



Finding the happy

Viola Nygren

Bachelor's Thesis
Degree Programme in
Experience and Wellness
Management 2015



Author(s) Viola Nygren	
Degree program Experience and Wellness Management	
Report/thesis title Finding the happy	Number of pages and appendix pages 32 + 11
<p>Finding the happy is about researching happiness, emphasis being on the perspective of the experiences. What is a happy experience and what are its elements? And from the viewpoint of experience and wellness service providers; can happiness be produced – or is it something born spontaneously, only experienced “in the moment”?</p> <p>The problems around the topic lie in its vastness – how can we produce solid data of something that is so intangible and so layered in its being as happiness?</p> <p>This is where very critical streamlining of the thesis topic was made; it was then decided to analyse and research the topic through the viewpoint of the experience and wellness industries – and to consider the ways businesses of these fields could benefit from the concept of happiness.</p> <p>A survey on happiness was implemented in order to build the theoretical frames around this thesis. With data from the survey along with extensive research, the elements of happiness were examined and analysed.</p> <p>The emphasis was, throughout the process of the thesis writing, to bring some fresh ideas for businesses, the core question being: Could happiness be a trigger for profit – and not just a side product or end result?</p> <p>In the end part of the thesis, real life examples from the corporate field showcase that many businesses have already harnessed happiness as a key factor of their business planning, branding, ethics and value charts as well as the implementation of their services.</p>	

Keywords

happiness, well-being, experiences, business models

Table of contents

1 Introduction.....	1
2 Experiencing happiness	3
2.1 Research and expert perspectives	3
2.1.1 Happiness or subjective well-being?	4
3 Happiness & its possible value to a business	6
4 Finding the happy survey	10
4.1 The survey's implementation	10
4.2 The segments of the survey.....	11
4.3 The answers	13
4.4 <i>Finding the happy</i> mini-movie	18
5 Discussion	19
5.1 Results of the survey	19
5.2 The elements of happiness revealed?	19
5.3 Evaluation of the thesis process and my own learning	21
References	23
Appendix	25

1 Introduction

Finding the happy aims to dive into a subject very close to us all – happiness.

What does it mean to feel happy? When do we feel most genuinely happy? Are we different in the ways we feel happiness? Can happiness be “produced”, meaning that it is created through actions of planning and delivering? Or is happiness something always born “in the moment”, spontaneously, in a way we ourselves cannot control?

We humans have a tendency to crave more experiences, things and possessions as time goes by. The more we have – the more we want. In today’s modern world, a reality bubbling with experiences and things to see, hear, feel and touch – many of us have become somewhat impatient and easily bored. We have the whole world at our fingertips through our iPads and screens of all kinds and we can do virtual traveling and experiencing wherever, and whenever, we want. What does this mean when it comes to happiness? Are we able to feel genuine happiness through life’s simple moments anymore – or does it all have to be fireworks, extreme happenings and 4D’s now?

These are the issues that the author of this thesis is here to analyse and wonder. Through a survey, video materials and data research, this thesis hopes to shed some light around the concept of happiness. This is done in order to bring some new ideas and thoughts about happiness into the discussions on the theme, and this way also hopefully help businesses visualize and create new services and products; ones that would succeed in the most simple, and yet also the most complicated task of all; in making the customer *happy*.

The author views the task of researching happiness from the viewpoint of service providers, with emphasis on the experience and wellness businesses. From the perspective of a service industry, for example the wellness industry, the question is; what is it that makes our customers happy? And can the knowledge of the factors of happiness be harnessed to bring value to a business?

The planning phase of Finding the happy started in August of 2014. The very first phases included a large amount of brainstorming, followed by active streamlining of the key concepts and finally polishing the main idea into the shape it now has. The part of working with the data, writing and materials be-

gun by the end of 2014 and continued from there, reaching the final phases in August 2015. As a part of writing this thesis, a large number of research materials were studied by the author, countless questions asked as well as experts of the field interviewed.

The work consisted not only of this written part of the thesis, but the author also created a mini-movie out of the hundreds of pictures collected online as a part of the Finding the happy project. These pictures were shared by people who were reached through social media; they shared their “moments of happiness” on Instagram with an official hashtag of Finding the happy (*#myfthpic*). The visual part of the thesis is meant to bring the feeling, *the element of experience* into this thesis. The mini-movie was not made with scientific intentions as it represents the creative side of this work; meaning that all theoretical information of Finding the happy is found from this very paper.

The author begins the thesis with *“Experiencing happiness”* – a part of the thesis where theories and data around the topic of happiness is discussed widely. Experiencing happiness is then followed by the part of *“Happiness & its value to a business”* where real life examples of businesses built around the concept of happiness are examined. After this comes part four which is about the *Finding the happy -survey* and its findings.

The author then concludes the thesis with the parts of *discussion, recommendations* and *learnings from the process*. In the very end references and the part of appendix can be found; the latter of these including many materials that were actively in use in the process of working with the thesis.

2 Experiencing happiness

The topic of happiness - not a simple one to research and analyse. Thus, in order to scale down the never ending width of the topic, this thesis's research looks happiness as something that is seen from the viewpoint of experiencing. Meaning that the main question around this paper is; *What are the elements of a happy experience?* And if we know these elements, do we have a possibility to "produce" happiness? The perspective to happiness as an experience means that the analysis is not done from the viewpoint of an individual and his/hers long-term happiness; the emphasis being more on happy experiences that bring genuine joy and wellbeing to their receiver – whether the experiences have or have not long-term effects. This is done in order to keep the viewpoint of service providers as a core issue.

2.1 Research and expert perspectives

Happiness, a "main character" behind everything we humans do. If we really stop and think about it; we get married, have babies, invest in cars and houses, travel, stay home and relax, exercise – all with the same aim in mind; to feel good, *to feel happy* afterwards. So after acknowledging that happiness is something everyone of us thrives towards to, what does "being happy" consist of?

The current understanding points at five major elements of happiness. "*These are, moving from the most impervious to change to those that are most under personal control: genetic determinants, macro social conditions, change events, proximal environment and personality*" (Csikszentmihalyi, M. & Hunter, J., 2006, p. 89)

To dive into these elements of happiness, I started my theoretical research work by interviewing **professor Markku Ojanen**. Professor Ojanen is a professor emeritus of psychology, a published author as well as an active lecturer on the topic of happiness.

Here is a summary of his description of happiness (Ojanen, 2015):

"Happiness has been described in surprisingly various ways, but one good way of "summing up" the term has been the combination of pleasure and sensibleness. The sole act of pleasure is not enough, since a human being cannot always be in the state of constant pleasure – and moreover, we humans get used to most of the feelings linked to pleasure. Sensibleness is often born from serving others, satisfaction comes from satisfying our own needs. Combining these two creates happiness – both in the individual's life as well as happiness on a more common level."

This perspective has some common traits with **Aristotle's** (a Greek philosopher and scientist from the Antique times) viewpoint on human happiness. According to Aristotle happiness that is purely hedonic is an ideal that he felt was vulgar; this sort of happiness, in his mind, would mean humans are just slaves to their desires. Instead, he felt that true happiness was found in the expression of virtue – in something that is worth doing. (Ryan and Deci, 2001)

Another paper combined this insight of meaningful doing with social interaction as a fruitful combination towards happiness; as self-fulfilment and social relationships were found to have the strongest correlations with the index of general subjective well-being. The study states that: *"... social relationships are probably the greatest single cause of happiness."* (Natvig, Albrektsen and Qvarnstrom, 2003)

It has also been studied that those individuals who, in general, possess more intimate or otherwise higher-quality relationships usually own a greater level of wellbeing. (Richard M. Ryan and Edwards L. Deci, 2001)

So could one happiness-infusing element within a business be as simple as putting extra efforts into the social interactions and their quality? Bill Marriott, an American businessman who is the Executive Chairman and Chairman of the Board of Marriott International, analyzes this very topic to the hotel chain's official blogsite called *Marriott on the move*:

"As we continue to grow, it's important to always thank your customers. A personal touch goes an even longer way in this age of tweeting and texting. Pick up the phone or grab a cup of coffee with a customer. It builds personal bonds that hopefully lead to repeat business...How often do you say "Thank You" to a customer?" (Marriott on the move, 2013)

2.1.1 Happiness or subjective well-being?

Diving even deeper into the land of happiness, it is good to pause for a short second and take note on the term itself - *happiness*. Something that is used in many ways and in various contexts; ultimately meaning *all that is good*.

Researchers in the field have often avoided the term and prefer to use the term "subjective well-being" (SWB), concept visually shown in figure 1. Even so, happiness remains to have such strong currency among the public discussion that it keeps on holding its place as these issues are discussed. Still, it is good to take note that *subjective well-being* is a term used among various researches since they feel it highlights the individual and

his/hers own assessment – instead of the judgements or beliefs of experts. (Diener, Napa Scollon and Lucas, 2003).

Figure 1.

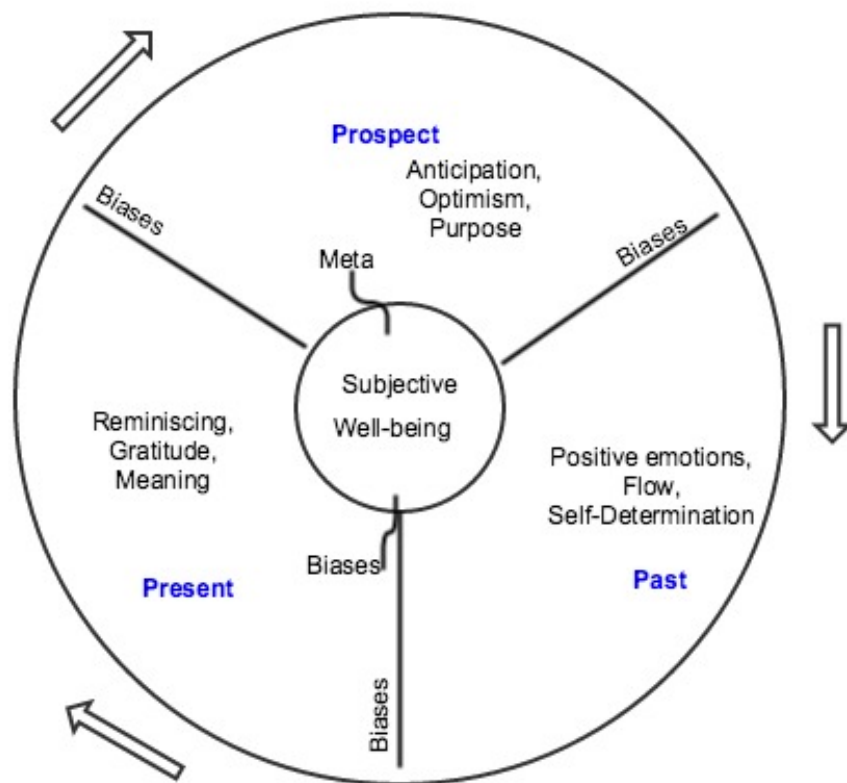


Figure 1. The figure describing the different elements of subjective well-being; the feelings linked to it and also the time settings where these feelings are most likely to occur.

The term psychological well-being is another one commonly used, and very closely linked to happiness. Its facets include: *self-acceptance, the establishment of quality ties to others, a sense of autonomy in thought and action, the ability to manage complex environments to suit personal needs and values, the pursuit of meaningful goals and a sense of purpose in life and continued growth and development as a person.* (Seifert, 2005) *Quality of life*, one more additional term, is also often used various times when topics around happiness are being discussed. (Veenhoven, 2007)

FOUR QUALITIES OF LIFE

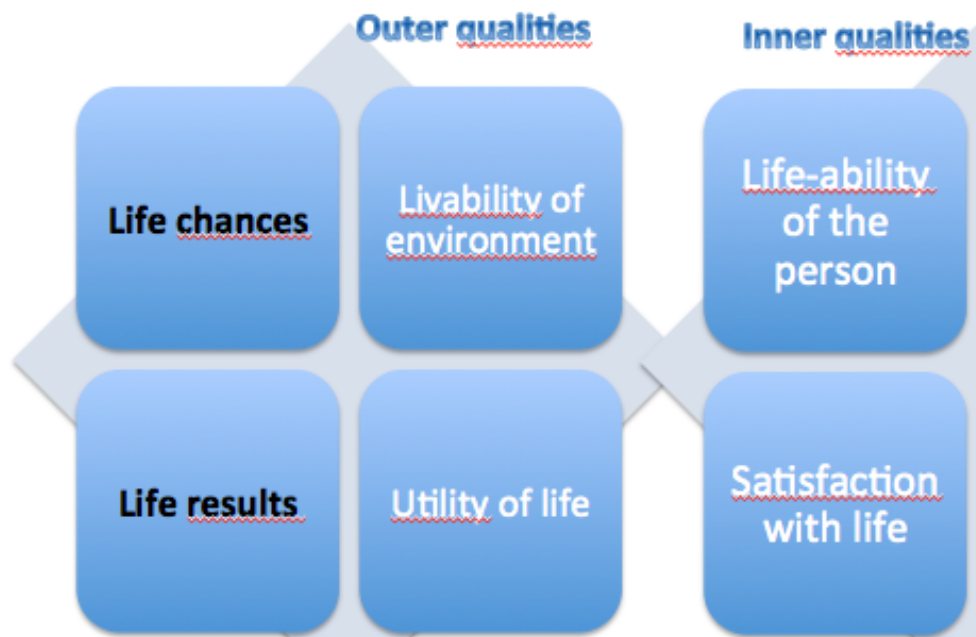


Figure 2. The four elements linked to the term "quality of life".

However, this paper will talk about happiness with its "original" name, in order to stay somewhat streamlined and clear in the contents written– but still, it is good to acknowledge that within researches and discussions, the terms vary.

3 Happiness & its possible value to a business

What happens if the thinking behind the ways of making a business profitable is reversed; when happiness is no longer a result of profits – but more so, a driver? What could happen to businesses if they took happiness as the core content of the way they work?

One of the most successful businesses in the field of experiences, *Disneyland*, has a declaration that emphasizes the service vision of the company. (Worldclassbenchmarking.com, 2015) The vision is about the way the park wants to serve its customers; every single employee's job is to *make the guests happy*. "*We Create Happiness*" is the core sentence of this vision.

Those who don't feel convinced by Disney's happiness-filled values could argue that service providers and businesses of all kinds are not in any way responsible for the feelings of fulfillment levels of their customers. However, since the competition is higher all the

time, and similar business ideas seem to follow one another, there are few things a company can do to stand out. Could happy customers be one of these precious assets?

Todd Sullivan, co-founder of a company called *FlightFox* (a company in the leisure/travel business) said that *“not every business needs happy customers”* (Sullivan, 2015) – not if one-time sales from large markets are enough for the business. He then continued to state the problem in this thinking: this strategy needs large amounts of money spent into it, in order to constantly reach and convert new customers. Sullivan went on to describe the value of happy customers: they return again, they tell about their customer experience to their friends – and this way the business gains organic growth.

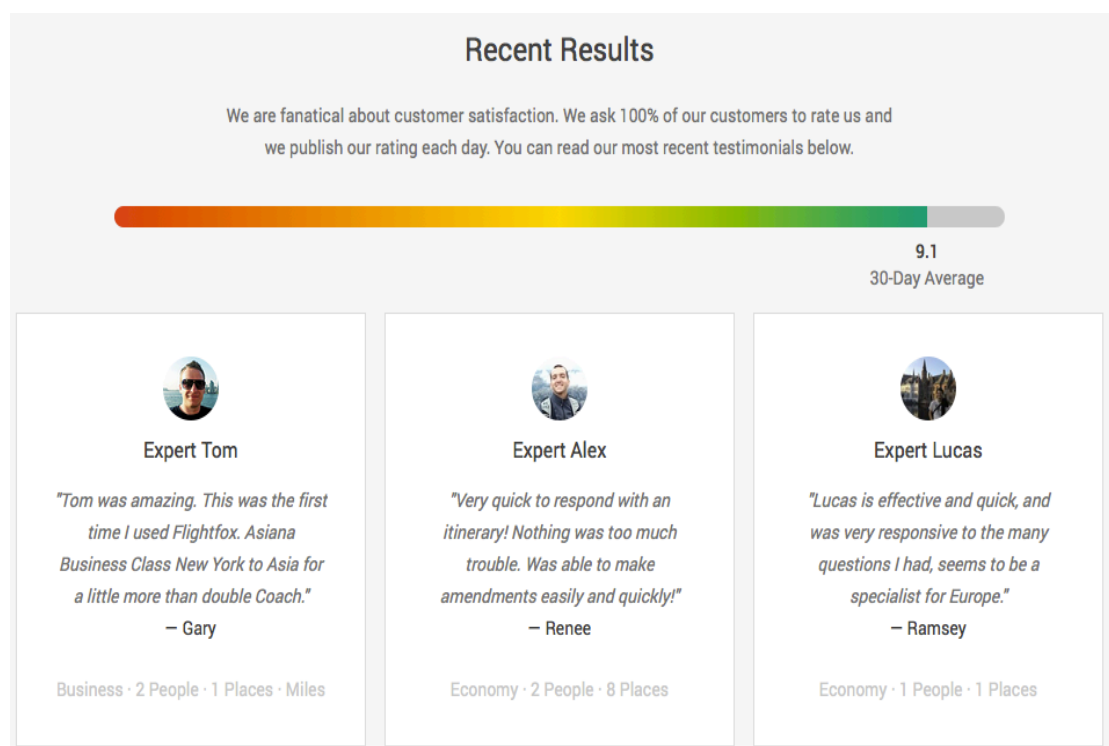


Figure 3. A snapshot from Flightfox's website

Flightfox describes themselves as *“customer happiness fanatics”*. They use various, very transparent, methods of measuring customer happiness and also change the methods used according to times and needs. A picture from the company's website works an example of their very communicative feedback; Flightfox shows that they really care about the way their customers feel by stating their customer feedback result on a big scale. As seen from the picture (picture 1) their customer satisfaction levels are very high.

Another example from the business field is Enterprise Holdings, a Missouri-based rental car company. Enterprise Holdings has grown significantly since its founding in 1957 and

its rental fleet has doubled in the last 10 years, their annual revenue being over 17 billion dollars. Maybe surprisingly, the company leader reveals that the most important bottom line to them is something else than the dollars — customer satisfaction. (Luecke, 2014)

According to Ray Wagner, Vice President of Government Affairs, it is all very simple;

“It’s simple: customer satisfaction is the key to career growth at Enterprise. Using this model, we’ve constructed a leadership team that, on all levels, understands how important it is to have happy customers and — most importantly — knows what it takes to achieve that goal.”

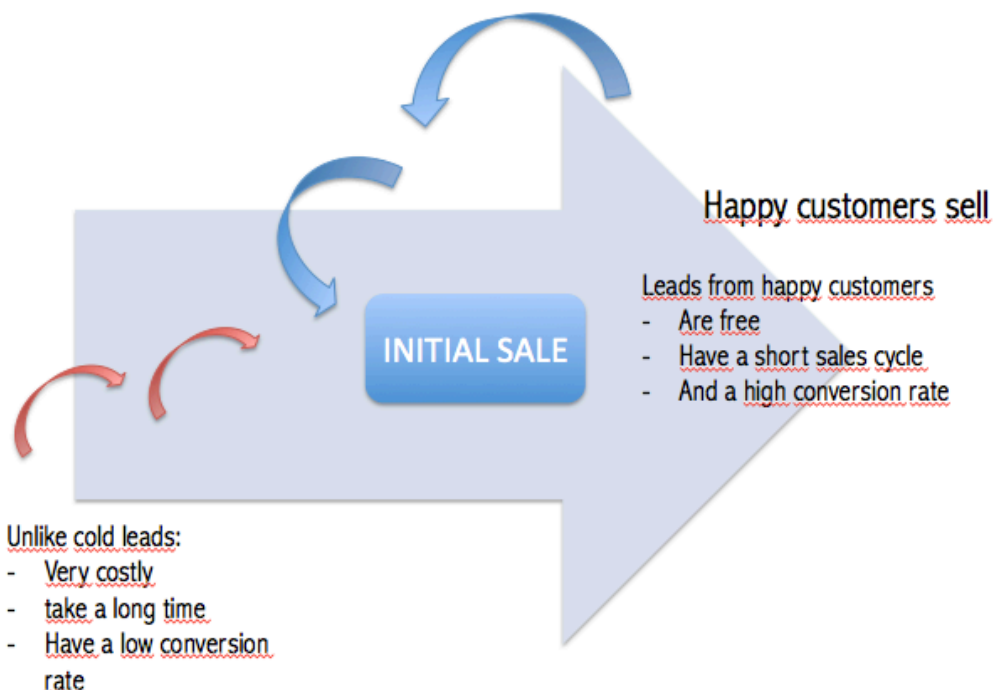


Figure 4. The picture above that describes the value of happy customers which strengthens the notions from the business providers heard from above. (Figure was created on the basis of a picture from Guy Nirpaz's, CEO and Founder of Totango's, slideshow.)

In an article *"How Zappos creates happy customers and employees"*, Tony Hsieh, the CEO and founder of the company shared his views on the topic of happiness as a core element of a business. (Hsieh, 2011) This Las Vegas-based business has created an emphasis on happiness; beginning with a strong belief that the culture of the company is critical in delivering the "wow"-experience – and making people feel good and happy buying from Zappos. Hsieh tells in the article that customers have even emailed the company

saying that they feel Zappos as "happiness in a box". Hsieh himself has been researching the field of happiness and discovered that most people don't really know what genuinely makes them feel happy. In his own research Hsieh found that "happy on the surface" is not the real deal – meaning having a roof over your head and a nice job – it's about elements larger than these, and according to Hsieh these can be boiled down to four happiness-triggers. These are: *perceived control*, *perceived progress*, *connectedness meaning the number and depth of your relationships*, and *being part of something bigger than yourself*.

Hsieh's words are something that could lead an example to many businesses, since Zappos is multi-billion dollar on-line sales company – and through this, surely to be an example on the arena of "happy businesses" that are also very successful.

4 Finding the happy survey

The target of the Finding the happy survey was to create research data for the thesis; something that would give clarification of the elements of happiness; the parts of a happy experience. The questions of the survey were targeted at shedding light on these issues: *sensory experiencing and its link to happiness, people's social activity and its correlation to the levels of happiness, how happy people feel on an average basis, what place equals happiness to people, what words people use to describe happiness and what do people feel would be their perfect, happy day – what would it look and feel like?*

The objective was to collect enough answers so that the data would have some solid ground to stand upon; meaning at least several hundreds of answers. In the end, a total of 606 people answered the survey.

Problems were recognized in the process of creating the survey and collecting the answers. The main issue was the topic and its width; how to create a survey that would manage to really dive into the topic of happiness?

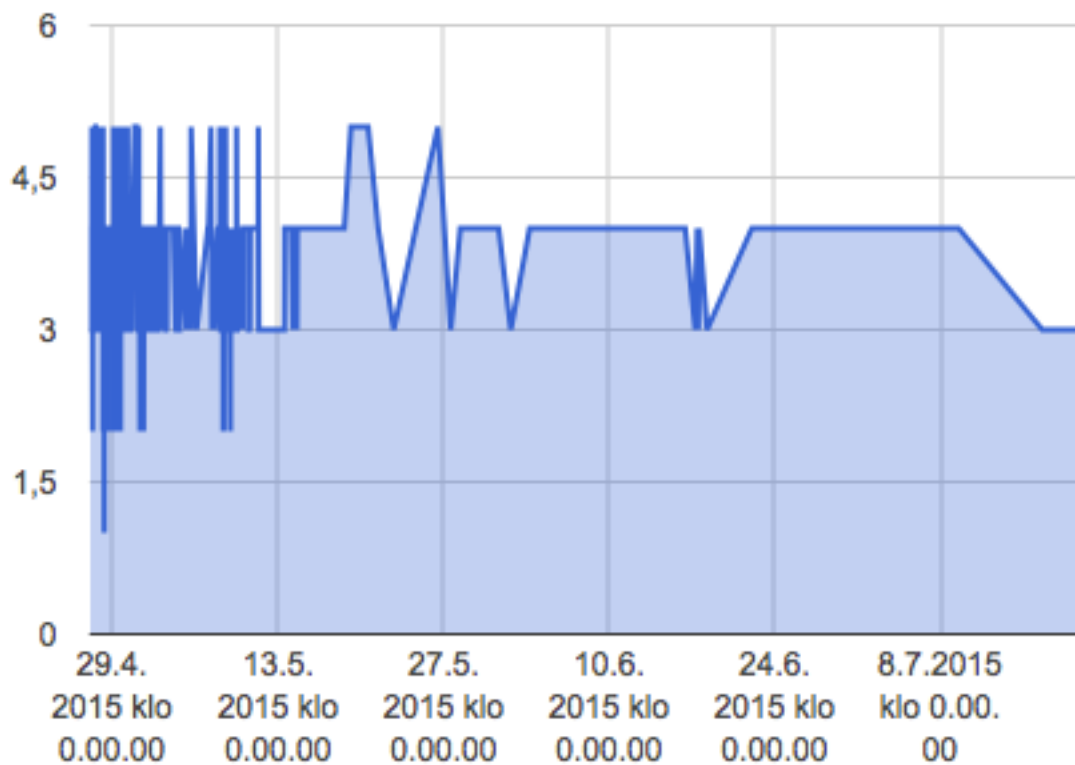
The questions were posed and formed in a way that made it easy for the people to answer the survey; I wanted to "undress" the questions from anything too complicated or unclear - so that people would have time and space to concentrate their minds on their real desires and the way they felt about the questions, about *happiness*.

The feedback from the people who responded the questionnaire was vast and positive. Many respondents gave feedback, saying that the questions posed to them made them ponder and question happiness, about the ways to gain happy experiences and in general; the way they live their lives.

4.1 The survey's implementation

The survey composed of a streamlined set of questions. It was shared online, between the timeframe of April 2015 to July 2015. A large portion of the answers were submitted in April. (table 1)

Figure 6. Timeline of the survey.



All in all, 606 participants took part in the survey. The survey was answered by people from various socio-demographic segments. The majority of the respondents were Finns. The people who answered were reached through social media (mainly Facebook and Instagram), email, my personal blog and my own networks (business and personal).

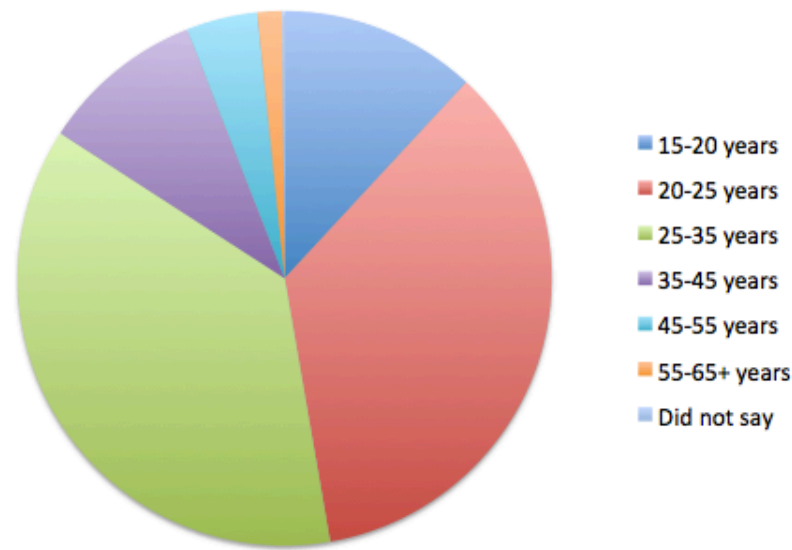
The challenge was found largely in the variables – or rather, in the question of how much all the possible variables effect the variable of happiness. Thus, critical decisions needed to be made in order to move ahead in the research process – since the possible variables around the topic of happiness are almost endless.

Because of this, the questions in the Finding the happy –survey were made coarse, in order to keep the width of all the variables somewhat in control.

4.2 The segments of the survey

Firstly, a question about the age was posed. It became later clear that the majority of the people who took the survey were between 20-35 years old. Below we can see a diagram showing the different age groups and their sizes.

Figure 7. The age segments of the survey



72 of the respondents were 15-20 years old. 214 were 20-25 years old. 223 were 25-35 years old. 60 were 35-45 years old. 26 were 45-55 years old. 9 were 55-65 years old. 1 said "I have no age actually". (table 1)

As 36.8% of the answers came from people that were 25-35 years old and the next biggest group was 20-25 year old participants (35.3%) - the emphasis of the age groups being on the section of young adults is a fact that should be taken into account, since it most likely had an effect on the results of the survey.

It also should be noted that an error occurred in the process of creating the answer options of this specific question; the age group division should have been set to 15-20, 21-26, 27-37, 38-48, 49-59, 60 ->. This error might have had a slight affect on the results, as one could decide what age group (from two options) they wished to belong to.

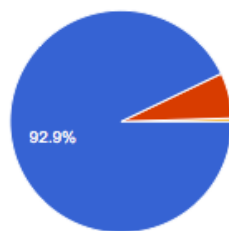
It also should be noted that the survey was implemented in Finland and because of this fact the answers consisted mainly of Finnish people. In fact, 96 % of all the answers came from Finland. Although, there were also answers from these countries; Switzerland (1), Sweden (4), Netherlands (2), China (1), USA (2), Montenegro (1) , UK (2), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1), Dubai (1), Germany (4), Spain (2), Malta (1), Austria (1) and Canada (1).

Majority of the answers coming from one specific culture is a thing that should be noted; it may affect the results strongly as the concept of happiness may vary largely depending on the culture. (Oishi et al., 2013)

The majority of the people who took the survey were women; 92.9% answers coming from females (563 people).

Figure 8. *A large majority of the respondents were female.*

Are you a male/female?



Female	563	92.9 %
Male	40	6.6 %
Prefer not to say	3	0.5 %

After these socio-demographical elements came six questions concerning different elements of happiness. Three of the questions were ones that the participants answered with their own words and the remaining three had multiple choice/numbered scale –answers. *(The survey is found from the section of Appendix in the end of this thesis.)*

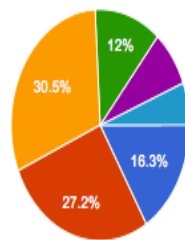
4.3 The answers

The first question was about how one would like to spend a day if they could choose the way that would make them the most happy. Majority of the votes went to the “*spend time with family members*” (30,5%), the second largest portion to “*call a friend and spend the day with them*” (27,2%) and the third biggest group of votes went to “*be alone and do whatever you wish*” (16.3). Reflecting purely these results at hand, it would seem that the social interaction connects to most of us when we think of the “happy elements” that life contains. However, it is good to take note of the fact that almost 100 people who answered this question chose the answer “*be alone and do whatever you wish*”. This is an important factor to notice, especially from the service provider’s point of view, since our clients are all individuals with very complex array of personalities and hence the needs of both extroverts and introverts should be considered when designing products or services.

The common belief that extroverts are happier, since social relationships are a self-evident well of happiness. However, it has been noted that in fact, the behaviour models of what research calls "happy introverts" has been analyzed to be virtually identical with the models of happy extroverts. (Hills and Argyle, 2001)

Figure 9. Situations that trigger happiness; the division of votes.

Which of these situations makes you feel happy the most? Imagine you have a day off... So you choose to:



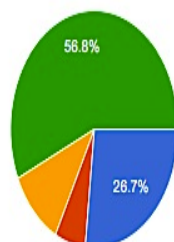
Be alone and do whatever you wish	99	16.3 %
Call a friend and spend the day with them	165	27.2 %
Spend time with family members	185	30.5 %
Do something active/do sports/try something new	73	12 %
Go to a restaurant/cafe/concert/bar	48	7.9 %
Muu	36	5.9 %

The second question was about the situations that trigger the largest amount of happiness (in the respondent's mind) and the multiple choice answers were based on the human senses (table 5). The clear majority (56.8%) chose "*holding a newborn baby / puppy OR hugging a loved one*" as the thing that triggers most happy feelings. This would indicate that the element of touch is something that connects to us very strongly, maybe even more so than other senses.

Studies have shown this to be true as touch communicates even very distinct emotions and does it in a very robust manner. Touch has been documented to communicate at least eight different emotional states, one of these being happiness. (Hertenstein et al., 2009)

Figure 10. Things that trigger happiness; division of votes.

Which of these things triggers the most happy feelings in your mind?



Seeing an amazing landscape (a fantastic looking sunset etc)	162	26.7 %
Tasting an unbelievably well made food dish	36	5.9 %
Hearing a song that you immediately love for the first time	64	10.6 %
Holding a newborn baby / puppy OR hugging a loved one	344	56.8 %

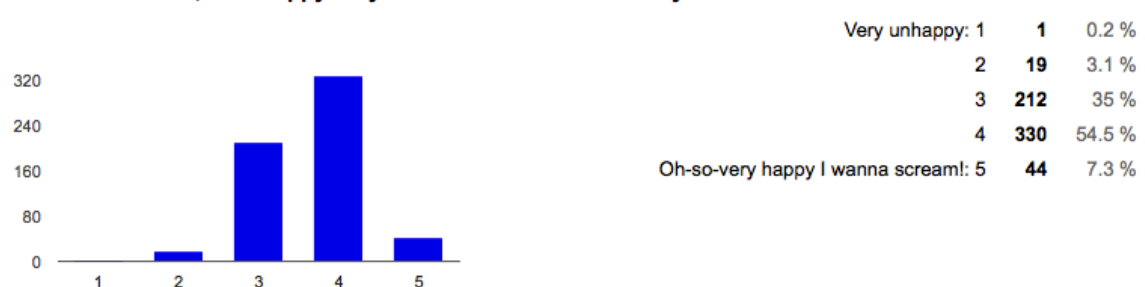
The second largest group of answers went to "seeing an amazing landscape (a fantastic looking sunset etc) – which got 162 votes (26.7%).

It can be noted here that the experience of being in nature is closely linked to this answer; landscape and sunset both are parts of the world of natural elements – and therefore are things that we people seem to link with being “*at peace*” and “*enjoying the moment*” (Finding the happy -survey, 2015).

Research shows that the closeness to nature does in fact increase happiness. Seeing natural elements, experiencing and being active in nature impacts positively on our well-being and the effects, although they occur fast, are long-lasting. (Mielenterveystalo, 2015)

Figure 11. Question of “How happy do you feel?”

On a scale from 1 to 5, how happy do you feel most of the time in your life?



The survey had a question about the way the participants felt about their life, when it comes to happiness. This question went on like so: “*On a scale from 1 to 5, how happy do you feel most of the time in your life?*” Over half of the answers stated “4” (54.4%) – which is happier than average/very happy.

The second largest portion of the votes went to “3” (35%) – which is averagely happy. The remaining votes were split between “5 / *Oh-so-happy I want to scream!*” with 7.3% of the votes, the number “2 / *Slightly unhappy*” with 3.1% and 1 / *Very unhappy* with 0.2%.

This indicates that the people who chose to answer the questionnaire were averagely happy, or more. It could also mean that people who already feel happy in their lives are more active when it comes to participating and sharing view points.

The next question, a question about “a happy place”, went on like so; “*If you think of a place that TO YOU means happiness, what is that place?*”

The answers to this were very multisided – but some common traits were easy to spot; as an example, 160 (out of the 606) people answered "home". This could be seen as people's willing to spend time at a place that creates a sense of safety around them.

Some other words that came up several times within the survey were "nature" and "mökki" (=cabin in Finnish) but the amounts were still small – meaning that the votes were spread out very much into separate things among people and no common ground solid enough was possible to decide upon through this question and its answers. Whereupon the relationship between a place, the elements it is built of and happiness of the individual remains as a topic that would require more extensive research.

The search continues as we move on with the questions, the next one being about the descriptive words of happiness. The question was this: *"If you think of happiness – what words come to your mind?"*

"Love" was the most common answer; as it was mentioned 260 times. Other popular words among the respondents were family which was mentioned 182 times, friends (mentioned 166 times), nature (mentioned 60 times), music (mentioned 60 times), dog/cat (mentioned 36 times) and children/kids (mentioned 25 times).

However, going back to the connection between love and happiness; let's take a short look at love and how it actually affects us humans – and through these affects, make us experience happiness.

Being *in love* increases dopamine production in our bodies; and dopamine is linked to pleasure and motivation; to make us understand this connection and its strength, it can be noted that cocaine also triggers lots of dopamine in our systems. Oxytocin is a substance produced in our bodies through bonding behaviour; so this does not only occur between loved ones. Oxytocin increases sociability and a study done with laboratory mice revealed that the mice's relationships were very disturbed as the oxytocin producing capabilities were shut down from the mice's internal systems. Oxytocin makes us feel pleasurable feelings like relaxation and rightness. (Hanson, 2008)

This indicates that happiness could largely be born, starting right from the level of biology, from an intangible world of people, situations and feelings.

From the perspective of service providers, especially the experience industry businesses, a good look into science could really blow away the future customers – if a business would come up with a "recipe" of services that infused these neurological happenings as a

part of the experience, this would surely be a possible asset of success. This would strengthen the ground below the experience field as the research results have already shown that experiences *do affect our happiness*. And moreover, their emphasis on our happiness is stronger than the effect from tangible product purchases. (Landau, 2015)

As the ending part, the questionnaire posed its respondents this question: *“And lastly, write down a short description of a perfect, happy day – the way YOU would see it.”*

The answers to this question were surprisingly fairly long – even if Finns are known for their minimal use of words. It seemed that people “were lit” as they got to analyse the elements of their own happy day.

A few examples of the answers received (more answers to this question found in the *Appendix*):

“After a long sleep early morning swim at the cottage, easy breakfast, reading a good book in bed, physical working outside, eating and spending time with family, long peaceful sauna in the evening, sitting outside by the fire, good wine and sex with lovely wife.” (Tv-Director, Male, 35-45 years, Helsinki)

“A perfectly happy day would be with no time pressure, so no strict schedule. However to have a perfectly happy day I would wake up very early to get the most out of it. I would eat only healthy food, and preferably try something new. The day with my boyfriend or a close friend. A day with new experiences - visiting some new beautiful place (a town, a park...). Taking time to enjoy the moment - having a coffee with a cake at some cafe with a nice view. Nice dinner out at the end of the day, and come back home with my loved one.” (Pianist, Female, 20-25 years, Utrecht / Netherlands)

“Early walking when birds are singing, nice breakfast with coffee, wondering around with friends, by foot, by car or by bike. Singing and picnicking, every now and then, then in the evening spending time in the garden listening to the voices of the breeze and the birds, looking at the sunset.” (Designer, Female, 55-65 years, Helsinki)

4.4 Finding the happy mini-movie

Since the topic of this thesis is very much a complex one; one that, in my mind, was better to be examined in a manner that is not purely scientific, I chose to add an extra section to the entity of the survey. As a result, I created a mini-movie carrying the same name as the thesis; *Finding the Happy*.

2nd of August 2015 the pictures that people had shared on Instagram, with the Finding the happy hashtag *#myfthpic*, were collected and then later on edited to become the mini-movie Finding the happy. There were 256 pictures shared with the official hashtag. The people who shared their pictures had been informed of the purpose of the picture sharing and about the way their pictures would be linked to this thesis.

The mini-movie was made by combining the pictures of real life situations along with quotes from scientists and experts on the field of happiness.

The movie had its own social media through which it was marketed - in order to gain the visual material for the video, as well as participants to the survey.

(Finding the happy -movie on Youtube: https://youtu.be/ycdl1_KAwK0)

5 Discussion

In this part of the thesis I will go through the results of my survey, discuss suggestions of improvement for future use and the success of my own research process. The end part will go through my own learning process.

5.1 Results of the survey

A critical viewpoint to the survey I created should be considered as one thinks of the public who responded; how truthful is this selected group when compared to bigger masses? What kind of people choose to answer *a survey on happiness* – meaning does the topic automatically scare away those, who may not feel that happy about their lives? And how does this affect the results?

In addition, important factors to notice are also the national differences and the ways culture and a country's wealth and well-being affects an individual and his or her happiness. The relation between nation's wealth and the average levels of people's happiness and well-being is proven to be positive and strong. This is not only a matter of material wealth; nation's wealth is an issue that is reflected to better democracy and legal systems than what poorer nations often have, so the cause of wealth to happiness is seen as indirect. (Diener et al., 1999)

The amount of respondents bring credibility to the survey, as 606 people answered the questions. The fact that creates the challenge when credibility is discussed is the very narrow timeframe of the survey. If more in-depth results were wanted to be collected, the timeframe should be extended in a large manner.

5.2 The elements of happiness revealed?

As it has been described within the contents of this thesis, the elements of happiness are extremely multi-leveled and even the terms within the field vary, hence no strict meaning of "happiness" can be decided upon right here and now – or in fact, probably ever.

The results of the Finding the happy survey did give some insights about the ways people perceive happiness, but as the vastness of the topic is very high-scale – the survey content I would create now, looking back, would have a higher volume of questions. The answer fields would not have so much room for "free writing" – since this made the survey examination challenging.

However, I do feel that something really valuable lies within this thesis. I believe that the way we do business is changing now, maybe more than ever. The world we live in moves with a pace faster than the lightnings and the technology we have at our hands has made it possible for us to dive into a different world through a shiny little screen, found right from our own pockets. This creates a dilemma for businesses everywhere. As people have nearly all the information of the world at their fingertips, and they can see miraculous events and things online – what happens to businesses whose core ideas are now shared on the web, or to experience providers threatened by videos, travel blogs and free Facebook events? And what about wellness businesses – as Youtube is completely filled with beauty and wellness tutorials and videos of all kind – why would anyone even need beauticians, spa therapists or yoga teachers anymore?

This is where the core idea, the juicy question and suggestion of my thesis, comes to the stage. What if there was something that could transform a very plain business to something spectacular, something people would queue to enter and pay high prices to? What could such a marketing asset be, in these days when everything is already "out there"? Could it all be boiled down to an element so close to us all – happiness. Where would our world and businesses go if concepts of working and producing were built on happiness?

I learned through this thesis's research that the *"big, bad corporate world"* is not all black and white; I discovered that there are multi-billion companies, such as Zappos and Enterprise Holdings, that emphasize the soft value of happiness.

As the survey showed – along with the earlier data from the research field – happiness is very often linked to other people, to interactivity; to belonging. This could explain the success of the businesses highlighting happiness as a value since this decision reflects to everything; to the employees, to customers, to partners and to the world around the company. People want to belong to a place where they are cared for and being listened to, where their needs and wishes matter and they have people around them. All these things can be brought into a business if happiness is chosen as the corporate's number one building block.

Everything holds a risk in it; and so does using happiness as a business metric. However, without risk, the world of business would not exist. Risk lies in everything worth trying, in everything new and daring and especially – in the things that could have the power to change things for the better.

5.3 Evaluation of the thesis process and my own learning

During the process of writing this thesis – and moreover, during all the phases of work that happened before the actual writing process, I feel I myself learned tremendously.

I struggled during the various phases of this thesis; not because I was not motivated, but because of the complicity of the work that went into bringing everything I learned, researched, noticed, analysed and collected, together – and creating something with a consistent, clear and informative content.

The choice of the topic was the easiest thing for me. As I created the idea – I was immediately sure; I knew that this was *my topic*. All the processes and challenges that followed the initial idea were multiple; but still, looking back, I would not change a thing.

I have learned a lot about myself, the way I study and learn and most importantly, about happiness.

Initially, beginning this process, I wished to be able to tell people something that would make them think, feel and experience something. This is, after all, the core of my studies. As a student of *Experience and Wellness Management*, the center of my studies is the element of experience - whatever the service industry (wellness, sports, non-profit activity, sales etc.) is, *the experience* of it all is what makes or breaks a business or an organization.

And this is why I wanted to build my thesis around happiness – the ultimate feeling experience, that all of us can relate to. Also, I genuinely believe that building a service around the concept of happiness can act as a winning asset in the marketing and experience/goods production processes of companies.

I believe that if we changed our personal and business mindsets from the traditional thinking around incomes and sales figures to the concept of genuine happiness and happy experiences – this could change the way we work, make ideas happen, serve people and make our way around things in the world.

If happiness acted as the trigger for profit - and not the result, what could happen to our businesses, to our world, to all of us?

References

- Csikszentmihalyi, M. & Hunter, J., (2006). Happiness in Everyday Life: The Uses of Experience Sampling. *Flow and the Foundations of Positive Psychology*, 89–101. Available at: <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/a:1024409732742>. Accessed: December 2015.
- Diener, E., Napa Scollon, C. and Lucas, R. (2003). The evolving concept of subjective well-being: the multifaceted nature of happiness. *Recent Advances in Psychology and Aging*, 187-219.
- Diener, E., Suh, E., Lucas, R. and Smith, H. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(2), 276-302.
- Hanson, R. (2008). The Brain in Lust and Love: The Evolution of Empathy, Cooperation, and Caring – And Graceful Ways to Ride the Roller-Coaster of Romance. 5-8.
- Hertenstein, M., Holmes, R., McCullough, M. and Keltner, D. (2009). The communication of emotion via touch. *Emotion*, 9(4), 566-573.
- Hills, P. and Argyle, M. (2001). Happiness, introversion–extraversion and happy introverts. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 30(4), 595-608.
- Hsieh, T. (2011). *How Zappos creates happy customers and employees*. Available at: http://www.greatplacetowork.com/storage/documents/Publications_Documents/Zappos_-_How_Zappos_Creates_Happy_Customers_and_Employees.pdf. Accessed: 1 May 2015.
- Landau, E. (2015). *Study: Experiences make us happier than possessions* - CNN.com. Edition.cnn.com. Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/02/10/happiness.possessions/>. Accessed 1 Aug. 2015.
- Luecke, J. (2014). *Enterprise Holdings thrives on happy customers, growing new leaders*. Missouri Business. Available at: <http://mobizmagazine.com/2014/11/25/enterprise-holdings-thrives-on-happy-customers-growing-new-leaders/>. Accessed: 17 Jun. 2015.
- Marriott, B. (2013). *How to stay in business, say "thanks"*, Marriott on the move. Available at: <http://http://www.blogs.marriott.com/marriott-on-the-move/2013/10/helping-our-guests-see-the-world-in-a-whole-new-way.html#sthash.nqD76lka.dpuf>. Accessed: 25 May 2015.

Mielenterveystalo (2015). Available at: https://www.mielenterveystalo.fi/aikuiset/itsehoito-jaopaat/oppaat/tietoa_luonnon_hyvinvointivaikutuksista. Accessed 1 Aug. 2015.

Natvig, G., Albrektsen, G. and Qvarnstrom, U. (2003). Associations between psychosocial factors and happiness among school adolescents. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 9 (3), 166-175.

Oishi, S., Graham, J., Kesebir, S. and Galinha, I. (2013). Concepts of Happiness Across Time and Cultures. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 39(5), 559-577.

Ojanen, M. (2015). *Finding the happy*. (email).

Ryan, R. and Deci, E. (2001). On Happiness and Human Potentials: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52 (1), 141-166.

Seifert, T. (2005). - *The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being*. Liberalarts.wabash.edu. Available at: <http://www.liberalarts.wabash.edu/ryff-scales/>. Accessed 15 May 2015.

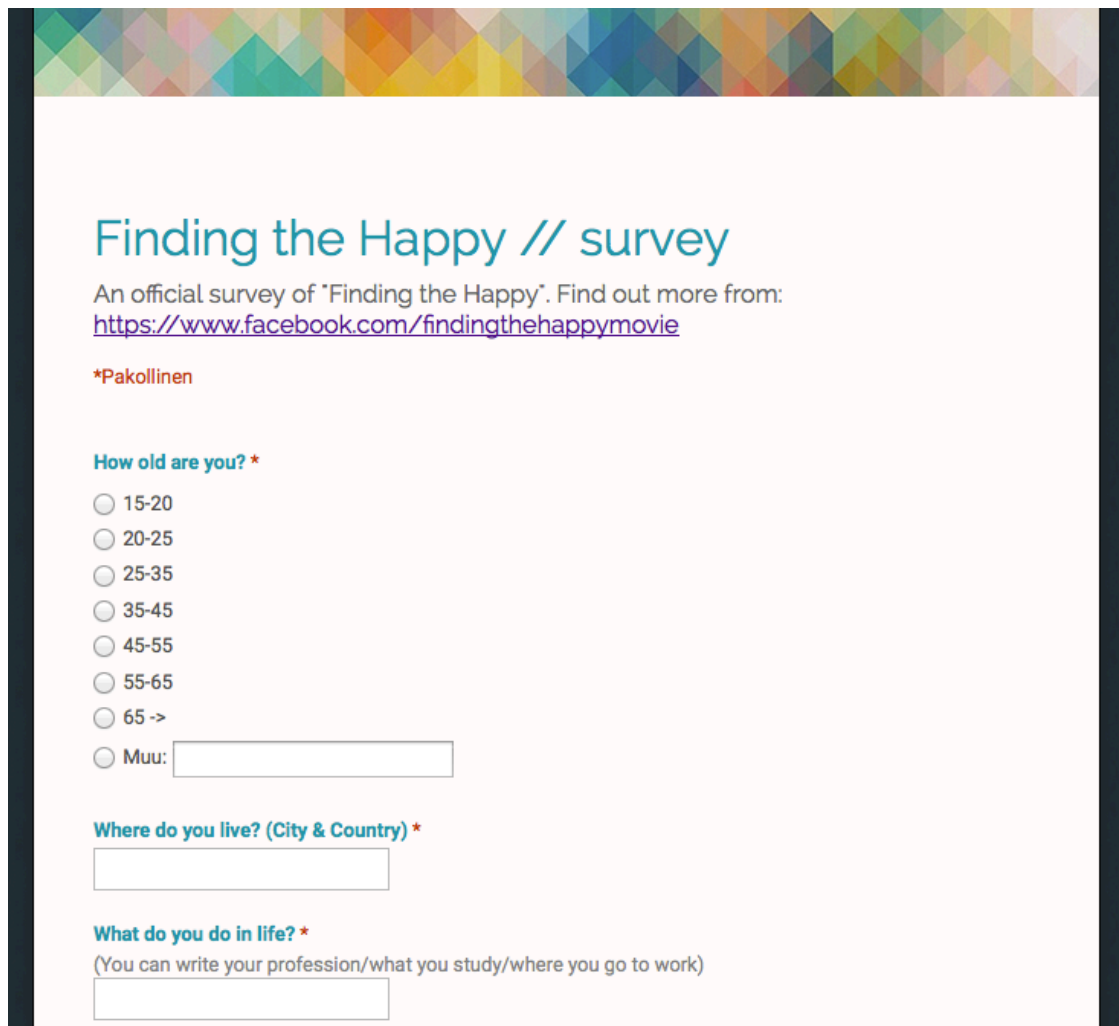
Sullivan, T. (2015). *How We Measure Customer Happiness*, Flightfox.com. Available at: <https://flightfox.com/business/how-we-measure-customer-happiness>. Accessed 14 Jun. 2015.

Wong, A. (2004). The role of emotional satisfaction in service encounters. *Managing Service Quality*, 14(5), 365-376.

Worldclassbenchmarking.com, (2015). *Disney's Four Keys to a Great Guest Experience-World Class Benchmarking | World Class Benchmarking*. Available at: <http://worldclassbenchmarking.com/disneys-four-keys-to-a-great-guest-experience/>. Accessed: 26 Jul. 2015.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Finding the happy –survey form on Google Docs



Finding the Happy // survey

An official survey of "Finding the Happy". Find out more from:
<https://www.facebook.com/findingthehappymovie>

*Pakollinen

How old are you? *

☐ 15-20
☐ 20-25
☐ 25-35
☐ 35-45
☐ 45-55
☐ 55-65
☐ 65 ->
☐ Muu:

Where do you live? (City & Country) *

What do you do in life? *
(You can write your profession/what you study/where you go to work)

Are you a male/female? *

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Which of these situations makes you feel happy the most? Imagine you have a day off... So you choose to: *

- ☐ Be alone and do whatever you wish
- ☐ Call a friend and spend the day with them
- ☐ Spend time with family members
- ☐ Do something active/do sports/try something new
- ☐ Go to a restaurant/cafe/concert/bar
- ☐ Muu:

Which of these things triggers the most happy feelings in your mind? *

- ☐ Seeing an amazing landscape (a fantastic looking sunset etc)
- ☐ Tasting an unbelievably well made food dish
- ☐ Hearing a song that you immediately love for the first time
- ☐ Holding a newborn baby / puppy OR hugging a loved one

On a scale from 1 to 5, how happy do you feel most of the time in your life? *

1 2 3 4 5

Very unhappy ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Oh-so-very happy I wanna scream!

If you think of a PLACE that TO YOU means happiness, what is that place? *

(answer could be: home / a deserted beach / cabin near the seaside / a big fancy dancefloor in a huge party setting etc.)

If you think of happiness - what words come to your mind? *

(this is totally freestyling! so no pressures - write what comes to mind. For example: love, good food, my family, nature, running etc.)

And lastly, write down a short description of a perfect, happy day - the way YOU would see it. *

(For example: breakfast with my family, then running in the woods. After that painting or doing something creative. And in the evening a chilled out evening at a nice restaurant with friends.)

THANK YOU for taking the time to answer.



Appendix 2. Survey answers to the question asking the respondents describe their *"perfect, happy day"*

"My perfect day would start with breakfast and a cup of good coffee together with loved ones. After that going snowboarding or surfing with my best mates. Taking a break to soak in the sun and cooking a nice big meal with friends and family. Listen to them play the guitar and sing and enjoying a glass of wine." (Student, Female, 20-25 years, Helsinki)

"Breakfast with my beautiful wife, a morning walk with the dog, playing football, shopping, hanging out with friends, a rock concert in the evening" (Psychologist, Male, 25-35 years, Helsinki)

"Early morning coffee with my colleagues and clients; hectic mid day working at Marina; afternoon party at the beach with clients and my husband and children; dinner at marina with friends." (Yachting agent, Female, 35-45 years, Tivat / Montenegro)

"Slow breakfast with my partner, long walk in the beach, go to see and experience new city, do something active, laugh a lot, hug and touch to each other."
(Osteopathy student, Female, 25-35 years, Maidstone / UK)

"Sunshine & waking up with loved one. Big brunch made together with dear friends over big table & chill lp sounds, swimming and sauna and laughter all day without a hurry. In the evening outdoor gig & dancing & singing. Own bed."
(Student of Hospitality Management, Female, 20-25 years, Helsinki)

"Travelling to San Francisco with my husband, exploring the city all day."
(Journalist, Female, 35-45 years, Karstula / Finland)

"Slow morning with a big cup of coffee on the balcony. A walk to the sea for a swim. Relaxing at home and perhaps planning my work (yes i am a workaholic) and then preparing for a barbeque with loved ones. drinking cocktails until the sunset..."
(Management Consultant, Female, 25-35 years, St Paul's Bay / Malta)

"Wake up early, take a taxi to airport, take flight to tropic islands, where I meet all my friends. The wind is good and we go kitesurfing in a lagoon where is nobody else. We have lunch all together. We are happy and laugh a lot. In the evening we relax next to the fire, enjoying tropical juices, good music and some nice partying."
(Food blogger & Cook book author, Female, 25-35 years, Espoo / Finland)

"My 28th birthday last october: waking up in a tent on a deserted beach in a small island in Greece. Eating fruit, cheese pie and chocolate for breakfast, then swimming and snorkeling in the shockingly blue, clear sea. Driving to a small village nearby and exploring it's narrow streets, reading a great book in a cafe for hours, having seafood for dinner in a taverna by the sea, driving to another beach, setting up the tent. Spending rest of the evening drinking red wine, talking and watching the starry sky."

(Editor in a newspaper, Female, 25-35 years, Helsinki / Finland)

"Meditate at 5 in the morning, breakfast, work, exercise, time with family, beer."

(Hotelier, Male, 35-45 years, Raase / Finland)

"First I'll wake up and notice how beautiful day is. Good tasty breakfast, doing some sports with my family, movie time, little nap, sauna, hanging out and talking after sauna and ofc good good."

(High school student, 15-20 years, Female, Kitee / Finland)

"Waking up on a boat, hearing the seagulls screaming on a sunny july day. Then eating breakfast on deck with a glass of champagne. After breakfast its time to go fishing and sunbathing, maybe swim a little. Then amazing grillfood eating, and at the evening going to sauna and listening the old finnish songs on radio, and watching the sunset."

(Sales / Interior design, Female, 25-35 years, Turku / Finland)

"Sitting by the sea in Norway. Hugging and kissin my husband on some high cliff and watching the sunset. I love everything clishe."

(House cleaner, Female, 20-25years, Helsinki / Finland)

"Breakfast in a cafe, leisurely sitting on a balcony, walking on a beach, doing a little voluntary work, eating in a small funny restaurant, sitting in a balcony drinking white wine."

(Freelance Musician, Female, 25-35 years, Espoo / Finland)

"Do what ever you want, no plans forehand - just go with the flow."

(Accounter, Male, 35-45 years, Helsinki / Finland)

"Delicious breakfast with my boyfriend after well slept night. After that going to long walk in the woods with my love. Then shower and making lunch together. Later going to movies and dinner. After that making love."

(Kindergarten teacher, Female, 20-25 years, Oulu / Finland)

"Waking up w/o an alarm, a huge brunch like breakfast and a good book. Putting on some light make-up and going out for a cup of tea with my friend. Cooking Indian food back at home and eat it while watching something from Netflix. Long run in the woods and finishing the day with tea and perhaps little online shopping."

(Works in customer service, Female, 25-35 years, Lahti / Finland)

"A long roadtrip with my boyfriend, singing together in the car, tasty and healthy meal and at the evening running alone in the woods."

(University student, 15-20 years, Female, Tampere / Finland)

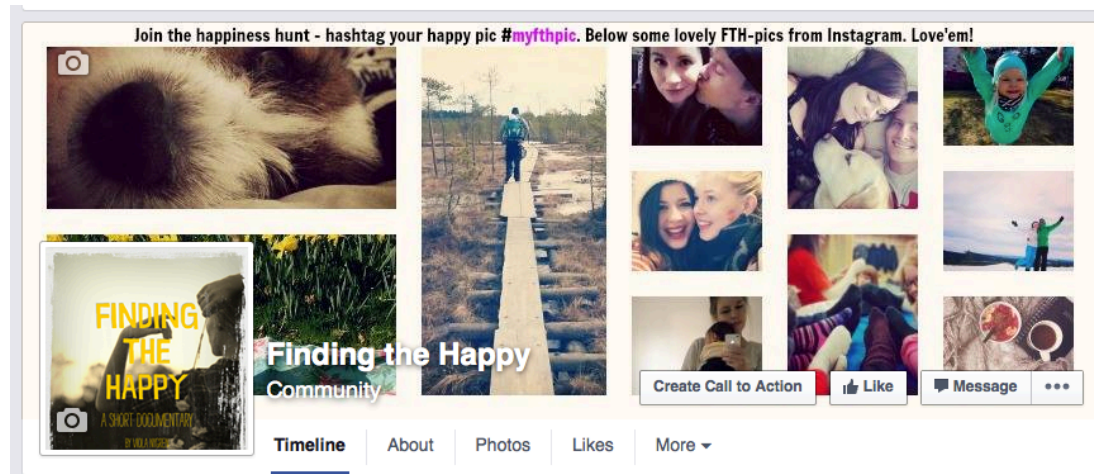
"Children in day-care and I'm all alone in home."

(Nurse, 25-35 years, Female, Harjavalta / Finland)

"Relaxed day with no huge plans. Walking around in good weather, spending time with lovely people, eating good food and dancing to great music. Being present with no worries."

(Language student, 20-25 years, Female, Jyväskylä / Finland)

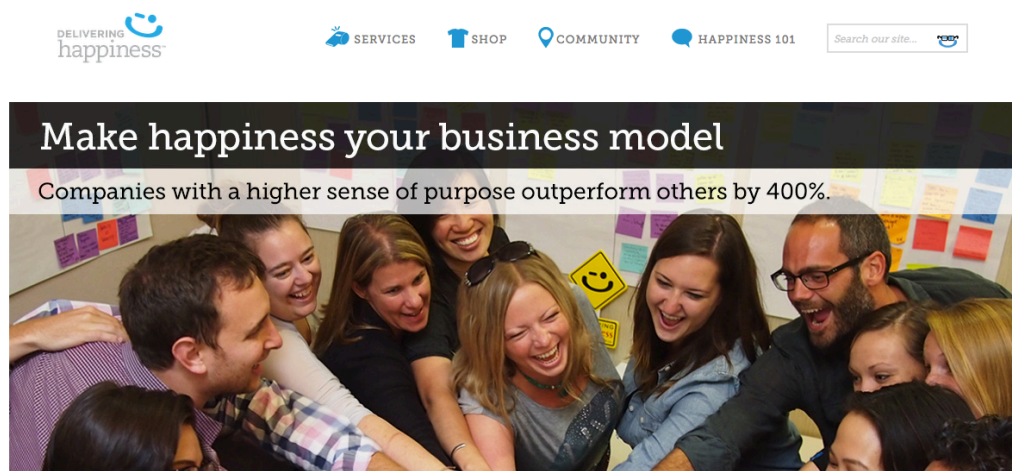
Appendix 3. Finding the happy –Facebook cover page



Appendix 4. A few example pictures of the Instagram content of Flnding the happy's channel (content made by people who shared their "happy pictures")



Appendix 5. Snapshot from *Deliveringhappiness.com*, a company helping business in “making happiness their business model”.



Appendix 6. Snapshot of *We love lean* – *Learn how to create products people love*-page's blog post

Why happiness should be your business model

By [Laurence McCahill](#), June 18, 2013

