinat and its history. Furthermore, the thesis is actually helpful for the organizers and is used as a guideline for the marketing. However, neither the author nor the organizers had previous experience on marketing plans

which meant that the process was quite confusing in the beginning and was completely started from the beginning. The early formulation of the plan also meant that a lot of details were not yet decided on. Moreover, the author was not in any other way involved in the organizing of the event, which made acquiring information harder and resulted in having to ask a lot of questions and not being able to proceed with the plan by one's one. The fact that the author did not live in the area made it more difficult to arrange meetings with the organizers and made it impossible for the author to attend all marketing meetings.

Some development ideas can be gathered based on the issues that caused problems during the thesis process. First of all, it is advisable that the writer of the marketing plan is tightly involved in the organizing of the event from the beginning until the end. If the writer's only task is to write the plan, it is very difficult to get a comprehensive idea of the event, its qualities and program which automatically makes the writing of the plan more difficult. In addition, if the writer is involved in organizing from the beginning until the event is held, the plan can be made more detailed and comprehensive. If the plan is drafted closer to the event and the writer is involved until the event itself, it is possible to analyze the results of the marketing and the plan as well.

Overall the thesis process went fluently and no major problems were encountered. The marketing plan helps the organizers to achieve their marketing goals and ensures everyone involved are aware of the objectives and strategies for achieving them. The success of the marketing and the true benefit of the plan cannot be fully seen until the event is held, but, nonetheless, it will guide the organizers to the right direction and create a base for the marketing of future editions of the event as well.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Marketing Plan for Narvan Markkinat 2015