

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences  
Unit of Tourism, Imatra  
Degree Programme in Tourism and Hospitality Management

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**Increasing International Tourism Attractiveness  
of Companies in Central Karelia with Product  
Development**

Thesis 2015

## **Abstract**

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Increasing International Tourism Attractiveness of Companies with Product Development, 41 pages, 1 appendix

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The purpose of the thesis is to increase the attraction of the tourism companies with product development in the area of road 9 in Central Karelia. The thesis will find out the needs and resources of the businesses in product development. It also evaluates the core tourism products of the area which could be interesting from international tourists' point of view. Finally it will give a few suggestions based on these findings on the possible tourism products that could be developed for the international tourists in the area. In other words the thesis attempts to give an idea of how the product development could work in the Central Karelian area.

The information for this study was gathered from interviewing three case companies in Central Karelia in 2013 with a semi structured theme interview, literature, the Internet, newspapers and tourism brochures of the destination.

The results show that tourism industry in Central Karelia is still to develop, and improvement concerning information flow is needed. The area has great tourism possibilities; however, cooperation between the companies and municipalities has to be increased in order to create more packages and improve the tourism attractiveness of Central Karelia. Perhaps a company that would specialize in creating and selling tourism packages for international tourists is an opportunity to facilitate the product development process.

Keywords: tourism, destination attractiveness, product development, cooperation, international tourism interest

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Introduction .....	4
2 The research method .....	8
3 Tourism attractiveness .....	9
3.1 International tourism interest in North Karelia.....	10
3.1.1 Central Europeans .....	10
3.1.2 Russians .....	12
3.2 Weaknesses and threats .....	13
3.3 Possibilities.....	14
4 Tourism product.....	15
4.1 Three approaches .....	16
4.1.1 Supply side approach .....	17
4.1.2 Customer- oriented approach .....	17
4.1.3 Destination management organization approach.....	18
4.2 Product development .....	19
4.2.1 Product formula .....	19
4.2.2 Memorable experience .....	21
5 Company resources and cooperation .....	22
6 Data collection .....	24
7 Results.....	25
7.1 Customers .....	27
7.2 Resources for tourism product .....	28
7.3 Central Karelia as a tourism destination .....	29
7.4 Cooperation.....	30
7.5 Product development .....	30
7.6 Future .....	31
8 Package suggestions.....	32
8.1 Fall and spring animal observation tour package .....	32
8.2 Wintertime handicraft tour .....	34
8.3 Summertime water theme holiday .....	35
9 Conclusions .....	36
10 List of references .....	39

## Appendices

Appendix 1

Questionnaire

## 1 Introduction

Central Karelia is a sub-region of North Karelia that consists of three municipalities Kitee, Tohmajärvi and Rääkkylä and it is located beside the border of Russia in Eastern Finland.

Central Karelia as a tourist destination has a lot of potential. The nature is variable with swamps, wilderness and hills that are characteristic to Northern Finland. There are also features from the Finnish Lakeland and countryside. The lakes are clean and the region is scarcely populated which enables the possibility to offer the tourist peaceful holidays in the nature.

Central Karelia is distinctive from the southern border land areas because of the rugged and hilly landscape that is characteristic to North Karelia. The hilly landscape can be experienced for example when driving the road nine to Niirala border crossing point there is a magnificent view over the woodlands from the top of a hill after passing the Tohmajärvi center.

There is also the river Jänisjoki which provides facilities for activities such as canoeing and fishing. The river has some rather easy rapids that are suitable for example for first time canoeists. The river flows into Lake Ladoga. Before the river crosses the Russian border in the village of Värtsilä, there are beautiful rustic landscapes with fields and well-kept farms that are worth seeing.

In the winter time there are great possibilities for activities such as snowmobiling because there are excellent routes along which the snowmobiler can enjoy the beautiful and variable landscapes. It has been said that the snowmobiling routes of Central Karelia are among the best in Finland and can compete with the snow mobile routes of Lapland. (Kiteen Aimo 2010.)

In winter there are also good skiing, skating and snowshoeing facilities and in summer there are many kinds of activities varying from swimming and horse riding to different kinds of events such as folk race events and music festivals. Families with children can also enjoy a day in Kitee zoo or in Aquapark.

There are also good amount of lodging companies in Central Karelia and the accommodation possibilities vary from hotel rooms and farmhouse

accommodation to summer houses and camping sites. The area offers also restaurants that can be found from the municipality centers of Tohmajärvi or Kitee and also restaurants that are located further away from the center. The food varies from traditional Finnish food to pizzerias.

There are also program services providers that can take tourists for example for a snow mobile safari, paint balling, canoe trip, snow-shoeing or fishing. Kiteen Aimo which is located at the airfield of Kitee offers the surroundings for many hobbies such as flying in a sailplane or shooting.

There are also various art galleries and handicraft shops such as Galleria Savipaja- handicraft shop and Puun Sielu- gallery that can offer a touch of culture for the tourists. In addition there are interesting museums that are worth to visit in the summer. For example in Tohmajärvi there is the power plant museum in Saario which is a nice experience also for the fresh water landscapes.

Moreover what makes Central and North Karelia's culture special is the traditional poem singing. Elias Lönnrot the author of the national epic Kalevala gathered some of the poems for this piece from Central and North Karelia. For instance in Kitee there is a house called Juhanantupa that was built to represent the Kalevala tradition and because Lönnrot once traveled there to collect hunting and animal-themed poems from poem singer Juhana Kainulainen.

The tourist route Runon ja Rajan- tie was created to represent the nature, the war history, the orthodox traditions and the poem. The route starts from South Karelia and ends in Lapland in Salla. (Via Karelia 2013.)

A representative of Karelia Expert Jaana Nykänen indicated that Central Karelia has a great potential as a tourist destination because of the hospitality of the locals, the nature and the war history. However, the challenge has been bringing the services together and being able to find them from one place. (Tourism info meetings 2013.)

According to a survey conducted by the regional council of North Karelia in 2011 in Niirala border crossing point among Russian travelers, the respondents indicated that they would like to have more different kinds of excursions,

information about services and destinations, more good quality hotels beside the border, information about shops and their selection, health services, car repairs, zoo and gyms in North Karelia.

In addition, the road 9 business development project conducted a survey (2012) among travel agencies and tour operators in Finland and in Russia. In the survey they were asked about their interests in Central Karelian tourism. The results showed that tour operators most often were looking for activities in the nature, canoeing services, horse riding, winter time activities, cultural attractions and theme tours. Moreover they were interested in spa and waterpark services.

Hence, as the list indicates the tourists and the tour operators mentioned they wanted to have more services that actually already exist in North Karelia. As a result the marketing information has not reached the Russian tourists well enough. It would be important to strengthen the information delivery because the lack of information leads to the fact that booking the trip to Central Karelia is not easy. (Niirala 2011.)

Strengthening the information delivery becomes even more important as the number of Russian tourists is rising throughout Finland. In the year 2012 there were 1.5 million border crossers in Niirala, 45% of them having Russian citizenship. The number of border crossers had risen from the previous year by 15 %. (Finnish border control statistics 2012.) Moreover in order to prevent the Russian tourists escaping to other areas than Central Karelia it is important that there is enough information available about the area and its services for them.

In 2014 Russians were the biggest tourist group in Finland. The biggest groups of other nationalities coming to North Karelia are from Germany, Sweden, Estonia, Netherlands, Switzerland, France, Italy, Great Britain and USA with more than thousand overnight stays per year. (Karelia expert 2014.)

This thesis was developed based on the need to improve the information delivery about the tourism services in Central Karelia. The thesis aims to raise the awareness of the potential that Central Karelia has from the tourism point of view by creating a few proposals of tourism products that could be developed

for international tourists. These tourism products are product packages that include accommodation, activities and food for one price.

Product packaging brings several advantages for both tourists and service providers. For the customer a packaged product saves time on the destination research, purchase process and it also reduces the price risk. For the service provider the product packaging increases the selection of products, prolongs the length of stays and increases the revenue. Moreover the packages are easy to sell and promote to tour operators and travel agencies. (Kolb 2006, pp. 182-184.)

The international tourists and Russian travelers are the target group of these packages. It can be assumed that the same packages can be targeted to all the tourists coming from abroad without considering the nationality of the tourist. As tourism is a constantly growing industry and people are seeking more and more different kind of tourism destinations and experiences, there can be a good chance to find a certain flow of tourists from not only Russia that can be interested in Central Karelia.

The thesis was done as a part of Central Karelia's Development Company's (Keti Oy) business development project ('Ysitien yritystoiminnan kehittäminen') in the area of road 9 from Niirala to Onkamo and in the rest of Central Karelia region. The project started in the beginning of April 2012 and it lasted until February 2015. The project was run by Birgitta Väisänen. The road 9 project finished before this thesis was released. Even so the results of the thesis will be shared with the interviewed tourism companies.

The aim of the road 9 -project was to find ways to benefit from the increasing flow of border crossers and customers, find out preconditions to build up new businesses, find investors, and promote business premises and plots. The desired results were emerging of new businesses and jobs, strengthened cooperation between companies, economic benefits for the community and increased turnover and knowledge for the companies.

The tourism point of view was important to this business development project. As it was discussed with Birgitta Väisänen the main objective of this thesis is to benefit the tourism companies in the Central Karelian area.

Essentially the thesis generated the tourism package proposals based on the needs of tourism companies. However, as these packages are established for international tourists it is important to think what kind of attractions and activities would be interesting from the international perspective. The pull factors or in other words the attractiveness factors could be Finnish nature, lakes and peace.

In general product development requires an idea, plan, testing, commercialization and an evaluation for improvement. This thesis however focused on idea production level. The product ideas are presented to case companies and they can evaluate and perhaps implement the ideas.

## **2 The research method**

The research is a qualitative study that aims to examine the basis and challenges of product development in the companies of Central Karelia. Furthermore it gives a proposal how the tourism attractiveness can be increased in the area from the international point of view.

The theoretical part introduces the important definitions and the information was collected from literature, brochures and internet. Furthermore I participated in tourism info meetings organized by project road 9 in 2013 so the information shared at these events will be used in the thesis. Furthermore observation was used as a research method when I travelled to meet the interviewees.

The empirical information was gathered from interviews with three case companies in Central Karelia. Based on the gathered information the main tourism products will be analyzed and two to three package proposals will be introduced.



### **3 Tourism attractiveness**

The key points that make Central Karelia attractive were already mentioned in the introduction. Therefore in this part the interest of international tourists towards the area and its threats and possibilities are in the focal point.

First it is necessary to know what kinds of other basic elements are involved in tourism destination development. Destination's internal qualities are the key aspects in tourism development. The premises for the development are the attractiveness, infrastructure, accessibility and services of the destination. (Kauppila 1994.)

Attractiveness therefore can be considered as one of the most important factors in tourism development. The destination and their images attract the tourist to pay a visit. In leisure tourism the single most important reason why tourists come to the destination is that the tourists desire to experience attractions that the place has to offer. (Cooper et al. 1998.)

According to Cooper et al. (1998) a common feature of tourist attractions is that they are shared with the host community. Tourist attractions can be divided into nature attractions, cultural attractions and attractions developed by people such as tour organizing.

Tourists can for example be appealed by the destination's active sports environment, unique nature, safety, sunshine, inexpensiveness, cultural activities, sightseeing, events, different culture and cuisine, and uniqueness of small towns or villages (Woodside & Martin 2008).

Kauppila (1994) states there are three factors that have effect on the tourism destination development. First the destination is affected by the demand that is strongly dependent on for example tourists' personal preferences, income, age, lifestyle or education and the changes in these features. The individuals define the demand based on their personal preferences. In addition the political and economic situations in the world affect the demand.

The growing number of Russian tourists in North Karelia has indicated that the destination is considered attractive. According to Kauppila (1994) if a

destination enjoys tourist flows the area is attractive from the tourism point of view.

### **3.1 International tourism interest in North Karelia**

Different cultures prefer different types of holidays. For instance tourists coming from Germany tend to come in the summer and book summer houses beside the lakes, the British tourists like activity holidays, the French and the Dutch like touring holidays and the Russians prefer short holiday packages. (North Karelia tourism strategy 2007.)

This chapter defines tourism attractiveness in general and more specifically what makes Finland and North Karelia attractive from the international viewpoint in order to find out the premises for tourism development in the area.

International tourists view a destination in a different way because the environment is completely new and that is already a new experience for them. Therefore it is important to acknowledge the factors of attractiveness that affect the tourist's experience.

#### **3.1.1 Central Europeans**

Overall the nature as a pull factor was important for tourists from Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, France and Spain. It was reported that the most popular summer activities among international tourists was fishing, hiking, picking up berries and mushrooms, bicycling and canoeing. (Kauppi 1996.)

Finland's strengths as a nature based destination are clean and unpolluted nature, endless amount of forests and lakes, wilderness, accessibility, snow and the number of activities. The supply and variety of nature tourism products in Finland are relatively good in comparison with other European competitors. According to foreign tour operators Finnish tourism products are well competitive in price and quality. Finns are also considered friendly and hospitable. (Kauppi 1996.)

Nature has also been one of the favorite subjects in tourism articles in international journals about Finland and North Karelia. The Daily Mail (2013) introduced North Karelia as an unknown winter wonderland that is a perfect place for magical Christmas holidays. The pictures in the article gave an idea of a holiday in Finland as a place to have a fairytale-like adventure, try activities such as snow shoeing or ice swimming and afterwards enjoy a hot chocolate somewhere warm. In the article reindeers were also part of the interest. The author of the article visited Koli in North Karelia.

The Spanish newspaper El País (2013) promoted North Karelia as an area where the wild breath of taiga can be experienced with forests and lakes beside the Russian border. The newspaper also wrote that there is a possibility to see bears safely from camouflaged observatories in the forest. There is a wilderness center that organizes these kinds of experiences in Ilomantsi 60km north from Central Karelia.

Furthermore a tourism article in a French newspaper Le Monde (2009) headlined North Karelia as the land of frozen lakes and snow scooters. The article took an interest in the possibility to walk on the frozen lake and doing activities such as skiing and snow shoeing in the untouched snow. In addition the article introduced the snow scooter which is a more unknown snow instrument. Essentially snow scooter is a normal scooter however the wheels are replaced by skids. The article was written in January in Koli as well.

The article in Le Monde had a more detailed view on Finnish culture. In the article attention was paid to the Finnish cuisine such as Karelian pies, smoked perch, mulled wine and Finnish alcohol specialties such as vodka, currant and cranberry liqueurs. The French readers were introduced also to other traditional Finnish elements such as the cup “kuksa” sculptured from a piece of wood and Finns putting candelabras in their windows during Christmas time to bring light to the darkness.

Evidently the articles shared some common interests. Winter was a uniting theme in these articles and they all mentioned that North Karelia is located beside the Russian border which is an exotic advantage for the area. Finland’s war history was also mentioned in the French article.

The articles took also an interest in seeing wild forest animals such as the wolverine, wolfs, lynx and the bear. However it has to be taken into consideration that a chance to see one of these animals in the nature is small and the possibility to see the animals have to be organized specifically with guidance. The products should be created sustainable, safe and with respect to the nature. (Pakarinen & Myyrinmaa 2009.)

The British article introduced a more fairytale like perspective of a Finnish holiday and the French article emphasized more the Finnish traditions such as ice fishing or winter swimming and specialties in cuisine. It is important to notice that different nationalities have different preferences in view of tourism attractions.

### **3.1.2 Russians**

However the tourists from neighboring countries have a slightly different approach why they come to Finland because they share the same climate and know Finland a little bit better than for example Central European visitors.

Russian tourists are the biggest tourist segment in Finland. Russians are interested in travelling to Finland because they think Finland has great shopping opportunities and they value Finnish products and quality. Finland is a convenient destination for Russians because of the close proximity and they can come to Finland by car. (Malankin 2012.)

However Russian visitors also believe that Finland is a good place to spend holidays. For example during Christmas time, which in Russia is celebrated one week after the New Year, many Russians come to enjoy their holidays in Finland.

Russians are interested in packages that are filled with activities and many options. The activities could possibly be something more special and unexpected such as midnight sky watching with a telescope. They also think that a good holiday consists of good food, drinks and entertainment such as musical performances. (Malankin 2012.)

Malankin (2012) also states as tourists Russians are spontaneous and curious. When they come for a holiday they want to forget the everyday life and enjoy. It is important that they are provided enough information about the activities and services in their holiday destination so that they can freely choose their activities on the spot.

### **3.2 Weaknesses and threats**

The attractiveness of Central Karelia as a tourism destination encounters some challenges although it can be considered that the destination has everything it needs to become popular among tourists.

Furthermore the unpredictable weather can cause cancelling of plans and can retract tourism attention. Central Karelia is a scarcely populated and remote area and the tourism infrastructure is still developing. The distances inside the destination are rather long and the services also scarcely placed.

For Central Europeans the destination can be hard to reach. The Joensuu airport is fifty kilometers away from Tohmajärvi, the train connections are rather good. However, the Kitee train station is not located close to municipality centers.

For Russian tourists it is easier to find to Central Karelia because they are usually travelling by their own cars. However, since the area is more rural, they rather travel to bigger towns for better shopping possibilities and do not stay in Central Karelia.

Shopping tourism is one of the main reasons why Russian tourists travel to Finland and it can be easily affected by economic problems such as the change of ruble exchange rate.

Foreign tour operators and their customers are most interested in areas such as Lapland, Kuusamo/Kainuu and Lake Saimaa area and the reason for this is that these areas have been doing marketing work abroad for the longest time. The tourism image of Finland is based on nature, however the image is too passive. It is difficult for the potential customers to reach the information about activities and tourist products. (Kauppi 1996.)

North Karelia as the most Eastern part of European Union and destination for border tourism have not been the most popular reasons why the tourists are attracted by the destination (North Karelia tourism strategy 2007).

Kauppi (1996) stated that in tourism business uncontrolled tourist flows can cause environmental problems which can lead to damaging the ground resources.

### **3.3 Possibilities**

In a tourism success enquiry of North Karelia conducted in 2003 it was found that the popularity of summer houses and nature trails has experienced steady growth. The interest towards the area's water tourism, orthodoxy impact and rural tourism has not enjoyed positive or negative change in the popularity. The musical events have however experienced a firm growth. (North Karelia tourism strategy 2007.)

Kuenzi & McNeely (2008) have stated that nature based tourism is the fastest growing sector. The reason why nature has become an important element in traveler's holiday choices can be because an increasing amount of people are living in urban areas disconnected from nature. Therefore it can be expected that more and more of these people are seeking to find a different holiday experience away from crowded cities and finding tranquility for example in the countryside. Steering this trend to Central Karelia more efficiently would bring more tourism income.

Cooperation between Finnish and for example Russian Karelian tourism organizations and companies could create more tourism possibilities to these areas. A holiday tour could involve a day trip to Russia to Valamo monastery. In addition the train connection between Joensuu and Petrozavodsk can increase the tourism attractiveness. (Tourism info meetings 2013.)

According to Pasi Immonen from Karjalan Helmi (Tourism info meetings 2013) it would be necessary to create more tourism packages for winter time. Tourism's seasonality can cause variation of tourism numbers which can therefore create fluctuation of income for the companies. In order to secure tourism companies'

stability of income, tourism packages also for other than summer time should be developed.

#### **4 Tourism product**

Koutoulas (2004) views that tourism product has two levels. The first level is the total tourism product that is the combination of all the elements that the tourist experiences during the trip. These elements can be for example the atmosphere, safety, cleanliness of the environment or the attractiveness. The second level consists solely of the components that the customer has paid such as accommodation, activities, food and transport.

Tourism product is a service product. It is intangible and produced and consumed simultaneously. It satisfies the needs of the tourist and it is a transaction between the service provider and the tourist. Tourism product is difficult to standardize because of the uniqueness of interaction in the service process. The demand and supply also vary depending on the season. The typical elements of tourism product are the destination attractiveness factors, the services, the accessibility, the tourism image and the price. (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, pp. 10-11.)

The literature in English language emphasizes the role of destination management organizations in tourism product development. The focus is on promoting the tourism destination as the tourism product. The tourism product development can be viewed as developing the image of the destination for example through promotion or branding.

Most of the tourism product development studies have been more focused on developing the destinations, resorts or sites as a total tourist product and only a few researches have studied the tourism product or service development in companies. Especially the small businesses have been left without attention in the sense of research development. (Komppula 2001.)

As the goods and services are often paralleled in different contexts, in the product development perspective the goods-based industries have been studied more widely than the service based industries. There is little knowledge

of how the services should be developed. In fact, many models of service development have been based on the goods development models. It was reported that the service organizations in the United States tend to improve their services, however they do not use any formal process for new service development, and that these service development practices are least emphasized in these service companies. (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons 2000.)

Similarly Komppula (2001) found out after interviewing two case companies in tourism that very often new products start from clients' inquiries or travel agency asking for some new activities for groups that already have tried everything. The new product idea might also come from the fact that the company wants to offer something new for their existing clients. After the company has figured out an idea of a new product, what they basically do is blueprint it, test it and sell it.

The study indicated that after the companies created their new products it is not usual to be able to keep the created product from the testing point to the end as such. The products have to be flexible to clients' wishes and sometimes if the product is popular enough it may create a new product line. (Komppula 2001.)

It was difficult to find a model that would explain how to build a tourism product in English literature so therefore I have used a book in Finnish about tourism product development by Komppula & Boxberg (2002) which has often been used in theses about tourism product development. The model explains specifically what kind of components a successful and a sellable tourism product needs.

#### **4.1 Three approaches**

In this chapter tourism product is explained more specifically from different viewpoints. I find it essential to explain the perspectives of the companies, customers and destination management companies because the thesis is closely connected with these three different perspectives. Then again as the English literature emphasizes the importance of tourism management companies it might bring some wider insights to this subject.



#### **4.1.1 Supply side approach**

The producers are the most important piece in tourism product development because the product would not exist without them. The producers most often are considered to be the SME's. Furthermore the tourism product is a composite of the products that for example the SME's produce. They supply the facilities and equipment in the service process and they receive a compensation for their work. (Cooper et al. 1998.)

There are many different types of tourism companies. Komppula & Boxberg (2002, pp. 13) state that the key elements in the approach for the supply side are in the business concept which includes information about why the company is in the market, what is the main product, what kind of needs it wishes to fulfill, to whom and what are the services that offer extra value and benefits to the customers. Most often the company has one certain main product that they produce to bring benefits for the customers. The idea can be for example producing accommodation services or bus tours. The main product can have some contributory service such as food service. The product is influenced by the physical surroundings, interaction, customer participation and the accessibility of the product.

In this thesis the company viewpoint is especially important because they were the ones to be interviewed and in order to be able to create tourism packages their opinion had to be heard.

#### **4.1.2 Customer- oriented approach**

In tourism product development the customer orientation is important. The products are designed according to customers' wishes. Most often the tourism products are popular among groups such as companies, school camps, pensioners, congress tourists and foreign travelers. (Kirjavainen 1997.)

The customers view the tourism product as an entity that starts when the tourist books the trip and finishes when he or she returns home. The tourist evaluates the quality of the experience with all the elements combined and one component of the entity can affect positively or negatively the entire trip. The

customer evaluates the destination's attractiveness based on what the tourist already knows about the area and what he experiences during the trip. (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, pp. 8-12.)

The service is always a subjective and individual experience for the customer, so the company can only provide the necessary facilities in the generation of the service to satisfy the customer's needs (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, pp. 21).

It is essential to remember who is the customer and how they can be satisfied when creating the holiday packages.

#### **4.1.3 Destination management organization approach**

I wanted to include the destination management organization approach in this part because the packages will be created from the DMO viewpoint. Ketä and the road 9 project which the thesis was originally working for can be considered to have a similar standpoint as a destination management organization although they are not specifically such organizations. I wanted to introduce the term DMO because it helps to describe what kind of interests the destination has as its whole. Furthermore in English literature the term is widely used and the description can be useful in this research.

Destination management organizations often view tourism product from a wider perspective. For the DMO's the destination is the tourism product. These organizations obtain information about all kinds of tourism services in a destination, promote the destination and they act as an extension for the tourism companies for support. Furthermore they can also act as an intermediary between the company and the tourist. (Wang et al. 2011.)

The tourists have a wide range of destinations to select and the suppliers and DMO's are trying to obtain attention from the competitive tourism market (Wang et al. 2011).

Keti in cooperation with the municipalities of Rääkkylä, Kitee and Tohmajärvi and Karelia expert, which is an actual DMO, are in charge of tourism management in Central Karelia. The destination management organization was the standpoint I wanted to take when creating ideas of the tourism packages.

## **4.2 Product development**

Tourism product development can signify either developing new products or improving the existing products. The aim of the product development is to find ways to satisfy customer needs even better which means that the needs of the customer are in the focal point in the development process. (Pesonen et al. 2000, pp. 35.)

The term productization occurs in tourism product development context. Whereas product development implies to any new or existing product that can be developed, productization has a more specific meaning. In English literature the term is not well noted, however in Finnish studies the term is more common.

According to Komppula & Boxberg (2002) productization signifies that the attractions or possibilities a destination offers are transformed into products that have a clear value producing core and price. The goal of productization can be for example producing memorable experiences for the customer.

Therefore in productization to be able to create images of memorable experiences and guarantee certain types of service processes where the customer's experience can be born, a service system that enables the memorable experience to become the motive and goal of the customer has to be created. (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, pp.93.)

### **4.2.1 Product formula**

The product consists of an attractive product idea, the description of it, successful service process and trustworthy and functioning service system. In the planning phase it is important to think about the value that the customer receives from using the service and also analyze the needs and participation of the customer in the service process. (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, pp.97-116.)

Tonder (2010) states that customer viewpoint is the premise for productization. The customer appreciates that the product is easy, accessible, fast, affordable and good quality. Moreover, it satisfies a problem that the customer has. The trendiness and the versatile content of the product become topical when these

components have been fulfilled. Furthermore, realism is necessary because it creates a steady foundation for the future.

The most efficient way to develop a product is to modularize it. In this way the product will become easier to comprehend for the buyer and the service provider. The modularized service package has been portrayed in figure 1. Building different modules facilitates the controlling of the product entity. It is important to notice that modularizing over-enthusiastically might cause shattering of the product entity, therefore while combining the product it is important to remember what is the core, the different versions and the service family of the product. (Tonder 2010.)

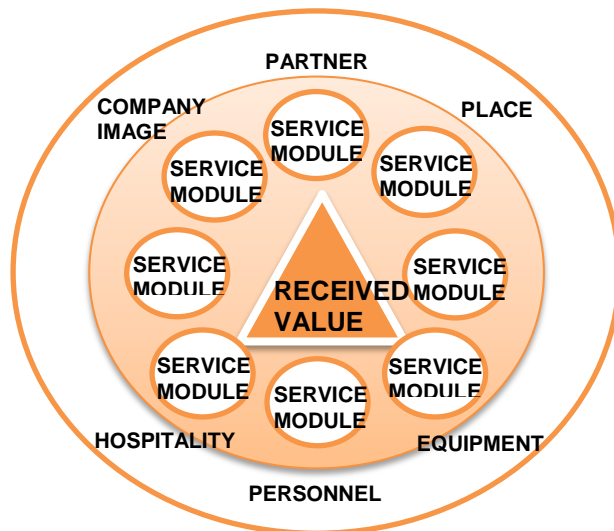


Figure 1. Tourism service package (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, pp. 25)

The service package consists of modules and in the center of the modules is the value received from the package. The modules can consist of skiing, having coffee beside the fire, visiting local art galleries, sauna and massage. The value can be for example hearty Christmas experience in winter atmosphere in peace and serenity. Around the modules is the service environment where the tourism transaction occurs. These are the transportation, hospitality of the host community, personnel, company image, partners, equipment and place.

Tonder (2010) states paying attention to the production processes plays even more significant role in product development than the detailed content. The customer often interacts with more than one company during their journey and

the more participants are included in the service production the more important becomes the definition of the different participants. In order to provide a service that is at the same time interesting, functional and profitable it is vital to be able to see the product from the commercial and process based viewpoint.

It is important to be clear with the product leaflet and the sales presentation. The contents of the product have to be presented as accurately and transparently as possible. It is essential to let the customers know exactly what kind of services they are buying so that they feel safe knowing they get their money's worth. (Tonder 2010.)

Komppula (2001) states the products that sell well are simple. The idea can be for example making coffee and pancakes by the fire on the winter night. The study emphasized the importance of customer service more than for example visibility of the company in the markets or the price of the product. The customer needs to remember that he or she had a good time and having the best customer service enables that.

#### **4.2.2 Memorable experience**

The concept of memorable tourist experience is challenging to define within the tourism product. For example in Finnish and Swedish there are specific words for it, however, English language does not recognize it. In tourism industry in Finland the concept is widely used and therefore it is essential to discuss it. The insight on the topic brings an in depth view on the tourism product that is created in this thesis.

Memorable tourist experience is an English translation of the Finnish word 'elämys' and as such it gives a rather good idea of what the tourism product desires to create in the mind of the tourist. The key point is to find out what the ingredients are to give an unforgettable feeling from the tourist experience. (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, pp. 26-30.)

Memorable tourist experience is a tourism product the main purpose of which is to produce certain feelings that can be created through new experiences. There are different ways to produce memorable experiences, for example by creating magic by telling stories of the place. In comparison to a normal experience the

memorable tourist experience is based strongly on emotions and it aims to generate a more individual experience for the customer.

The topic was chosen because it gives an idea how and what kind of packages should be developed in Central Karelia for international guests. Furthermore, the concept assists to comprehend that tourism product can be more than a basic provider- consumer relation and give a better insight on tourist's perspective during the holiday. In addition I wanted to emphasize the meaning of customer value in product packaging because it helps to tie the product together.

The significance of memorable tourist experience in tourism attractiveness is a key aspect. In today's world the memorable experiences are formed more and more through tourist's own active behavior. (Kauppi 1996.)

Producing these kinds of experiences has been very common in nature tourism and tour operators have also been interested in organizing them. The theory about customer- oriented tourism product can be applied in the context of producing an unforgettable experience for the customer. (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, pp. 26-30.)

## **5 Company resources and cooperation**

In tourism product development the resources of the companies are in focal point. To achieve tourism development in an area, the stakeholders such as tourism companies have to be consulted to identify the available resources. After the resources have been recognized, strategic planning exercises such as product development can be created. (Moscardo 2008.)

Komppula & Boxberg (2002) report the company resources are the tangible and intangible assets which include the staff skills and knowledge, the equipment, the place and the cooperative partners and their resources. In this part I have discussed cooperation more specifically.

Occasionally the companies produce the packages by themselves and neglect the opportunity to network with another company. Cooperation is a great

resource for the company to construct more innovative tourism products. The companies have more and more been trying to utilize this resource to find new product entities. (Komppula & Boxberg 2002.)

Networking between companies in product development most often creates the most successful tourism products. Cooperation reduces the work load of companies because they do not have to create the product by themselves. (Kirjavainen 1997.)

Each entrepreneur produces one or several modules in the product development process and combining these modules the actual product is built (Kirjavainen 1997).

Furthermore in the formation process of the tourism product and destination image the cooperation between companies and other organizations connected to tourism becomes prerequisite because small businesses do not have the same possibilities to marketing as the large businesses. The tourism product development is enabled when the businesses can specialize in different fields and the development of the area can be secured. The more cooperation the destination has, the more it can be seen in the image of the destination. When the cooperation is constructive, the different services of companies support one another. (Komppula 1996.)

Cooperation can exist between organizations and companies or between businesses working in the same field. A research conducted by Kalmar University in Sweden presented that the cooperation between businesses and other organizations has been little and difficulties have been discovered in finding mutual goals and strategies that satisfy each of the parties. (Komppula 1996.)

In addition the study conducted by Komppula (1996) indicated that there is a significant necessity for increasing cooperation, however, there has been a lack of implementation. The study indicated also that the companies use cooperation in terms of economizing and specializing. Moreover, cooperation is seen as a help to control the threats of environment changes.

According to von Friedrichs Grängsjö & Gummesson (2006) the most successful cooperative networks of businesses based their realization on three different factors. First the study showed that the network had defined clearly a mutual goal based on common good and individual interests. The social dimension was identified as an important part of the cooperation. The members of the cooperative group have to feel comfortable to share ideas and problems in physical face to face situation. Second important factor was to balance the cooperation and competition. The biggest competitors were felt to come from other destinations. Therefore it was considered that the joint effort to encourage visitors to come to the destination also would provoke competition within the destination. The third important factor was to create an action-oriented atmosphere since the implementation most usually has been proved to progress either too slowly or not at all.

As there were also a handicraft company interviewed in this thesis, it is important to discuss what kind of effects it can have on the cooperation. The handicraft companies can gain great benefits from networking with tourism companies. The handicrafts businesses can benefit for instance from certain groups that are interested in nature and culture. Handicrafts can specialize to serve the tourists or it can be one part of the tourism product. However, the products that are built around handicrafts require subtlety and good taste so that the product makes sense. (Vehkasalo 2006.)

In this study networking between companies becomes one of the key aspects because packaging the tourism product can be built through cooperation. In this research the cooperation will be presented as imaginary which however could possibly result in actual cooperation to create a tourist product.

## **6 Data collection**

The empirical data was gathered from the tourism companies in Central Karelian area. The case companies were chosen because they receive income from tourism, their locations are relatively close to one another, they share common interests yet each of them offers their own unique range of services.



The questions in the interviews were open-ended and flexible. The reason why this type of interviewing method was chosen is that the interview style enables the interviewee to tell about his or her understandings, experiences and opinions more profoundly than in survey-based approaches. (Byrne 2004; Silverman 2006, pp. 114.)

The interviews were conducted in the spring 2013. Two of the companies were interviewed face to face at their premises and one company sent its interview answers by email because the face to face situation was not possible. The answers were analyzed in a qualitative manner and based on these findings conclusions and the package proposals were completed. The proposals are based on the pull factors of the area and the resources and the needs of the companies.

During the interview the companies were asked about their current situation, customers, resources, cooperation and future plans. They were informed that the package proposals are developed based on their needs and capabilities concerning packaging and that there are going to be two to three proposals especially designated for international customers.

## **7 Results**

It was important to find out the current position of the companies to understand better their interests and help to direct the interview. The aim was to find out some basic information about the company. The companies were asked about their current situation, how they have evolved, what their main services are, how many employees they have and how many years they have been functioning.

The companies are representatives of SME's and the employees in these companies are the entrepreneurs themselves. Altogether there were one to two workers per company. The companies receive their income from tourism at least partially.

The first company is a newly found Hotelli Joki located in beautiful rustic landscapes beside the river Jänisjoki five kilometers away from the border

crossing station of Niirala. It was founded in 2013 and it has seven rooms in total and twenty eight bed-places. The hotel offers catering, conference and banquet facilities, laundry service and bar. They also have a sauna and a retail jewelry selling point. They provide an art exhibition in the hotel lobby from promising artists.

The second company is a housing company Ellilän matkailutila which is also located six kilometers from the border crossing station. The company offers bed and breakfast type of accommodation in peaceful surroundings in the village of Kaurila in Tohmajärvi. The company has been operating since 2000 and now after a short break they have continued the business from the beginning of May 2013. The owner stated that they used to organize camps but they do not offer this service anymore. Furthermore they do not produce catering service now as much as before.

Finally the third company is a handicraft company Galleria Savipaja. The company started as a full time business in 2005. The location of this gallery and handicraft shop is in a small orthodox village in Petravaara, Tohmajärvi seventeen kilometers from the border crossing station and sixteen kilometers from the Tohmajärvi center. This gallery offers and it is perfect for visitors to come and enjoy the peace and quiet and handicraft work. It is truly a place to escape from the rush. The company also owns a lean-to and a smoke sauna.

Hotelli Joki is a newly founded business, so their situation at the moment from the part of customers and products is not permanent. Galleria Savipaja is not a full time tourism company and more of a product selling company, however, a noteworthy part of the customers is tourists. Overall the companies were interested in having more tourism guests.

Until today there has not yet been cooperation between companies to create a tourist product; however, there is noteworthy interest towards this kind of project and companies in general in Central Karelia acknowledge the necessity of tourism product development and are open to it.

## 7.1 Customers

The next part focused on the customers. The aim was to find out what kind of customers the companies most commonly receive and what kind of interests they have towards international customers. The entrepreneurs were also asked what kind of customer requests they get.

The companies reported that they receive all kinds of customer groups varying from different age groups to families and couples. All customers are equally important.

The leisure tourists have been the biggest customer group of these companies. Hotelli Joki stated that there have been customers coming for bird watching, incentive groups, and travelers who have come to see their friends and relatives in the area. The hotel also indicated that they also receive local customers for the bar and laundry services. In Galleria Savipaja the biggest part of the customers are individuals and groups. The biggest part of the customers is women.

One of the entrepreneurs stated that it is not always known where the customers have found the information about the company. Most often the information spreads through word of mouth. A large part of the customers is either day trippers or spend one or two nights on the spot. The high season lasts from spring until Christmas. However, in the fall there are some quieter periods.

The companies have received different kinds of product and service requests from customers. For instance the representative of Galleria Savipaja stated that the visitors have been interested in handicraft courses and organizing handicraft courses for children. In the other two companies the customers have been interested in canoeing, catering and accommodation.

The companies have received customers from all over the world. The companies reported that there have been customers from countries such as Russia, Estonia, Spain, Hungary, Japan, Switzerland and Germany. The international customers have been interested in the Finnish nature and the peace.

The Russian tourists were evidently one interest group because of the closeness to the border. Hence the representative of Ellilän Matkailutila stated that they have tourists from Russia more than from any other country. Galleria Savipaja reported that they have had some Russian tourists but their customer segment has not been bigger than that of the rest of the customers. The owner of Hotelli Joki stated that the Russian customer group is their main target group and they wish to receive more Russian guests.

The companies were also interested in receiving customers from other countries. The companies indicated that for example Central European customers could be an interesting customer group. However, the nationality of the customer did not seem to have an important role in the business. The representative of Hotelli Joki indicated that their primary customer groups for marketing are Finnish and Russian customers but in the long run they are willing to widen the target audience to Europeans as well.

One of the main aims of the thesis is to raise awareness of Central Karelia among international tourists, therefore it was important to discuss whether they received international customers and from which countries. It was important to recognize that there exists international tourism interest towards the area and that there is a potential to receive even more international tourists.

## **7.2 Resources for tourism product**

The interviews indicated that there were variable skills such as handicraft skills, catering skills, massage, language skills and guiding skills. The main resources that Galleria Savipaja can offer are the handicrafts made from clay. In addition, the owner reported that she could possibly guide some groups how to work with clay during a one-day course just to let the guests feel it and get a little creative. Additionally the companies own different kind of equipment, for example Ellilän matkailutila offers the possibility for canoeing, snow shoeing and bicycle renting and there are binoculars possible for use in Hotelli Joki.

### **7.3 Central Karelia as a tourism destination**

Furthermore the companies believed that the pull factors of the place were closeness to the border, nature, disparity, tranquility, river Jänisjoki, canoeing, fishing, lakes, orthodox traditions, the hilly landscapes and war history. Then again there were factors of attractiveness that were connected just around the place where the company operates. Ellilän Matkailutila is located beside a school museum of Kaurila where there is a possibility to see old school equipment from the beginning of twentieth century. Hotelli Joki shares the same yard with a mill museum and in addition there is a hydroelectric power plant museum located in Tohmajärvi not too far away from the hotel.

As I drove to interview the companies I noticed that the areas where the companies operate differ from each other quite a lot even though the companies are located in the same municipality. It was surprising how intricate and diverse the nature and geography is there. The fertile soil around the banks of the river Jänisjoki has generated agriculture in the area and therefore the rural landscape is a common element especially in Värtsilä where Hotelli Joki is located. Furthermore Galleria Savipaja locates further away from the main road and in order to reach the place the visitor gets to drive along a winding road through the forest and admire the views. Therefore the locations of the companies could be considered as a resource as well when creating tourist products.

Nonetheless the exceptional location is a remarkable attractiveness factor and due to the Eastern influence on the area in the history the area has elements that make the destination stand out from the competitors. For instance the food and religion have been influenced by the East. Similarly the war history of the area brings stories for the tourists to listen. There are many incomparable cultural elements that make the area distinctive from other competing destinations so therefore it would be important to think about also what kind of ideas the unique culture can bring for the tourism packages.

## **7.4 Cooperation**

The case companies stated that they have had plenty of cooperation with different kind of organizations and companies. They have for example organized events together with village committee and other forms of cooperation with the municipality, museums, church and projects such as the road 9- project. The companies reported that if they do not have a service that the customer requests they will contact a company that has the service in order to enable the customer a good service experience. The companies were willing to advertise one another.

The companies indicated that the cooperation has gone well in the past however there could be more cooperation. The companies suggested for improvement that there should be some kind of system where all the companies and services of the area can be found and that cooperation can be developed through product development.

Hence product development can be a good way for the companies to engage in cooperation. Developing tourist packages would also fill the necessity to be able to find all the services from one place.

## **7.5 Product development**

The companies indicated that they would like to offer the international tourists simple packages related to nature, handicraft or welfare. The entrepreneurs indicated that it is important to combine activities that are similar to each other when packaging the tourist product. The interviews also showed that in product packaging it is essential to highlight the closeness of the border and the nature. The packages could include a war history tour, catering at a village house and canoeing and fishing activities.

The packages should include accommodation and activities and be designed according to seasons. The key is to offer them a memorable experience, for example a winter tourism package where the tourist ski to a lean-to and have a black pot coffee and cinnamon rolls beside the fire in snowy landscape.

The companies have also various handicraft skills so using these resources would be important in tourism package development. For instance accommodation and a handicrafts course could be combined in one package.

A guide who takes the tourist groups for a tour around Central Karelia should be hired. The tourists would be glad to hear stories about the war or other exciting stories while watching the landscapes. A guided tour can be a part of a tourist package.

In the tourism product development it is important to respect the nature and traditional values of the area. The tourism packages have to be created responsibly so that they do not violate any personal property or values of the locals or nature.

## **7.6 Future**

Finally the last part of the interviews discussed the future of the companies. The companies reported that they especially would like to develop their marketing more in the future. One company reported that one of their interests was to invest in target marketing. Another company stated that their signposting beside the road 9 was insufficient so their plan in the future was to improve their visibility for the traffic. The area and its services are unknown to many visitors so therefore it is also important to have proper sign posts so that the tourists can reach the places better.

The companies indicated also that they would like to offer more packages, products and events in the future. One company stated that they are interested in developing nature and recreational program services. For example organizing a welfare event for companies would be one of their interests.

In the last question it was asked what kind of participation the companies wish to have from municipality or projects in product development or in other issues. It would be important if for example the municipality could help with marketing the companies. They also wished for more support and enthusiasm from the municipality. It seemed that the bureaucracy was one of the issues that could be reduced also.

One entrepreneur suggested that there could be a project for designing a tourism package that would be tested and made functional. Then the tourism package could be sold for example to travel agencies or tour operators.

The representative of Hotelli Joki notified that they have in their future prospects to be able to offer the customers a traditional wooden hot tub, handicraft and language courses, a pier and winter swimming possibility in the river.

## 8 Package suggestions

The package proposals have been portrayed in this part first as a diagram and then explained more specifically. The packages have been presented as the customer would want to see the product with a clear introduction and description of the services included.

The packages have been created with international interest in mind. Some of the packages may need some extra cooperation with other companies. Suggestions for further contacts are introduced at the end of each package description. The service modules marked with a star (\*) are services that are not included in the package price.

### 8.1 Fall and spring animal observation tour package



Figure 2. Fall and spring animal observation tour package



The idea of the package is to offer the guests an adventurous experience in the North Karelian nature by going to the forest and seeing wild animals in their natural habitat. There is also a possibility to try birdwatching and observe the migratory birds of spring or fall at Lake Sääperi. The main activity of the package is to observe animals in the nature. In addition, there may be a possibility to spot some wildlife while canoeing on the river Jänisjoki. The package is a peaceful, slow paced and fresh choice for people looking for a different kind of adventure that consists of activities that are suitable for almost any age and any kind of earlier experience that people might have of these activities. Additionally the guests can enjoy smoke sauna at Galleria Savipaja, regular sauna and breakfast at the hotel Joki.

There are also activities that require extra cost such as visit to the zoo, bike tours, beauty and massage treatments and horseback riding. Flights to Joensuu airport and car rental are not included in the package price. With car the guests can tour freely around Central and North Karelia and explore what kind of sights the area presents.

The duration of the package is five to six days. The package is especially suitable for Central Europeans and animal lovers all over the world. The package needs a contact with a guide who can take the guests to the forest and who has some knowledge of wild animals and how to behave in the wilderness. Furthermore bird watching guidance and possibly binoculars are needed.

## 8.2 Wintertime handicraft tour



Figure 3. Wintertime handicraft tour

The package combines handicrafts, relaxation and winter. The idea is to provide guests a unique experience in the remote area of Central Karelia in a crispy winter atmosphere. The holiday offers the opportunity to tour at the art galleries and handicraft shops and participate in a handicraft course with professional guidance. The guests can prepare snow sculptures and express their creativity playfully. The guests are provided as a counterbalance relaxation in sauna, enjoy massage or beauty treatments and a visit to a salt chamber.

With extra cost and willingness there is an opportunity to put on the snow shoes and take a walk in the snow and enjoy the wintry landscapes beside the camp fire with a steamy cup of coffee and cinnamon bun in a stick.

The package is suitable for everyone for example groups with special interest in handicrafts or couples wanting to spend their birthday or anniversary in a peaceful yet romantic atmosphere. The duration of the package is four to five days. The flights and car hire are not included in the package price. One's own car or car hire is recommended so that the guests can freely tour in Central Karelia and perhaps pay a visit to national park Koli.

A contact with a company who has a salt chamber service is required. The service will be included in the package price. For instance Riihivalkea in Kitee offers salt chamber service.

### 8.3 Summertime water theme holiday



Figure 4. Summertime water theme holiday

This water themed holiday gives a fresh break for those who long after a cooling escape from the blazing summer sun. The weather in Finland in the summer can be unpredictable but one thing is certain, there is plenty of water around, and lightness.

The package includes a visit to a water mill of Saario where the guests can enjoy the freshness of the running water and beautiful views while having a picnic. This visit will be organized on a day when the rain is not pouring. It is a good activity for the evening.

The guests will be taken for a canoeing tour on river Jänisjoki. The river does not have many difficult rapids so therefore paddling on the river suits for everyone. The guests can have a stopover by a camp fire place and have lunch in between canoeing.

The guests can experience the Northern lightness and spend one night in a summer house beside the lake and relax in Finnish style that includes swim, sauna and barbecue.

Finally the guests can spend a day in Kitee and visit the zoo with Finnish wild animals and cruise in a boat on the lake Pyhäjärvi. In addition they have a

chance to go to see the historical place in Puhos where the first steam boat was launched in 1833.

The holiday lasts for five days. The holiday offers also possibility for bicycling and walking in the nature trails. The accommodation will be mainly in Hotelli Joki, however one night will be spent in a summer house.

It is recommended that the guests will hire a car. Otherwise there will be some negotiation with a bus company for the transportation which will then add some extra costs to the package price. Furthermore cooperation with Kitee zoo has to be considered for example for special discounts.

## **9 Conclusions**

The aim of the thesis was to show what kind of possibilities there are to still increase the tourism attractiveness of Central Karelia. It was important to analyze what the existing factors of attractiveness are and how they can be attached to the desires of the international tourists. The interviews with the companies helped a lot to understand their standpoint, how the company works, what they want and what kind of troubles they might have. Based on the knowledge that was collected I could find package ideas that could match with the companies' needs and customer needs using the existing material of attractions.

There is still much to be done in order to make the products fully functioning and they do encounter some challenges due to high prices and hard accessibility of the area. However, if the quality of the product matches with the price, the customers are willing to pay for it. The accessibility can be solved by giving a clear description of how to reach the destination or the different modules within the service product.

The accessibility of the product then becomes a challenge. The answers can lie in marketing. There are many travel agencies that present and sell holiday packages on their web pages and it is a great way to communicate with the customer. The prospective holiday packages can be distributed to the travel agencies. Furthermore, promotion in the social media generates also attention

from the customers. Ensuring the good quality of the product is essential in order to effect positively the word of mouth which then stabilizes the tourism flow.

In the interviews the companies indicated that they wished to have more support from the municipality marketing wise. The inclination shows that there seems to be some kind of distance between the companies and the actors of the public sector. The reason can be that the municipality is small and they do not have enough resources to support tourism sector. The companies in Central Karelia usually operate with Keti for support, and Visit Karelia and Karelia Expert are in charge of general promotion of the area.

The key question is therefore who will then be in charge of developing these packages. The tourism companies in this area are small or medium sized and they have fewer resources to build the package themselves. Cooperation with other companies is one solution but which of those companies will be in charge of the package is another question. The burden of promotion and organizing for a SME could be too big.

Therefore the possibility for establishing a tour operating company should be measured. The company would be in charge of designing the packages with the companies, organizing them, marketing, distribution, communicating with the public sector and finding the customers. One of the tasks of the company would be to facilitate the cooperation between companies by acting as a mediator and connection creator.

The company would specialize in reaching the international customers and creating packages according to their taste. International tourists always want to see and experience something that they do not have in their own country but at the same time to a certain extent. It is difficult to concretely analyze whether the international customer wants the same things as their fellow countrymen but some differences can be seen between for example Russians and the French when they travel in Finland.

For instance a product the theme of which would circle around experiencing the midnight sun would not interest the Russian customer because the weather

conditions are more or less the same in Russia so the package would not bring anything new for the customer. Therefore there has to be some subtle changes in the packages according to the nationality. However, the package suggestions in this thesis have been created in a way that is open to all the nationalities and the changes will come later when the target group and the nationality is defined.

The most interesting thing for me in this thesis project was that I got to meet with different parties in the tourism business. I got to interview the companies themselves, work with project road 9 and meet with destination management organization and municipality representatives in tourism info meetings in 2013. Although the thesis took more time than what was originally planned and the road 9 project finalized before the thesis, I am glad that I could be part of it during 2012 and 2013 because the project helped me a lot to gather information and meet with companies, Karelia expert and municipality representatives of Kitee, Tohmajärvi and Rääkkylä.

## Figures

Figure 1. Tourism services package (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, p. 25), p. 20

Figure 2. Fall and spring animal observation tour package, p.32

Figure 3. Wintertime handicraft tour, p.33

Figure 4. Summertime water theme holiday, p.34

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## **Appendix**

### **Company interview**

#### **Yrityksen tilanneanalyysi:**

Mikä on yrityksenne nykytilanne?

Kuinka monta työntekijää teillä on?

Mitkä ovat päätuotteenne ja palvelut?

Ovatko tuotteenne tai palvelunne muuttuneet tai vaihtuneet ajan saatossa?

.

#### **Yrityksen asiakkaat: (Kansainväliset asiakkaat, erityisesti venäläiset)**

Millaisia asiakkaita teillä on?

- Ikä, elämäntilanne
- Vapaa-aika, yhdistykset, työ, incentive- asiakkaita

Ketkä ovat tärkeimmät asiakkaanne?

Onko teillä myös kansainvälisiä asiakkaita? (Jos on, niin mistä he tulevat?)

Oletteko kiinnostuneita sekä suomalaisista että kansainvälisistä asiakkaista?

Onko teillä kiinnostusta jonkin tietyn maan asiakkaita kohtaan?

Minkälaisia tuotteita tai palveluita asiakkaat usein teiltä kysyvät?

#### **Alueen vetovoimaisuus ja Yrityksen voimavarat:**

Millaista osaamista yrityksessänne on? (eräopas, hieroja, kielitaito, ruoka)

Minkälaisia välineitä ja laitteita teillä on käytössänne? (esimerkiksi kuljetusvälineet, aktiviteetteihin liittyvät välineet kuten suksia tai luistimia)

Mikä tekee alueesta jolla toimitte vetovoimaisen? Mitkä ovat paikan kiinnostavimmat tekijät?

Miten niitä voisi hyödyntää tuotepaketoinnissa?

**Yrityksen tekemä yhteistyö:**

Minkälaista yhteistyötä teillä on muitten yritysten, tai esimerkiksi erilaisten järjestöjen tai kunnan kanssa?

Miten mielestänne yhteistyö on sujunut?

Pitäisikö yhteistyötä kehittää? Jos pitäisi, niin miten?

Haluaisitteko lisätä yhteistyötä muiden yritysten kanssa?

**Toiminnan kehittäminen ja tulevaisuus:**

Haluaisitteko kehittää toimintaanne vielä jollakin tavalla?

Minkälaisia tuotepaketteja haluaisitte kehittää kansainvälisille asiakkaille?

Minkälaista osallistumista odottaisitte esimerkiksi hankkeilta tai kunnalta tuotekehityksessä tai muissa asioissa?