

# **Millennials' opinion on Supplementary Programs around Corporate Events**

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<p>In a few years the Millennials are becoming the generational majority at the workplaces. The differences in their values and motivations compared to previous generations has changed the business travel and corporate event industry. This generational group is more alike to turn leisure activities into networking opportunities and business trips into holidays than the previous generations. The Millennials' desire to blur the lines between business and leisure has generated a new phenomenon called bleisure. Supplementary programs organized around corporate events are one way of combining leisure elements to business activities.</p> <p>The aim of the thesis is to collect information from the Millennials living in Northern Europe on their expectations, wishes and motivation towards the supplementary programs organized around corporate events. The primary data was collected by using a quantitative survey shared to the target group on Facebook. The survey reached 60 respondents in total of which the majority were Finnish, German and Swedish.</p> <p>The commissioner of the thesis is The Travel Experience. The Travel Experience is a destination management company and incoming agency based in Helsinki, Finland. They are specialized in organizing international events and incentive trips in Finland, Sweden and St. Petersburg. The results of the study offer The Travel Experience Company valuable insight of one of their customer groups– the Millennials.</p> <p>The key findings of the study show that Millennials value supplementary programs which offer networking opportunities and create added value to the corporate events. The study indicates that Millennials can be motivated to attend more corporate events by using supplementary programs. The respondents would also be willing to pay for supplementary programs which offer memorable experiences and add value to the corporate event.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Millennials, corporate events, supplementary programs, business travel, bleisure	

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# 1 Introduction

The growing number of Millennials as employees at workplaces and thereby also as business travelers and corporate event attendees increases the employers and event organizers interest towards the needs and motivations of this generation. In order to create engaging supplementary programs for Millennials which would increase their motivation in attending corporate events their needs and motivation towards supplementary programs in corporate events needs to be further researched.

Millennials are a generation born in 1980-2000 (Benckendorff, Moscardo & Pendergast 2010, 2). They are known for their skills in the field of digital technologies which originate from their early years as they were constantly adapting to new digital technologies. This generational group is constantly connected and has a global mindset. They are considered to be the most educated of the generations and supportive towards diversity and individualism. They prefer to work in teams and around projects. Millennials tend to change their occupation if they consider that another position would allow them to move forward in their career. This has made other generations blame Millennials for lack of job loyalty. Millennials have also been called as impatient which may relate to the fact that Millennials are used to receive information almost in real time as the internet has enabled a fast information flow worldwide. (Vesterinen & Suutarinen, 2011, 119-120)

The aim of the thesis is to identify the expectations, needs and motivation of the Millennials towards supplementary programs organised around corporate events.

The topic of this thesis arose from my interest and experience in attending and working in corporate events. The change in the values and motivations of the new generation in workplaces has challenged the people in the corporate event industry to come up with new innovative ways to engage this generation and motivate them to attend events. As a member of the millennial generation I found the topic relatable and actual as the business travellers and corporate event attendees will in few years mostly be consisting of Millennials.

The research method is quantitative research in a form of questionnaire shared in social media channel to the target group of the study. The questions in the questionnaire were created to support the research questions. The research questions are "What kind of supplementary programs Millennials expect and wish for when attending corporate events?" and "Could supplementary services increase the motivation of Millennials to attend corporate events?"

The commissioner of the thesis is a destination management company and incoming travel agency located in Helsinki Finland called The Travel Experience. The Travel Experience is offering destination management services for companies, tour operators and travel professionals in the areas of meetings, events, conferences, incentive travel, technical visits and other tailor-made tour programmes in Scandinavia, Baltic countries and Russia. The Travel Experience is a member of AFTA – the Association of Finnish Travel Agents, Congress Network Finland and Ovation Global DMC network. The directors of The Travel Experience are members of Site which is the international incentive travel organisation. In addition to the memberships of these highly valued organisations The Travel Experience is also part of quality development program of Finnish travel industry called “Quality 1000”. (The Travel Experience Oy 2012) The Quality 1000 program is offering series of trainings in order to enable independent work of companies and their employees in developing the quality of their services and products. (Haaga Perho 2011)

The aim of this thesis is relevant for the commissioner as they are organising various international corporate events with supplementary programs. The Millennials are the generation which has started or already has entered the work life and therefore will soon be also the main customer groups travelling for business and attending corporate events. In a few years more Millennials will be in manager positions in companies and organisations and will be making the decisions regarding the company events. This study will offer The Travel Experience valuable insights on Millennials' wishes and expectations towards supplementary programs organised around corporate events. They can use the information when planning supplementary programs with groups including Millennials.

This thesis consists of six parts. First the aim, research questions and background for the study are briefly introduced in the introduction. The second part introduces the phenomenon of combining business and leisure when travelling for business and attending corporate events. The theoretical framework presents the millennial generation. This part emphasizes the values and motivational triggers of the Millennials which affect their behaviour especially on workplaces and as business travellers. Methodology introduces the chosen research method. Finally the results of the primary research are presented and linked to the theory in conclusion.

## **2 Combining business and leisure elements in corporate events**

This chapter presents bleisure travel which is a phenomenon of combining leisure elements to the actual business activities during business travel. This phenomenon is increasing among the young business travellers – the Millennials. Millennials are blurring the lines between business and leisure by turning leisure activities into networking opportunities and extending their business trips into holidays. (Vivion 2016)

The development of technologies has created a lifestyle where people are constantly connected through mobile and internet devices. This has also enabled working during leisure activities. (CWT 2016) Bleisure in business travel includes for example extended stays at business travel destination. However the stays are more often extended when the business travel destination is a long-haul destination. Especially the younger travellers have embraced the bleisure phenomenon. (CWT 2016)

The suppliers in the field of business travel and in particularly corporate event professionals have the possibility to take the most out of this phenomenon by planning business travel offers and event programs designed especially to match the needs of this generational. Not only does this phenomenon increase the revenue in the business event destinations but it also creates added value and memorable experiences for the business travellers. (Vivion 2016)

First business travel and methods of combining leisure elements to it are presented. Furthermore also the types of corporate events and some of the most common supplementary programs organised in them are listed.

### **2.1 Leisure elements in business travel**

Business travel includes all travel which is related to one's work. Business travel includes individual business travel, incentive trips, corporate hospitality as well as attending meetings, exhibitions and other corporate related events. (Davidson & Cope 2003, 3)

Leisure elements in traveling such as shopping for souvenirs, dining at restaurants and sightseeing are not usually considered the priority motivation for the most types of business travel. In business trips such as meeting clients or attending trade fairs the priority motivation is usually considered being the actual business action such as closing deals or presenting company products or services to potential clients. However these additional

activities are often considered to be part of business travel and especially a part of corporate events. (Davidson & Cope, 2003, 255-256)

Business travel can increase the leisure travel in a destination in many different ways. Business travelers may choose to spend a couple of days in a destination where the business activity will take place or choose to explore another place near the destination where they might not yet have had the chance to travel before. This kind of pre- and post tours are usually more likely to take place if the business travel destination is a long-haul destination. (Davidson & Cope, 2003, 256-261)

In some cases business travelers may have the chance to bring their spouses or other companion with them to a business trip. Spouses may enjoy the leisure activities in a destination while their partners are doing business. (Davidson & Cope, 2003, 256-261) Business travelers may have the possibility to take part in some leisure activities themselves and thereby get to know a destination better. After their positive or negative experiences in a business travel destination they might share their experiences to their friends and acquaintances after returning home. (Davidson & Cope, 2003, 256-261)

## **2.2 Corporate events and supplementary programs**

There are many types of corporate events. Corporate events include conferences, seminars, tradeshow, team building and networking events, product launches, incentive trips and meetings among other business related events. These events can be organised by event management professionals or the company employees themselves. (EventManagement.com 2017)

One form of business travel where the supplementary programs are considered to be included as a part of the main program are incentive trips. Incentive trips are usually identified as reward for the employees for achieving certain goals or closing great deals. (Davidson & Cope, 2003, 3) Incentive trips are paid by the company and are usually consisting of memorable experiences which thrive the employees to continue meeting their goals and exceeding expectations. (Davidson & Cope, 2003, 158) The commissioner of the thesis The Travel Experience has a long history in organising various incentive trips. The activities The Travel Experience offers during incentive trips include for example husky safaris and ice breaker cruises in Lapland. (The Travel Experience Oy 2015)

Supplementary programs in corporate events are all the activities which are organised for the corporate event attendees in addition to the actual business activities.

Different kind of activities such as dinners, team building activities and pre- or post tours are built around the actual corporate events in order to create added value and memorable experiences for the corporate event attendees. When looking through websites of Finnish destination management companies the supplementary services which are most often offered with the ready-made corporate event packages organised in Finland are pre-, or post tours to Lapland, Stockholm, Tallinn or St. Petersburg. Other activities which were frequently mentioned were themed tours and cultural specialities. (The Travel Experience Oy 2015; Viada 2014)



### **3 The Millennials attending corporate events**

The following chapter introduces the generational theory which has been used as a framework during the thesis project in order to provide customer insight. The generational theory is introduced to emphasize the characteristics of the target group of this study in relation to other generations. In order to introduce the background for the values and behaviour the millennial generation possesses also the other generational cohorts have been briefly introduced. After the brief introduction of the generational theory and other generations the Millennials will be presented more closely. Millennials' general characteristics will be listed as well as their researched behaviour as employees and finally as business travellers attending corporate events and participating in supplementary programs.

Multiple blog posts, articles and books has been published about the behaviour of the millennial generation at their workplaces and in work life in general. There are also quite many sources which discuss the topic "How to engage Millennials at events?". This study aims to find out how to engage the Millennials particularly in corporate events with the help of supplementary programs which is a topic of which a lot of empirical research has not yet been conducted. In order to create better understanding of the targeted research group the characteristics, values and behaviour of the group needs to be more closely viewed. The following subchapters will gather information which will be used as theory when the primary data collected through a survey questionnaire is analysed.

#### **3.1 Generational theory as a tool for customer insight**

Customer insight plays an important role in company's business activities as it creates deeper understanding of the target market and thereby increases the competence in relation to other companies providing similar services or products. Customer insight consists of analysed research which has been made by using various surveys where customers own opinions are measured or by following the purchasing behaviour of the customers stored to the customer records when customers visit and purchase items through internet platforms. (Arantola 2006, 23-24)

The collection of customer information or data has developed in the past years as internet has enabled simple and effective ways of collecting information from the customers directly and through their operations in the internet websites (Arantola 2006, 23). Generational

theory is an essential part of the customer insight as it enables customer segmentation into groups which share similar values and characteristics. (Arantola 2006, 28)

According to Fields et al. (2008, in Benckendorff & al., 2010,2) the origin of generational theory can be found in America but the results of the studies can be considered comparable to the generation members in other countries as the sociological behaviour is spreading faster through globalization and developed information and communications technology. Especially the internet and certain social media channels have enabled fast information flow worldwide (Fields & al., 2008 in Benckendorff & al. 2010, 2). Generational theories research the generational behaviour which most of the members of the generational cohorts generally share. Hence the focus of the generational theories lies on the generational groups rather than focusing on the individuals of this group. (Pendergast, 2007; Fields et al., 2008 in Benckendorff & al. 2010, 1)

Generations can be differentiated from each other by the period of time people were born, the sociological and economic conditions and the generational signposts they shared during their early years. These factors are stated to have the biggest effect on Millennials' characteristics and values which this generational group share. (Benckendorff & al., 2010, 2) In the book *Generation, Inc. From Boomers to Linksters - Managing the Friction between the Generation at Work* (2010) Larry and Meagan Johnson define the generational signposts as events or phenomenon which occurred during the early years of a generation. These signposts form similarities in attitudes and priorities which effect the purchasing behaviour, values and behaviour at work and views on world and life in general. (Johnson & Johnson 2010, 4)

Challenges relating the comparativeness between people from the same generation is that most generational studies have been conducted at one particular time which means that they cannot be applied to the whole generation because the current events and phenomenon have an effect on their behaviour and values (Twenge & Cambell in Ng, Lyons & Schweitzer, 2012, 2). Another challenge concerning the generational studies is that most of them have been conducted in America which can possibly in some extend affect the reliability and comparativeness to other cultures in different continents. However some studies state that American lifestyle and state of mind has in some extend spread to other continents (Twenge & Cambell in Ng, Lyons & Schweitzer, 2012, 2).

Generational theory has been used in this study as a framework in order to view the opinions of corporate events attendees about the supplementary programs through a current

topic – The Millennials. The generational theory contains some limitations but serves as a framework with the intention to limit the target group used in this study.

### **3.2 Generations**

The generations which currently are the main influencers at the workplaces and therefore also attendees of corporate events are the Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1979) and Generation Y also called the Millennials (1980-2000) (Beckendorff & al., 2010, 2).

Each of the generation possesses certain characteristics and values which originate from the sociological and economic situation which was present at the time they were born and during the early years of their lives (Johnson & Johnson, 2010, 5). The values of previous generations affected their views of the world through the behaviour and opinions of their parents. In addition to the influences from their parents the signposts including events and phenomenon which occurred in the early years and throughout their lives shaped their views on the world. (Johnson & Johnson 2010, 4) The characteristics, values and generational signpost of each generation varies compared to other generations.

In workplaces the differences in the values and ways of working between the co-workers from various generations can cause disagreement and other challenges but they can also have a positive effect on the environment and create an innovative working atmosphere when each of the generations needs has been taken into consideration. (Meister & Willyerd 2010, 44) The ways the companies which have employees from multiple generations manage, motivate and recruit their employees and shape these procedures according to the generational interests define how attractive the new employees find the job. (Meister & Willyerd 2010, 41)

The Baby Boomers born in 1946-1964 (Meister & Willyerd 2010, 46, Kennedy 2017) got their name after the increased number of babies born during in their early years as the Second World War ended (Kennedy 2017). Two biggest impacts for this generation were television and first personal computers (Meister & Willyerd 2010, 47). Baby Boomers have been identified as idealists with strong work ethic and acceptance towards authoritarian leadership styles (Beckendorff & al., 2010, 4).

The Generation X born in 1965-1979 (Beckendorff & al., 2010, 2) are known as individualistic generation who in contrary to Baby Boomers value more cooperative leadership styles (Beckendorff & al., 2010, 4).

The Generation Y mostly referred to as the Millennials born in 1980-2000 (Beckendorff & al., 2010, 2) are the generation which has also been called as the digital natives which originate from one of the most significant signpost they experienced during their early years, the birth and growth of the internet age (Vesterinen & Suutarinen 2011, 119-120). This generation will be introduced in more depth in the next subchapter (Chapter 3.3). The decision of choosing the millennial generation as the target group of the thesis arose from the currency of the topic in the areas of business and event management.

### **3.3 The Millennials**

Although the birth years of demographic groups are not exactly specified in any sources the Millennials, also called as Generation Y, the Digital Generation or the Nexters, are stated to be a demographical group consisting of people born in the beginning of 1980's to early 2000. (Benckendorff & al., 2010, 2, Raines 2002)

Studies about their needs and motivations regarding their behaviour in workplaces and their expectations concerning the working methods has been a trend among the researchers due to the fact that they are the next demographical group of which the work life will mostly be consisting of in the future as the Baby Boomers term usually used with people born in 1946-1964 (Kennedy 2017) will retire. Employers are eager to find out Millennials' needs and motivations concerning work life and find out the best work practises for this particular generation. In addition to company managers also event planners are looking for ways to engage the members of this generation in events as they are the group of which the event attendees will mostly consist of. Some tips from event professionals on how to engage Millennials in corporate events are for example to enable networking opportunities and to combine social media and other digital technologies to the event. (Chereskin 2015)

As earlier mentioned in this thesis the events experienced by the generations during their early years have had impact on their characteristics and views on the world. (Johnson & Johnson, 2010, 4) One of the biggest events which occurred at the early years of the Millennials and had a remarkable impact on them was the birth of Internet. Many sources have called the Millennials as digital natives. Millennials have gotten used to using internet from the early age and have therefore adapted relatively quickly also to the newest forms of technology such as smartphones and different kind of applications which can be used through smartphones for numerous purposes. The adaption has been slower for the previous generation as most of them have been forced to adapt to this new era after being

already gotten used to using other kind of substitutive equipment for internet. (Vesterinen & Suutarinen 2011, 119-120)

Another phenomenon which got more media visibility during the generation of Millennials is terrorism. The Millennials experienced the September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and others following that. The information flow is much faster because of social media channels and the whole world gets the news about terrorist attacks instantly. Security is considered to be an important issue for Millennials. (Benckendorff & al., 2010, 8)

Millennials have a global mind-set. Their network consist of international acquaintances and close friends which all they refer to with the word 'friend'. Millennials stay in contact with their international friends with the help of digital technology including various social media channels. (Vesterinen & Suutarinen 2011, 119)

Apart from the digital know-how and concern towards safety issues Millennials are also considered to be the generation with the most high-level of education possibly because of high expectations directed at them at places such as schools and work places by their parents, teachers and employers. (Benckendorff & al., 2010, 5-6) In many sources Millennials are praised to be the most educated generation. Other positive qualities associated with Millennials are great networking and teamwork skills, and self-confidence. (Vesterinen & Suutarinen 2011, 120)

However there are also some rather negative characteristics and qualities associated with millennial generation. They are stated to be hectic and impatient (Vesterinen & Suutarinen 2011, 120) The impatience most likely originates from the fact that this generational is used to receiving information almost in real time through various technical tools especially social media channels. Even though these traits are considered being part of the Millennials characteristics they can be also change during time and as a result of experiences which are yet to come. (Benckendorff & al., 2010, 10)

Some members of the millennial generation have shared their opinion about not being able to relate to all the Millennial generations characteristics often associated with this generational cohort. (Ubl, Walden & Arbit 2017) In the book *Managing Millennials for Dummies* (2017) Ubl, Walden and Arbit state that the Millennial generation could be divided into old Millennials and new Millennials. In this study the birth years of the Millennial generation has been divided to old Millennials born in 1980-1990 and new Millennials 1990-2000. (Ubl & al., 2017) The old Millennials tend to share similar characteristics and values as the Generation X whereas the new Millennials in the other hand are more famil-

lar with the millennial characteristics and values. According to Ubl, Walden and Arbit (Ubl & al., 2017) the new Millennials would also share some similarities with the newest generational cohort, generation Z, born after 2000 (Ubl & al., 2017)

The differences between the old Millennials and the new Millennials are mostly relating to their age. A big part of the old Millennials already have a family of their own, a career and might already be at manager positions. (Ubl & al., 2017)

Another factors which separates the old and new Millennials is the development of technology. Whereas the old Millennials had a rather slow start of technological development the new Millennials were born in a world where technological development had already been fast. (Ubl & al., 2017)

Despite these differences the Millennials can still be referred to as one generation with more similarities than differences. (Ubl & al., 2017)

Nevertheless during the analysis of the questionnaire results the divide between old and new Millennials will be taken into consideration.

### **3.4 The Millennials at work**

As new generations enter the workplaces or move up inside the workplace the generations, already accustomed to one way of working, are introduced to new colleagues from a new generation with modern ideologies. The differences in values and work practises may collide and new working styles and communication methods are in order. Especially interesting to the managers of companies is the millennial generation (born in 1980-2000) for this generation possesses unique working methods and social trends compared to older generations. (Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar & Kaifi 2012) This chapter introduces the millennial generation's characteristics as employees which has an impact on what kind of working methods should be offered to them.

The work life has experienced major changes during the last few decades. As previously it was normal to stay at one company for even the whole working career in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is more common to move from one career to another even multiple times. The Millennials are more alike to change from one line of business to another and educate themselves between careers in order to ensure one's personal development. (McCrindle Research 2006, 7). The often occurring change of career has been leading to older generations assumptions of Millennials lacking job loyalty. (Vesterinen & Suutarinen 2011, 121)

Despite the alleged lack of job loyalty the Millennials have also been considered to possess many favourable qualities as employees. Their most favourable qualities as employees are considered to be self-confidence, motivation towards work, supportiveness towards diversity and individualism. (Myers & Sadaghiani 2010, 225) Their skills in the area of digital technologies has made them a competitive asset for companies working with new technologies. (Kaifi & al. 2012)

Millennials tend to value untraditional working methods and prefer working in teams especially around projects. Millennials value open communication and frequent exchange of feedback with their co-workers and employers. (Myers & Sadaghiani 2010, 225)

Unlike previous generations, the Millennials have more demands when it comes to the work life. They require freedom to work out of office and ability to choose their working hours. (Johnson & Johnson, 132) Furthermore for this generation the work is not all about making money and advancing in one's career but they also seek work which offers educational development and networking opportunities. (McCrindle Research 2006, 7)

### **3.5 Millennials as business travellers attending corporate events**

Millennial business travellers are known for their desire to combine business and leisure elements during their business travels (Vivion 2016).

Combining business and leisure elements has become a phenomenon called bleisure which has increased especially among young business travellers (Vivion 2016). Business travel providers can benefit from the phenomenon by offering the Millennial business travellers bleisure experiences such as extended hotel stays with a special price in order to attract them to combine their business trips and holidays (Vivion 2016). Corporate event planners can profit from the popularity of combining business and leisure activities by offering the corporate event attendees supplementary programs such as sightseeing tours of dinners.

According to BridgeStreet Global Hospitality report (BridgeStreet Global Hospitality 2014) sightseeing tours, dinners and experiencing cultural specialities are the most popular bleisure activities (Vivion 2016). Bleisure activities not only create increasing revenue in the business travel and corporate event destination but also memorable experiences for the business travellers (Vivion 2016).

As business travellers Millennials are also breaking traditional working ways as well as accommodation forms and ways of transport. Millennials have been stated to prefer working in social spaces such as hotel lobbies instead of their own hotel rooms (Turk 2016). Millennials are combining sharing services to their business trips. Sharing services such as Uber and Airbnb which are mostly used during leisure travel have increased their popularity among millennial business travellers (Sampson 2017).

Millennials are already taking over the generational majority as business travellers and as corporate event attendees. The change in the generation majority of event attendees requires attention from the corporate event planners when it comes to planning the operations of corporate events. The most distinctive and known characteristics of the Millennial generation is their know-how in digital technologies especially social media. (Skift 2015) When traveling for business the Millennials appreciate quick service and are more alike to use mobile apps for booking accommodation and rental cars than older generations of business travellers (Turk 2016). Millennials tend to use every opportunity of their business travel to continue working with the use of their laptops or smartphones. Consequently Millennials are expecting a working Wi-Fi connection wherever they are. (Turk 2016)

In addition to digital technologies fully functional and part of the program in the meeting, conferences and other business related events the elements which Millennials have been stated to expect and value in corporate events are networking opportunities. Networking opportunities are important for the Millennials because they believe that contacts are more precious today in work life than high degrees. The importance of the digital communication channels to the Millennials generation can often be misinterpreted as a low motivation of the millennial generation in attending corporate events. However it has been researched that the Millennials value highly the face-to face meetings and networking opportunities which corporate events bring. (Skift 2015)

To summarize the theory on customer behaviour of the Millennials as employees attending corporate events it is important to notice few key points. Firstly Millennials are motivated by different things compared to previous generations. Secondly although the generation of Millennials can be considered as a rather homogenous groups with similar interest there are still some people inside the millennial generations who feel more convergent towards another generation. This has caused a division to old and new Millennials. (Ubl & al., 2017) Millennials can however be considered as a one generation with similar values and needs. One thing which unites all the Millennials is that they are always connected though internet or mobile devices which means that a fully functional Wi-Fi is important.



Millennials combine also passion towards teamwork and motivation to find networking opportunities. Networking opportunities can be rather easily organised around corporate events with the help of supplementary programs because Millennials are also very keen on combining business and leisure activities. All in all good networking activities, working Wi-Fi and creative solutions concerning accommodation, transport methods and working spaces are some of the most important factors when planning corporate events for Millennials.

## **4 Methodology**

The aim of the study is to identify the expectations and wishes of the Millennials towards the supplementary programs organised in corporate events. The thesis project started in January 2017 by contacting the commissioner of the thesis, The Travel Experience, and proposing the subject to them. The theoretical framework was researched by using literature and various internet sources including academic journals and articles. The data was collected between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of May by sharing a survey questionnaire in Facebook. A quantitative research method in a form of a survey questionnaire shared in social media was found as a suitable method concerning the topic itself and the target group of the research.

### **4.1 Data collection**

The data collection started by finding information about the phenomenon of the Millennial generation mixing the business and leisure elements during business travel. Secondary data which included previously collected information about the target group and the use of supplementary programs in corporate events was collected from various books and academic journals.

Data collection is an essential part of most research processes. In some cases the research can be done without conducting new research by using the internet as a source in finding relevant data conducted by other researchers. When collecting data from which any empirical research has not been yet undertaken the data collection must be planned and constructed by the researchers. Data collection is usually conducted by gathering information through questionnaires or face-to-face interviews. Other methods for data collection are observation and participation. (Sapsford & Jupp 2006, 124) The collected data can be used as an evidence to support the research findings and the conclusions made after the data has been analysed. (Sapsford & Jupp 2006, 1-3) Data collection methods in research are generally either quantitative or qualitative. A certain sort of research may require the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The most important is that the research method should be selected to support the research questions. (Finn, Elliot-White and Walton 2000, 8)

The primary data collection for this thesis was implemented by conducting a survey questionnaire (Appendix 1.) with the use of Webropol online survey tool. The aim of the survey was to collect information about the expectations, needs and wishes of the business travellers from the millennial generation concerning the supplementary programs organised in

corporate events. In addition to finding out the expectations and wishes towards the supplementary services in the corporate events the aim was to find out if supplementary programs would have an effect to the motivation of the Millennials to attend corporate events.

Survey in a form of a questionnaire shared to the respondents through social media channels was chosen as the data collection method for the thesis because of its frequent use in tourism and event related researches. It was found to be the best approach for collecting quantitative data from the millennial generation. (Finn & al., 2000, 86-87). The questions in the questionnaire were made to support the research questions. The aim of the thesis was kept in mind during the planning of the questions. Before publishing the questionnaire it was tested with potential respondents in order to avoid possible misinterpretations. (Finn & al., 2000, 93-94)

Survey was published in Facebook and shared to respondents from different nationalities inside the millennial generation living in Northern Europe by using the network of the thesis writer. The platform for the sharing of the survey was chosen to match the most preferable communication approach of the targeted respondents. Millennials are born in the era of quickly evolving digital revolution and therefore they have gathered good level of knowledge of social media as it plays a big role in their everyday life. Survey questions were made by using the theoretical framework including the needs and motivations of Millennials as framework for the questions and implementing them to match the research questions. The questionnaire included questions about the expectations and wishes of the millennial generations towards the supplementary programs in corporate events and their previous experiences in participating or experiencing supplementary programs in corporate events. In addition to the expectations, wishes and previous experiences also their motivation towards corporate events organising supplementary programs was researched.

## **4.2 Quantitative and qualitative research**

Quantitative and qualitative research methods are two main research methods used in empirical research. They can be used separately or by combining both methods. Quantitative research is about collecting data from several respondents for which the research has been targeted to whereas qualitative research is about focusing on fewer respondents but emphasizing their own views. It is important to choose the method which is the most suitable for the research aim and is thereby enhancing the validity of the research. (Hirsjärvi & al., 1997, 135-140)

The quantitative research method was selected as a research method for this study because it suited the aim of the thesis. The aim was to study Millennials living in Northern Europe and finding out their expectations and motivations towards supplementary programs organised around corporate events. If also qualitative research methods would have been combined the results could have been more profound.

#### **4.3 Survey questionnaire and data analysis**

Survey is a common tool in research which aims to find out the opinions of the respondents concerning certain topic. The questions in the survey questionnaire should be carefully planned in order to meet the goals the research aims with the information collected. (Fink 2003, 1) According to Finn, Elliot-White and Walton (2000) when planning a questionnaire it is important to avoid the collection of unnecessary data which may occur if the questions are not necessary for the purpose of the research. (Finn & al., 2000, 94) Validity and reliability are essential factors when planning questions for a survey questionnaire. Misinterpretations are possible if the questions are not stated clearly and tested before sharing to the targeted respondents. This generates invalid results as the results may change remarkably due to misinterpreted questions. Unreliable and unnecessary data may occur if the questions do not support the research questions. (Hirsjärvi & al. 1997, 231-232)

Data analysis was done after the primary data had been collected through the survey questionnaire. All the previous stages of the research process had been aiming to this stage as the results collected with the research questions are analysed. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 221) The primary data for the research oriented thesis was collected by sharing a questionnaire in thesis writer's Facebook wall to her Facebook friends between 4<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2017. The goal was to collect 60-80 answers in order to get a reliable overview on the opinions and motivation of the millennial generation living in Northern Europe concerning the supplementary programs organised around corporate events. The goal was met at the end of the data collection as the number of respondents was 60.

The data collection methods which have been chosen to support the research questions affect the way the data will be analysed (Hirsjärvi & al. 1997, 221). Quantitative research method was chosen as a research method because it supported the aim of the study. According to Hirsjärvi & al (1997) after the primary data has been collected the data needs to be organised. (Hirsjärvi & al. 1997, 222) The organized data has been presented with ta-

bles and percentages and will be analysed later on in conclusion (Chapter 6) by comparing the collected results to the theory presented (Chapter 2 and 3).

#### **4.4 Validity and Reliability**

Research can be identified as valid if it measures the factors which were intended during the planning process. Reliability on the other hand means that if the study would be repeated the results would be similar. (Bradley 2007, 64) Validity is required from all types of research in order to avoid invalid hence useless data collection. Yet no research can be defined as 100 % valid as there always lies a minor chance for error both in qualitative and quantitative research methods as well as in the mixed research methods including elements of the two. The validity can be maximised by aiming towards deep and useful data collection and objective and appropriate data analysis throughout the research process. (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, 179)

The research aim was kept in mind during the research process. However the unfamiliar topic for some of the respondents and partly also English language effected the validity of the results. This could have been avoided by translating the questionnaire in more languages and presenting the topic more thoroughly. The questionnaire could also have been distributed through different channels in order to get more variety to the nationality of the respondents. With more questions there could have been more in depth results.

The reliability of the research means that if the study would be repeated the results would be similar. (Bradley 2007, 64) If this study would be conducted again the results would probably be rather similar.

## 5 Results

The results of the questionnaire have been presented in the following subchapters and finally analysed more in depth with the theory in the conclusion. The tables and numbers are based on the data which was received from the 60 respondents from Northern Europe. These respondents participated in the study by filling up the questionnaire which was shared on Facebook.

### 5.1 Age and nationality of the respondents

The year of birth was divided into four groups; Millennials born in 1980-1985, 1986-1990, 1991-1995 and in 1996-2000. Most of the respondents (75%) were born in 1991-1995. Second biggest respondent group was born in 1986-1990 (16, 7%). Third biggest groups with 5% was Millennials born in 1996-2000. Least respondents (3, 4%) were from the birth years 1980-1985.

The year of birth was asked from the respondents in order to ensure that the questions were answered by a member of the millennial generation. The options for the year of birth questions were divided into four groups of which the two first seen in the table (Figure 1.) are the representatives of the old Millennials. The other two groups represent the members of the new Millennials. (Ubl & al., 2017) By dividing these two types inside the generations the possible differences between these groups might be detected.

Due to the uneven respondent rate of the old Millennials versus the new Millennials any distinctive differences between these two groups could not be detected.

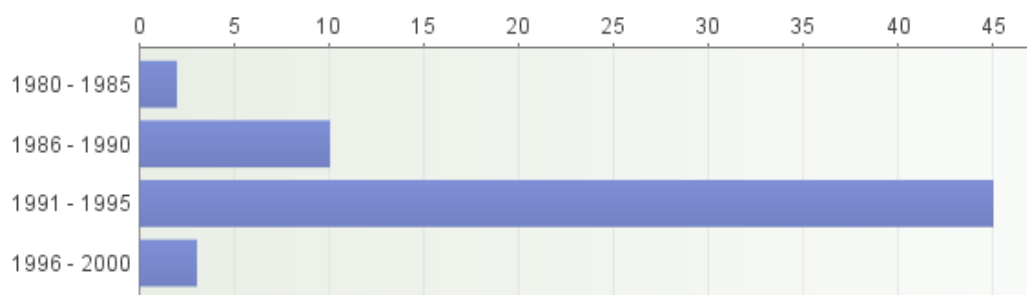


Figure 1. Year of Birth (n=60)

The nationality of the respondents was mostly Finnish with 61, 7%. Second biggest nationality were Germans with 11, 7 % and third biggest Swedish with 5%. The questionnaire was posted on the thesis writers Facebook page which reached mostly Finnish Millennials.

## 5.2 Previous corporate event and supplementary program experiences

This part of the questionnaire measured the number of corporate event attendance and supplementary program participation among the respondents.

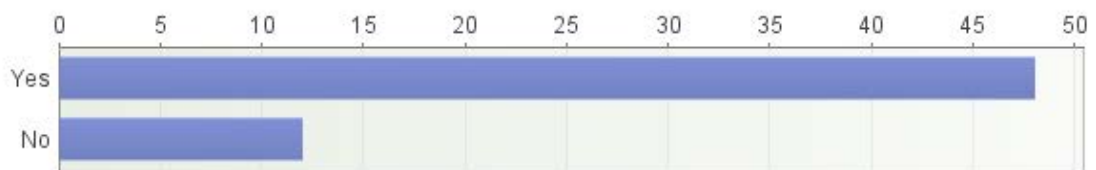


Figure 2. Corporate event attendance (n=60)

Majority of the respondents had already attended corporate events (Figure 2.) but half of the respondents (Figure 3.) answered that they did not participate in or experience any supplementary programs during the corporate events.

Due to the rather young age of the respondents many of them might have been participating in corporate events as volunteers or workers and have therefore not participated in any outside of event activities. To some of the respondents the concept of supplementary programs might not be familiar which lead them to answer no.



Figure 3. Supplementary program participation (n=60)

### 5.3 Expectations and wishes towards supplementary programs

This question collected the expectations and wishes the Millennials have towards supplementary programs in corporate events.

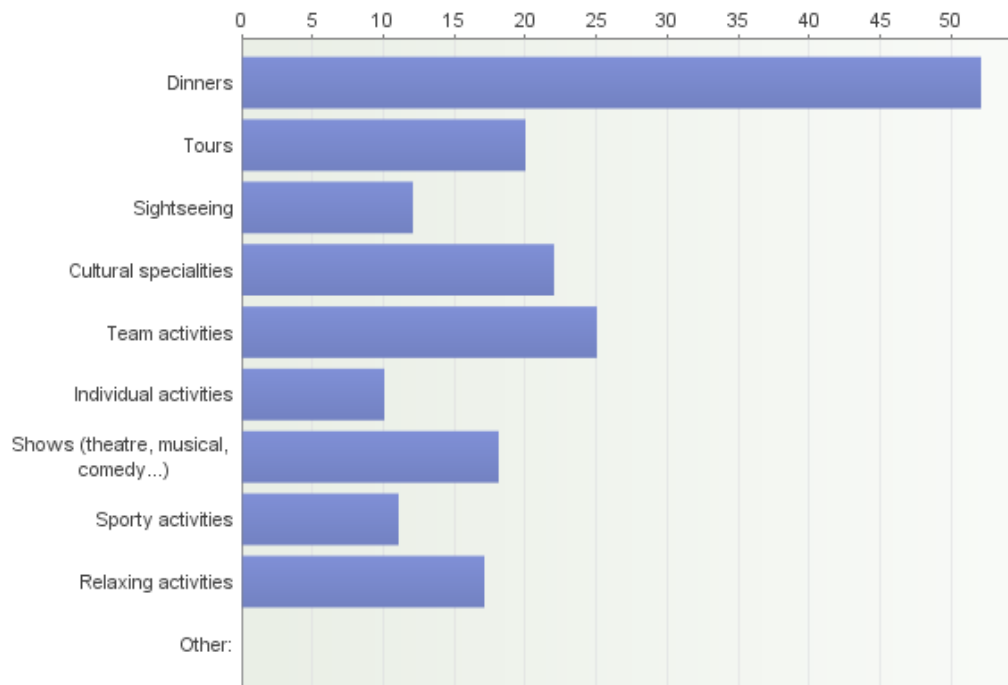


Figure 4. Expected supplementary programs in corporate events (n=59)

The most common supplementary programs were categorised into nine groups. The respondents were given the opportunity to choose one or more options. They could also choose another type of supplementary program which they expect when attending corporate events.

Most of the respondents expected that corporate events include at least dinners, tours, cultural specialities and team activities. These supplementary programs are some of the most common ones organised in corporate events and might therefore be expected in corporate events by these respondents.

The wishes of the Millennials relating the supplementary programs organised in corporate events were divided into same nine categories which were presented as options in previous question (Figure 4.)

Most of the respondents wished that supplementary programs would include dinners, cultural specialities and team activities.



#### 5.4 Most appealing factors in corporate events and most interesting supplementary programs

The respondents were asked to choose the most appealing factors when attending corporate events. They were allowed to choose one or more options.

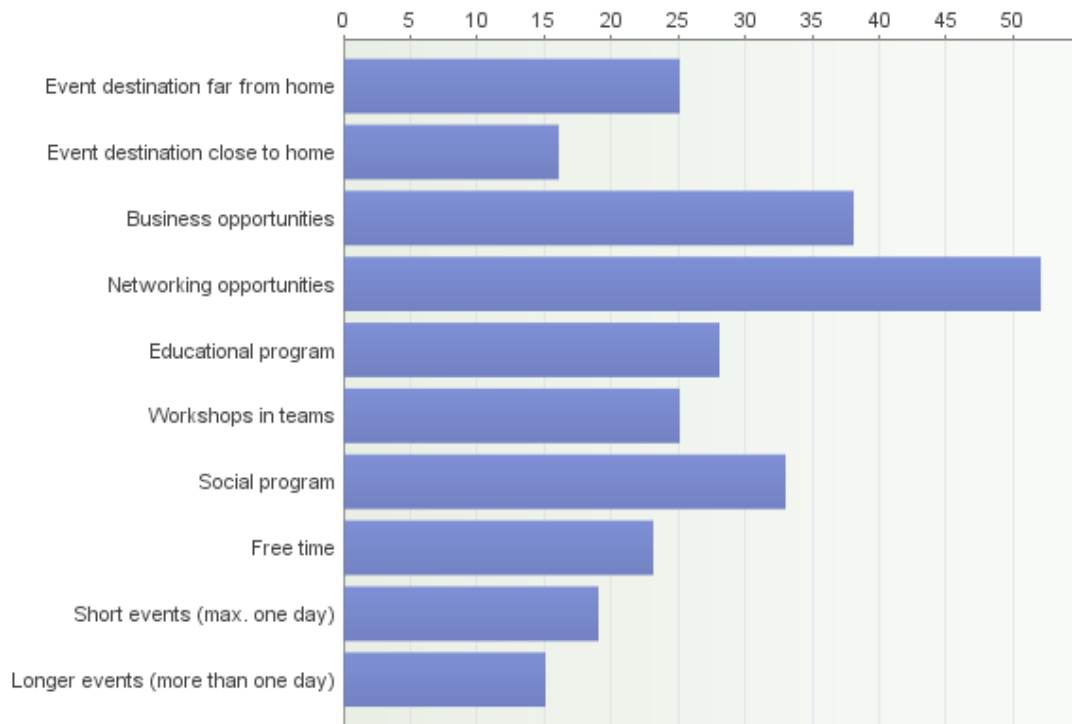


Figure 5. Most appealing factors when attending corporate events (n=60)

The most appealing factor in corporate events was networking opportunities followed by business opportunities and social program. The least appealing factors in attending corporate events were longer events and event destination close to home.

The following question measured which of the following supplementary programs were identified as the most interesting.

The respondents were asked to rate the supplementary programs from 1 to 5 from which 1 meant that they are not interested to experience that kind of supplementary programs and 5 that they are interested in that kind of supplementary programs.

	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
Pre- or post tour inside or outside the destination of corporate event	1	6	20	23	10	60	3.58
Sightseeing tour in the corporate event destination	2	6	18	19	15	60	3.65
Themed tours	4	9	21	19	7	60	3.27
Team building activities	5	8	10	23	14	60	3.55
Themed dinners	1	5	8	25	21	60	4
Experiencing cultural specialties of the region/ country	0	3	3	21	33	60	4.4
Shows such as theatre, musical or comedy	2	10	12	17	19	60	3.68
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>3.73</b>

Figure 6. The most and least interesting supplementary programs (n=60)

### 5.5 Supplementary programs' effect on motivation in corporate events attendance

This part of the survey measured if supplementary programs could increase the motivation of the Millennials to attend corporate events. The respondents were asked to answer if supplementary programs effect their motivation in attending corporate events and afterwards to specify why.

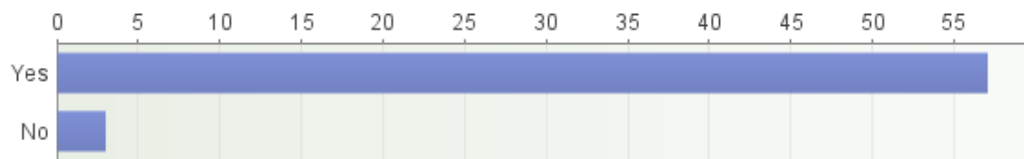


Figure 7. Supplementary programs affecting the motivation of the Millennials in attending corporate events (n=60)

Most of the respondents (95%) said that supplementary programs would motivate them to attend corporate events. The ones who said that supplementary programs would motivate them to attend corporate events explained their answer by saying that supplementary programs are great way to network and relax after the business activities. They also mentioned that supplementary programs add value to the corporate events and create memorable experiences for the corporate event attendees.

One of the respondent's summarized the most common answers to this question: "Perhaps the possibility to get more from an event than just the expected value is appealing. When there is program which is not time-tabled, it brings the possibility of networking."

The ones who answered that supplementary programs do not affect their motivation in attending corporate events said that they choose to attend an event because of the actual content and supplementary programs are irrelevant to them. One of the respondents agreed that supplementary programs could be useful if they serve as networking possibilities.

The respondents were also asked if they would pay for supplementary programs in corporate events and to specify for which kind of programs they would be willing to pay or why they would not be willing to pay for supplementary programs.

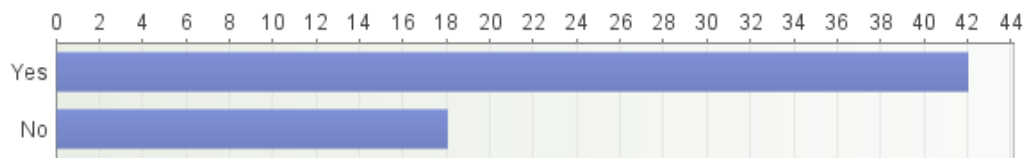


Figure 8. Willingness to pay for supplementary programs in corporate events (n=60)

70% of the respondents would be willing to pay for supplementary programs in corporate events. 30% would not be willing to pay for supplementary programs in corporate events.

The respondents would be willing to pay mostly for dinners and cultural specialties. Important factor mentioned often was that the supplementary program should be really interesting and create extra value in order to be worth paying for.

The other part of the respondents who said that they would not be willing to pay for supplementary programs said that they should be covered by the company they are working for.

## 6 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to find out the expectations, wishes and motivations of the Millennials traveling for business towards the supplementary programs in corporate events. The commissioner of the thesis is a destination management company and incoming agency called The Travel Experience. This study will offer the commissioner valuable insight on one of their customer segments. The study was conducted by sharing a questionnaire in Facebook to Millennials from the Northern European countries. The questionnaire was created by using the online survey platform Webropol. The questions in the questionnaire were created to support the research questions. The research questions were "What are the expectations and wishes of the millennial generation traveling for business when it comes to the supplementary program in corporate events?" and "Could supplementary services increase the motivation of the Millennials to attend more corporate events?"

The questionnaire received in total 60 millennial respondents mostly from Finland, Germany and Sweden. The biggest age group was 1990-1995 which most likely was caused by the group which was reached by the thesis writers Facebook post. Least respondents were from the oldest and the youngest millennial birth year groups. The birth years were divided into four groups in order to detect possible differences between the old and the new Millennials. Due to the low number of respondents which concentrated mostly on the new Millennials there was no distinctive differences detected. Most of the respondents had been attending corporate events but only 50% said that they had experienced or participated in supplementary programs. Due to the rather young age of the respondents some of them could have been working at corporate events instead of attending them as actual attendees. Some of the respondents might also not have had a clear image of what the concept of supplementary programs include. Most of the respondents who had been attendees in corporate events said that the supplementary programs they experienced in corporate events were mostly dinners.

The respondents mostly expected rather usual supplementary services from corporate events such as dinners but also cultural specialties and team activities were expected by many respondents. Wishes towards supplementary programs in corporate events were similar to the expectations the respondents had. The questions about the most appealing factors when attending supplementary programs and the choice of the most interesting supplementary programs clearly showed that activities which offer networking opportunities such as dinners are important for Millennials. According to a research conducted by

Skift and Meetings Mean Business (Skift 2015) the Millennials consider the right networks to be more valuable in work life than educational success.

Supplementary services clearly increase the motivation of the Millennials to attend corporate events as almost all of the respondents agreed that they are motivated by supplementary programs. As one of the respondents summarized the most frequent answers by saying that the supplementary programs can add unexpected value for the event and create important networking opportunities. Most of the respondents would also be willing to pay themselves for attractive supplementary programs around corporate events.

The combination of business activities and leisure elements is clearly more present in the corporate events today. Many events create added value by concentrating on the visual elements of the event and creating memorable experiences also by using one of a kind activities and cultural specialties. The desire of the Millennials towards team work and networking can already be seen in the programs options which the event organizers offer for corporate events. The Travel Experience is already enhancing the cultural specialties of the Helsinki and Lapland region which would create memorable experiences for the attendees. Various team building activities are also mentioned.

When going through websites of Finnish, Swedish and German websites of local destination management companies and incoming agencies organizing corporate events the main supplementary programs mentioned in their websites are about team work and experiencing cultural specialties. (The Travel Experience Oy 2015; The Arrangers of Sweden 2017; gernEvent GmbH 2016) Not only do these team building activities offer memorable experiences and networking opportunities but they also might be trendy at the moment because of the many generations working together in the companies. The differences in their values and needs might occasionally cause some disagreements and negative atmosphere at the workplaces but through these team building activities these generations may get to know each other better and bond. We are living in an experience economy today where travelers want to gain new experiences mostly so that they can post it on their social media channels.

When planning supplementary programs for groups with attendees from multiple generations it might be difficult to design supplementary programs which suit all the attendees' needs. However as the companies will soon be mostly consisting of Millennials the needs and motivational triggers of this particular generation should be taken into consider. Interactive activities are a great way to offer the networking activities for the Millennials.

## **7 Reflection on own learning during thesis process**

The thesis process started in January 2017 by proposing a thesis topic to the commissioner The Travel Experience. The topic changed during the spring in order to better suit the needs of the commissioner. The goal was to graduate in spring semester 2017 which made the schedule quite tight. Time management was not handled in a best possible way on my behalf but I learned a lot about how to be efficient when there is a lot to do in a short amount of time.

In addition to learning about the topic itself and the target group of the research I also learned about the research process. Many things must be considered when planning a questionnaire. Despite the conscientious planning of the questionnaire layout and the questions some matters still arose during the data analysis which could have raised the respondent number and improved the validity of the data. I could have translated the questionnaire in more than one language which could have raised the respondent number. In addition to that the topic seemed quite unfamiliar to many of the respondents which means that the introduction of the questionnaire could have enlightened the topic more precisely. There could also have been more questions in order to receive more in depth results of the topic. All in all I believe that this thesis process has taught me a lot about the corporate event industry which will be useful in the future.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Millennials' opinion on supplementary programs around corporate events

Dear respondent,

this survey is conducted as a part of Bachelor's thesis by a Degree Programme in Tourism student of Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Porvoo, Finland.

The aim of the survey is to find out the wishes and expectations of millennial generation towards the supplementary programs organized around corporate events in addition to actual business activities.

Supplementary programs in corporate events include activities which are experienced in addition to actual business activities during, before or after the corporate event. Supplementary programs include activities and experiences such as themed dinners, social program and pre- or post tours.

The primary respondent is a member of the millennial generation (born in approx. 1980-2000) who has already been traveling for business and attended one or more corporate events. If you have not yet attended any corporate events but belong to the millennial generation your expectations and wishes towards supplementary programs in corporate events are also very much appreciated.

This questionnaire consists of 15 questions and will take around 10 minutes.  
Your contribution is highly appreciated.

#### 1. Year of birth \*

This survey is targeting millennials born in 1980 - 2000

( ) 1980 - 1985

( ) 1986 - 1990

☐ 1991 - 1995

☐ 1996 - 2000

**2. Nationality**

A rectangular text input field with a light gray border. It contains no text. On the right side, there are three small square buttons stacked vertically, with the top and bottom ones having upward and downward arrows respectively. On the bottom left, there are two small square buttons, with the left one having a leftward arrow and the right one having a rightward arrow.

**3. Have you ever attended corporate events (incl. conferences, exhibitions, product launches or other business related events)? \***

☐ Yes

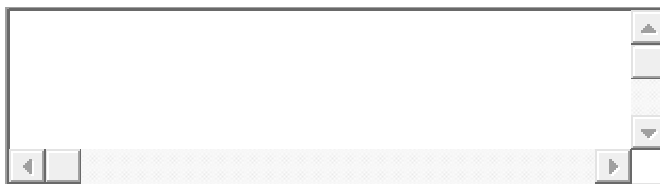
☐ No

**4. Have you participated in or experienced any supplementary programs in corporate events? \***

☐ Yes

☐ No

**5. Please specify what kind of supplementary programs you experienced?**

A rectangular text input field with a light gray border. It contains no text. On the right side, there are three small square buttons stacked vertically, with the top and bottom ones having upward and downward arrows respectively. On the bottom left, there are two small square buttons, with the left one having a leftward arrow and the right one having a rightward arrow.

**6. Which of the following supplementary programs do you expect to be included when attending corporate events? (Please select one or more)**

☐ Dinners

☐ Tours

☐ Sightseeing

☐ Cultural specialities

☐ Team activities

- ☐ Individual activities
- ☐ Shows (theatre, musical, comedy...)
- ☐ Sporty activities
- ☐ Relaxing activities
- ☐ Other:

7. What kind of supplementary programs would you wish to experience in corporate events? \*

8. Which of the following factors do you find appealing when attending corporate events?(Please select one or more)

- ☐ Event destination far from home
- ☐ Event destination close to home
- ☐ Business opportunities
- ☐ Networking opportunities
- ☐ Educational program
- ☐ Workshops in teams
- ☐ Social program
- ☐ Free time
- ☐ Short events (max. one day)
- ☐ Longer events (more than one day)

9. Please rate the following supplementary programs in corporate events from 1-5 (1= not interested, 5=very interested) \*

	1	2	3	4	5
Pre- or post tour inside or outside the destination of corporate event	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Sightseeing tour in the corporate event destination	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Themed tours	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Team building activities	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Themed dinners	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Experiencing cultural specialties of the region/ country	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Shows such as theatre, musical or comedy	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

**10.** Could supplementary programs increase your motivation in attending corporate events? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

**11.** If yes, why?

**12.** If not, why?

**13.** Would you be willing to pay for supplementary programs when attending corporate events?

☐ Yes

☐ No

**14.** If yes, for what kind of supplementary programs would you be willing to pay?



**15.** If not, why?

