

Comprehensive Management and Operational Development of Suomu Ski Resort

THESIS OF THEME GROUP 1

Bachelor Degree of Hospitality Management

2020

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FOREWORD

This article-based thesis is a specific research about the management and operation of Suomu Ski Resort. The thesis consists of five separate articles regarding the ski resort's marketing, destination management, human resource management, risk and crisis management and sustainability. General introduction of Suomu, background of study and methods used in the research process have been illuminated in the common theoretical framework. The authors demonstrated the results of their individual study and devised development plan for the ski resort in conclusions of the research.

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1. COMMON THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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Introduction of Suomu Ski Resort

Suomu Ski Resort is located in the municipality of Kemijärvi. Composed of Eturinteet and Itä-Suomu, the ski resort lies by the Arctic Circle and occupies the mountain, Suomutunturi, with a summit elevation of 409 metres. A ski school, a ski cafe combined with ski rental reception and Hotel Suomutunturi are all situated at Eturinteet and a cottage restaurant is located at Itä-Suomu nearby a husky park in the forest. As a destination, Suomu provides not only ski services but also accommodation and various tourism activities for visitors. The accommodation includes hotel rooms and cottages; the program services offer visitors different activities in all seasons of the year. Comprehensive town services can be found at the municipality's centre, Kemijärvi, which is half an hour's drive away from Suomu. (Suomu 2020.)

With reference to its upscale slopes, they are highly useful for the training of skiing athletes. Some excellent top skiers like mogul skiing Olympic Champion and World Champion Janne Lahtela, Olympic bronze medallist and World Championship silver medallist Sami Mustonen and their role model, World Cup winner and world championship bronze medallist Martti Kellokumpu all learned their skills there (Suomu 2020). Ruka ski team performed slalom training at Suomu in January of 2020.

To be a top training centre which serves alpine teams and clubs from the Nordic countries, Central Europe and Asia, Suomu has renewed its front slope and is working to develop a coaching centre, an equipment testing centre, sports medicine services and a business incubator. Moreover, a new snowmaking system that allows alpine skiing season to begin earlier than before has been completed (Viinikka 2019). Kari Tirkkonen and his Chinese wife, Qian Yang-Tirkkonen are the entrepreneurs of Suomu. They established Wilderness Suomu Oy and Suomu - Rinteet Oy in 2015 to operate tourism business of the ski resort.

Background and Methods of Research

At the end of January 2020, Kari Tirkkonen lost all the reservations from Chinese groups the day after the Chinese central government had announced the suspension of Chinese group trips abroad due to the coronavirus (Reinikainen 2020). While it was not even a peak season at that moment, they were obliged to make cancellations without charge and faced with a notch in economy. Although the lack of snow in the southern Finland was an advantage for Suomu which should had brought it more Finnish customers this winter, with the growing number of new infections in the country, the native tended to reduce travelling and stay at home for self-quarantine. Hence, Suomu lost a large amount of revenue from Finnish clients, too.

According to the latest information published on its official website (Suomu 2020), Suomu has been closed since 29th of March 2020 as the last ski resort in Lapland, due to the spread of Covid-19 pandemic. Other accessories including hotels and chalets were shut down concurrently, while the grooming of cross-country ski tracks is still performed twice a week weather permitting or as required.

Despite the business crisis Suomu faced recently, issues in the daily operation were spotted by the authors during their internship in Suomu from December of 2019 to January of 2020. This paper aimed to observe the current status of Suomu's different aspects of management under the specific circumstance of coronavirus outbreak and to provide constructive feedback for further development.

Qualitative research was conducted during the study. In view of the safety regulations regarding COVID-19 pandemic and the entrepreneur's tight schedule, a face-to-face interview with the ski resort was unfortunately not possible. After communicating with the Suomu's CEO and our former practical training supervisor Mrs. Yang-Tirkkonen, two online questionnaires therefore were conducted to help gather information. Theoretical background and information is based on the books, lectures, online materials, personal experiences during the stay in Suomu and information obtained from the questionnaire surveys mentioned above.

2. MARKETING

Author: Jiahuan Du

The article discusses about all the marketing methods that Suomu used. The methods included are both traditional marketing and online marketing. According to the existing marketing methods and the future development plan of Suomu, this article also gives suggestions to Suomu for development.

The facts about Suomu stated in the article are based on the observation of the author. And the authors of the paper have sent a questionnaire to the CEO of Suomu Ski Resort; the questionnaire is related to the marketing, destination management, HRM, crisis management and sustainability of Suomu. In the marketing part, the questions are mainly about investigating all the existing methods Suomu is now using for marketing and the future developing plans of Suomu. According to these facts and some challenges of Suomu, the passage discusses possible solutions and suggestions for better development.

In today's society, online marketing is playing a more important role than ever, and there is also a growing resistance for supplier-led marketing, such as newspaper, television and some other traditional marketing methods. According to the CEO of Suomu, Suomu now still spend efforts, which is equal to online marketing, on traditional marketing (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020a). The passage would suggest Suomu begin to put the concentration on online marketing. Also, based on the observation by author and some basic facts about the facilities in Suomu, the passage suggests Suomu to build more basic and entertainment facilities and to provide visitors with more services and choices in the future.

Keywords: traditional marketing, online marketing, marketing

2.1 Traditional Marketing

Defined by Marketing School (2012), traditional marketing is a broad category that incorporates many forms of advertising and marketing. It's the most recognizable types of marketing; the advertisements that we see and hear every day are almost traditional marketing. Most traditional marketing strategies can be included into four categories: print, broadcast, direct mail, and telephone. (Marketing School, 2012)

Broadcasting, as a traditional marketing way, is used by Suomu for current marketing. Suomu holds regular competitions, making Suomu have more publicity not only among local or regional people but also among the world. For example, the Finnish Alpine Ski Race Finland held the finale of the "Sino-Finnish Winter Sports Year" event on January 25 in Suomu ski resort of Finland (Dazhong News 2020). The event that was held in January 2020, has been broadcast by Chinese and Finnish media, making the resort known in China and making more people in Finland know this place. Besides, according to the CEO of Suomu Mr Tirkkonen (2020a), Suomu is going to expand its business by arranging ski instructors' training. Tourists participating in skiing lessons come from different countries, by holding the training, Suomu can make itself known among other countries. However, it still has drawbacks which can inhibit some advanced skiers come here to ski. To minimize the disadvantages, the ski resort needs to find balance to provide services between training team and regular visitors.

There are some national and regional teams who do their regular training in Suomu. The news that there are teams do their training in Suomu would be advertised on local newspapers. Through the advertisement, Suomu can attract ski lovers who are particular interested in skiing. The regular training teams use one or two slopes for training each time, and when they are training, the slopes cannot be used by tourists and other visitors. This means that in most of the opening time, visitors have no chances to use one or two specific slopes which are the steepest slopes in the ski resort. This may inhibit some advanced skiers come here for skiing. As a result, it is important for managers to find the balance between this kind of marketing and serving other customers.

Suomu ski resort also co-operates with tourism companies. The cooperation can be important to Suomu, because tourism companies provide the most visitors to Suomu. This is also how Suomu distinguishes itself from other ski resorts. According to the CEO of Suomu Mr Tirkkonen (2020a), tourism companies bring large numbers of tourists to Suomu every year, making Suomu full of foreign customers. Cooperation with tourism companies, which makes Suomu as a fixed destination in a route for visitors, is the most effective marketing way of Suomu because the number of visitors who are led here in a team takes the highest proportion among all the other customers. For these visitors, Suomu is not only a ski resort, but also a destination for their holiday, which means that Suomu is expected to provide more services to customers than other ski resorts. Suomu provides many tourism activities such as snowmobile, snowshoes and other events to fulfil visitors' time when they are not skiing. As a destination, Suomu provides visitors with various services including supporting products (accommodation) and core products (skiing and tourism activities) just like other destinations in Finland, however, it differentiates itself by providing visitors packages including skiing, various tourism activities, transportation and accommodation. By contrast, most destinations or ski resorts in Finland do not have this kind of combination, making Suomu distinct from other destinations and ski resorts in Finland. For example, in Pyhä, although there are many companies in this area that can provide tourism activities and accommodations for visitors, the ski resort company itself only manages skiing business. The paper would suggest Suomu to keep this unique feature and expand it in the future. For instance, Suomu can develop itself as a brand combining ski experience, safari activities, accommodation and also other services, but not just advertise these activities separately.

2.2 Online Marketing

Suomu also has various online marketing channels, through which visitors and other customers can find information of Suomu. In today's society, interaction plays an important role in marketing, however, the traditional marketing ways such as advertising on TV and newspaper are considered lacking of interaction with customers. "There is growing cynicism and resistance to supplier-led brand messages, with the collective knowledge and feedback of the network

beginning to have a more important impact on purchasing decisions.” (Tagg, Stevenson & Vescovi 2012). It means that companies need to use other ways to market themselves and allow interaction with customers. Online marketing can meet all these requirements, it can not only make communication between companies and customers possible, but also allow interactions among customers. Customers can give feedback and comments to the services or the companies, and other customers also can see these comments. As a result, online marketing is an important way for companies to gain more publicity.

The replies given by the CEO of Suomu to the questionnaire show that Suomu advertises through social media, which includes Instagram, Facebook, Wechat, and Suomu’s official website. It also shows that Suomu uses Weibo for marketing. (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020a) As there has not been any information about Suomu on Weibo, we can know that Suomu is planning to market on Weibo. Weibo is a very popular social media in China, with large amounts of users. In the scale and usage of China's Weibo users in 2018, the data shows that the scale of China's Weibo users in 2018 was 337 million, an increase of 34.56 million compared with the end of 2017. The proportion of Weibo users in the overall number of Internet users reached 42.3 million. (ASKCI Consulting Co., Ltd, 2019) People in China especially younger people prefer to share their lives and travels through Weibo, and the sharing can be seen by every user of Weibo; Wechat and QQ are most popular social media in China, but they are relatively personal——people’s sharing can only be seen by their friends. Weibo is becoming more popular among all the users than ever. By December 2018, China ’s WeChat Moments and QQ Space user utilization rates were 83.4% and 58.8%, respectively, down 3.9 / 5.6 percentage points from the end of 2017; Weibo utilization rate was 42.3%, up 1.4 percentage points from the end of 2017 (ASKCI Consulting Co., Ltd, 2019). To make more people in China get to know Suomu, using Weibo to market is an effective and economical way.

As Tagg et al (2012) stated, new generation Web-based communities and hosted applications are beginning to have a major impact on customer behaviour across a diverse range of industries, both B2C and B2B. Traditional marketing only allows suppliers to spread their information and messages to customers. It means that the traditional way of marketing is suppliers-led and do

not allow the interaction with customers. In today's society, this kind of way for marketing has become less effective. More customers begin to resist supplier-led brand messages, while online marketing is beginning to have more important impacts on purchasing decisions, because customers can find collective information, feedback and comments on the network. According to the replies given by the CEO to the questionnaire, the traditional marketing and online marketing are considered equally important to Suomu (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020a). It shows that Suomu now is still spend a relatively high proportion of investment on traditional marketing. The paper would suggest Suomu to put focus on the online marketing. To better interact with customers, Suomu may develop more online marketing channels such as Weibo and also other popular mobile applications among customers.

Through some mobile applications, suppliers can not only provide messages to customers but also interact with them. The interaction, which allows customers to give comments, share their experiences and ideas and communicate with suppliers, is an important issue that determine the success of marketing. As Tagg et al (2012) stated, from a marketing perspective, the most distinctive feature is not the technology involved but rather the growth of a new global culture – a 'Net generation' culture based on decentralised authority rather than hierarchy and control, online socialising and collaboration, user-generated and distributed content, open communications, peer-to-peer sharing, and global participation.

2.3 Challenges Suomu is Facing

There are still challenges Suomu now is facing: lack of additional service that makes the visit enjoyable, which means that the varieties of entertaining activities for visitors are not enough. For example, most visitors who come here for holiday do their tourism activities and ski in the daytime but cannot find anything to do in the evening—there is not even a pub in the night. As a result, Suomu is not a place for a holiday that more than two or three days. Suomu can deal with this problem by investing on building more entertaining facilities or cooperating with other companies in this area. Now, Suomu is building a new restaurant in its hotel. The new restaurant should open also in the night-time. In the future, customers can choose to spend their evening in the pub (which is in

the restaurant) rather than stay in their room. Also, it needs a half an hour's drive from Suomu to the nearby city where visitors can find shops and more restaurants, and Suomu has no shops or markets and provides little food choices, visitors may find it inconvenient for them when they want to eat. The replies given by the CEO to the questionnaire show that, Suomu now is planning to build more facilities including basic facilities and entertainment facilities (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020a). The paper would make suggestions for Suomu to build more basic facilities such as a shop and entertainment facilities. For example, Suomu can open a pub to make customers feel more convenient and to enrich their schedules, making them have better experiences.

Also, Suomu now has various ways to market itself online, however, the information that were provided online can sometimes be found outdated. For instance, the information of transportation on the official website sometimes can be found outdated and can make visitors confused. As the CEO of Suomu answered in the questionnaire, Suomu updates information online every one to three days. And when being asked that what issues are considered most important when advertising online, the CEO chose accommodation, events, entertainment activities, basic facilities and nature environment, but skipped transportation and atmosphere (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020a). However, the outdated information can make customers more difficult to find out how to get the ski resort or even give up finding eventually. This will have negative influences on their experience, even if they finally find correct information of transportation. As a result, the paper would suggest Suomu not just focus on some specific types of information but also update other information regularly.

3. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Author: Xiangqing Meng

The aim of this article was to analyse the status of Suomu from the viewpoint of destination developing and management. Through the destination management knowledge, five aspects about this ski resort are discussed in the context: strategic foundation, destination branding, developing experience and product, cooperation with DMOs as well as e-business and information management.

Current and basic situation was mainly acquired by qualitative research, and the questionnaires were sent to the operators of Suomu by Wechat. Related information from database and some websites was collected and arranged in the study process and also referred in the context.

Suomu Ski Resort is dedicated to international tourism business because of its conditions and created as a tourism destination. Appealing names of the travel packages could be helpful in branding process to create fantastic image for tourists. Special tourism experiences and products aiming at Asian customers are discussed for developing experiences. Online booking channels are suggested for Suomu official website as an important e-business platform. In addition, their cooperation with DMOs of different levels was assessed by research and indicated at the last part.

Keywords: destination strategy, destination branding, tourism experience, e-business, DMO

3.1 Concept of Destination Management

A tourism destination can be defined as a geographical region, political jurisdiction or major attraction where visitors would be provided with a range of satisfying or memorable visitation experiences (Bornhorst, Ritchie & Sheehan 2009, 572). According to the guide for tourism destination management from World Tourism Organization (WTO), it includes tourism product such as support services and attractions and tourist resources within one day's return travel time. The main basic elements are attractions, public and private amenities, accessibility, human resources, price, image and character. The provision and quality of these elements is influential in the visitor's decisions to make their trip. (WTO 2007,1.)

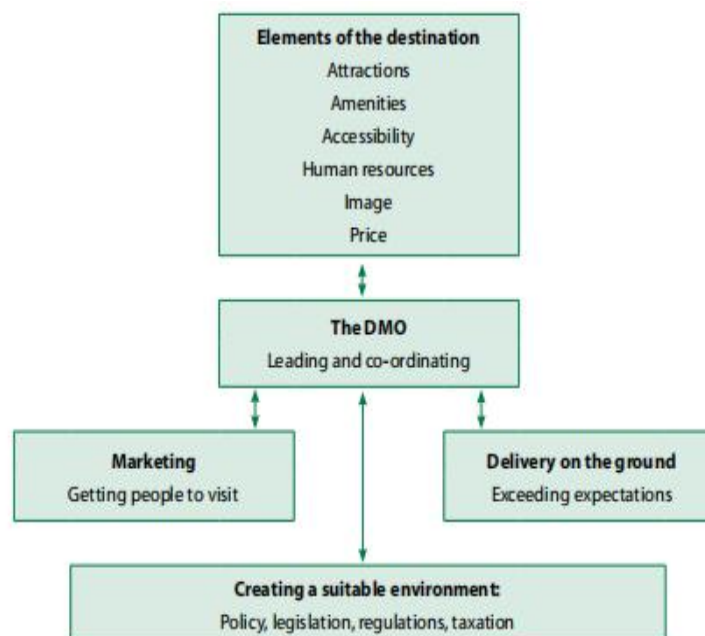


Figure 1 Destination Management (WTO 2007,4)

Destination management involves coordinated and integrated management of complex factors in a destination. Legislation, local practices and even national culture have impacts on destination management. (WTO 2007,4.) Effective destination management requires strategic or long-term planning, continual monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes from tourism efforts. Figure 1 presents a summary of destination management.

The concepts above provide fundamental views of destination management. Despite the elements of the destination itself which directly affect the experiences of visitors, various components constitute the success of a tourism

destination. The following analysis of the destination management of Suomu Ski Resort comprises its destination strategies, cooperation with DMOs, destination branding, developing experience and products, and e-business platforms.

3.2 Strategic Foundation of Suomu

A tourism destination is constituted of many different components. How these components are integrated affects the benefits of stakeholders and the sustainability of local economy. Hence, good development strategies should be made for the sake of development of the destination and amended termly every five to ten years.

To lay solid strategic foundations for the development of destination, it is necessary for the managers to assess the companies' current situation and set an inspiring vision and goals for the future (WTO 2007, 27). In the assessing phase, a comparing analysis between Suomu and its competitor was undertaken. Salla Ski Resort is adjacent to Suomu and regarded as a very significant competitor in the vicinity. Table 1 shows the competitiveness analyzed of these two ski resorts.

Table 1 Analysis Comparing Salla and Suomu

Ski Resorts Aspects	Suomu Ski Resort	Salla Ski Resort
Geographical location	Kemijärvi, at southeast of Lapland, on the Arctic Circle	Salla, northeast to Suomu, close to the border of Finland and Russia
Originated from	1965	1937 or earlier
Number of slopes	10	15
Cross-country ski trails	73 km, 17 km illuminated	160 km, 43 km illuminated
Open seasons	Mainly in winter	Winter and Summer
Clients	Chinese, Singaporean, European tourists in groups Finnish athletes and families	Finnish and Russian Families with children

Social medium	Facebook, Instagram, Weibo	Tripadvisor, Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram.
Payment method	Only on the site, Finnish booking channel online	Various methods on/off-line
Website information	Basic information with some mistakes	All the services and information, clear and accurate
Activities in addition to Skiing	Snowmobiling, ice fishing, husky safari, aurora hunting, toboggans.	Spa, reindeer farm visit, electric cars, fatbikes, summer outdoors.
Dining	A ski cafe and cottage restaurant, other possibilities available in town above 40km far away	At least 6 restaurants near the slopes
Accommodations	Two hotels mainly for tourists and some cottages	Hotels, cottages, apartments and caravan parking area
Distance from downtown	44.5 km	10 km

According to the interview (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020a) with the entrepreneurs of Suomu, their most important target market is motorcoach tour groups from Asia and other parts of Europe (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020a). Suomu's operators manage to use the natural resources to the maximum extent instead of coordinating with other local safari enterprises. Typical arctic safaris including husky safari, ice fishing, aurora hunting and experiential ski lessons have been attached to the tourists' travel packages during their stay. Hotel Suomutunturi is dominated by tour groups in the peak season. Finnish families also come to ski, although mostly at Christmas holiday and Easter. Therefore, ski athletes occupy two best slopes in most of the quiet time.

Salla concentrates on providing fantastic ski experience for local residents, especially family with children (Salla 2020). And because of Salla's unique geographic position, Russian customers are also appealed. They have more

slopes which are also in the FIS competitive standard, longer ski trails, more accommodations and catering services, which means they have more customer capacity than Suomu. In addition, concrete information involved with all kinds of needs can be searched on its website, helping customers plan and book their trips online.

The biggest disadvantage for Suomu to attract Finnish customers, compared to Salla, can be the lack of auxiliary business and optional services. Its location is so far away from the shopping centre that the customers need around forty minutes for driving each trip. The owners claimed that they had tried to launch collaboration with villagers nearby, but the local residents did not show much interests to the idea of constructing commercial district. Probably, it is the poor willing of community support that has hindered the development of Suomu.

For this reason, more attention has been forced on providing destination experiences and services for international customers. To develop as a unique tourism destination combining safaris with ski experience has become the basic strategy of Suomu. Suomu claims to remain as “a genuine Lapland Holiday Resort” on its website, and the new hotel under construction will serve for its long-term development. Moreover, they regard conserving the surrounding nature as a guiding principle of development. (Suomu 2020.) The original vision reveals their awareness of sustainability.

3.3 Destination Branding

Defined by Ritchie and Ritchie (1998,17), a brand of destination can be a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic used to identify and differentiate the destination. They added that it conveys the promise of a memorable tourism experience associated with the particular destination, and it also reinforces the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experiences. (Ritchie & Ritchie 1998, 17.)

A study of three brand elements (name, tagline and logo) in destination branding was performed by Kladou and other researchers (2016, 8) who drew the conclusions that the name of a destination takes more important place than its tagline and logo, especially for a new destination or a new route combining multiple destinations (Kladou, Kavaratzis, Rigopoulou & Salonika 2016, 8).

Hence, to attract more foreign tourists, Suomu entrepreneurs might find some fascinating words to name their travel products at the early stage of branding efforts.

Oppositely, Suomu is widely regarded as an established ski destination by Finnish skiers since it first opened in 1965, earlier than most of other ski resorts in Lapland. To emphasise its name among the native, effective brand tactics and promotional devices make more sense than changes of the tagline or the logo. Nevertheless, the authors (Kladou, Kavartzis, Rigopoulou & Salonika 2016, 8) highlighted the view afterwards that it is the traits and characteristics of the place itself that are most influential in decision-making process. Rather than only focusing on promotional campaigns and devices, the entrepreneurs should expand the unique features of Suomu like landscapes of arctic nature, Lappish lifestyle and splendid ski experiences, which contribute to brilliant image of the destination.

3.4 Developing Experience and Product

Tourism experience consists of two dimensions according to the structure model of tourism experience. The dimension of peak touristic experiences refers to the experience of the attractions that constitute the major motivations to tourism. Another is the dimension of supporting consumer experiences referring to the experiences of gratifying basic consumer needs on the journey, such as eating, sleeping and transportation, which do not constitute the major motivations to tourism. (Quan & Wang 2004, 300.) Both of these two dimensions are necessary in the whole structure and should be considered in the design of memorable tourism experience. The behaviors of target clients also require consideration because it is believed that customers rule the markets. Understanding the needs of customers and the ability to offer solutions to these needs, as well as to adapt to the changes of the needs of customers, will give service providers a competitive advantage. (Egboro 2015.)

Chinese tourists have made up a large segment in the tourism of Suomu in recent years. The most leading motivation of their visit is the attractiveness of natural scenery in the wilderness of Finland. Because of the environmental pollution in China cities where they mainly come from, they admire the fresh air, blue sky, dense forest and all the factors of wilderness. Also, the Lappish

activities combined with nature such as fishing, hiking and going to sauna appeal to them. (Song 2018, 30.) Hence, these attractions and products can be fully developed and highlighted as peak touristic experience in the marketing.

Song (2008) claimed that another travel behaviour of Chinese customers is buying typical products like trinkets, cosmetics or even nourishment. Most of them suppose that Finnish products are more environmentally friendly and of better quality than Chinese products. As Alipay has become one of the main payment methods in China, Chinese customers tend to purchase especially in shops where they can use Alipay, and tax-free shops or goods are prevalent among them, too. (Song 2018, 31.) A few souvenirs were spotted at the ski hotel reception while the prices of them were much higher than those in other destinations such as Santa Claus Village. As a result, these souvenirs became ornaments of the hall rather than saleable products. The inconvenience of shopping was regularly complained by both customers and staff. Only the ski cafe offered food, drinks and cigarettes, but except lunch buffet, the price-quality ratio of which was not so excellent, other selections on the menu were several meals with French fries. These shortcomings of supporting customer experiences need corrections for long-term benefits.

3.5 E-business and Information Management

Referred to the e-business platform they mainly use in the operation, the entrepreneurs of Suomu mentioned Hotellinx Property Management System (PMS) which is a Finnish-based hotel management software (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020a). Its functions include front office, sales, online reservations, housekeeping and task management. Hotellinx Cloud, as it declares, has been developed for hospitality industry and adapting itself to the needs of practically any organizations within this branch. The strength of this system is its ability to cover hotels and restaurants plus all other departments and types of reservations in the same package. (Hotellinx Systems Ltd 2020.) Therefore, it is particularly useful for Suomu that usually offers their guests other services besides accommodation. From our observation, Suomu has used Hotellinx PMS at their ski hotel reception and restaurants.

Concluded in the research of digital tourism for Visit Arctic Europe Project (Gelter 2017, 28), the growing up of the digital generations has been changing

Internet users' behaviors, which results in Internet considered as the primary source for travel information and travel experiences support. Purchase processes will move into the mobile devices and be accomplished over the Internet as well. (Gelter 2017, 28.) The official website is an indispensable access to the destination through which customers gain specific information in the trip planning and booking processes. While Suomu's website supplies English and Russian language selection, the booking approach of ski passes or other ski services is only in Finnish. Due to the digital tendency of tourism, it is recommended that they produce English booking channels at least and make it possible for foreign customers to book and finish payment online, which can not only reduce the cost of time and labour in transaction process but also improve accuracy.

3.6 Cooperation with Destination Management Organizations

Coordinating many constituent elements of the tourism product, Destination Marketing or / and Management Organizations (DMOs / DMMOs) provide visitor services and necessary information structure to market the destination democratically and enhance residents' well-being (Fuchs, Höpken & Lexhagen 2014). Thoroughly, the goals of Destination Management Organizations are to plan the development of destinations and to enhance the collaboration of the memberships in order to provide highly satisfactory experience.

From the interview with the entrepreneurs of Suomu (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020a), we learned that they coordinate with several DMOs of different levels. Unitours is the foremost one. It is auxiliary to Uniman Oy, a Finnish travel agency located in Helsinki which also belongs to the entrepreneurs of Suomu (Kauppalehti 2020). This company has brought almost all the international tourists of Suomu making it one of the indispensable destinations in these customers' trips of Lapland. They also have memberships in Visit Finland, the most widely recognized destination marketing and management association in Finland. Though Visit Finland has the most comprehensive travel information of Finland including all the ski resorts, it only shows the name of 'Suomu' on the map but has not linked to its official website, which is distinct from other ski resorts (Visit Finland 2020). Somehow it seems that Suomu Ski Resort has not realized the value of this largest DMO in marketing themselves. Visit Kemijärvi is the local

DMO of regional level in charge of the tourism development of this municipality. It posts almost all the activities and events on its website. Two ski resorts are recommended, Suomu and Pyhä Fell, and their official website links have been shown on individual web pages. (Kemijärven Matkailuinfo 2020.)

The operators of Suomu revealed the responsibilities these DMOs have taken and assessed the effects they have made. The contents were referenced from the research of roles and responsibilities in Destination Management and Marketing by WTO (2007,135). As Table 2 demonstrates, they had excellent effects in training and education, product “start-ups” as well as strategy, research and development. Events development and management was announced to have received little favour from these DMOs. Other responsibilities such as destination promotion, business campaigns to SMMEs, destination coordination and management as well as visitor information and management were at a medium level. (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020a.)

Table 2 Assessment of Responsibilities of the DMOs

Responsibilities	Grade from 1-5, Fail-Success				
Destination promotion, including branding and image	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Campaigns to drive business, particularly to SMMEs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Destination coordination and management	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Visitor information and reservations	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Training and education	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Product “start-ups”	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Events development and management	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Strategy, research and development	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

The original form is attached as Appendix 1. It also contained four more responsibilities: unbiased information services, operation or facilitation of bookings, business advice and attractions development and management. But according to the answer of the operators, they were not much concerned in the whole cooperation.

4. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Author: Niyan Tian

Human resource management is a big topic but this part concentrates on human resource management of Suomu Ski Resort in regard of the points to which the owners attach importance: stable and skillful employees and ways to improve performance of employees. In addition, the owners want some novel ideas to promote the overall level of human resource management, which requires understanding of the cutting-edge views of human resource management and attach more stress to the feedback from the staff.

The research method used in the article is qualitative research method. Since the author of this article has worked in the ski resort and is familiar with internal situations, observations and perspectives of the author are expressed in this part. Discussions with other employees in that firm would be illustrated as well to help solve the issues.

Based on study and analysis, conclusions are that if employees work happily and feel satisfied with wages and bonus, the working environment and living environment, they are liable to stay here and proceed to work next winter season. Additionally, improvements about conditions of working meal and emphasis on the suggestions and feedback from employees boost the performance of workers.

Keywords: employee selection, training, working environment, performance management, employee incentive

4.1 Introduction

From my perspective, all the strategies and plans in an organization rely on people to fulfil, which means if the management could not govern the employees very well, regardless of how perfect the tactics are, the aim would not be achieved as expected.

In that regard, a highly committed, capable, empowered, involved, and motivated workforce was seen as the way to competitive advantage and sustained business success (Storey 1995). Compared with other ski resorts, the main business of the Suomu Ski Resort is more than tourism than skiing itself. It relies on the UNITOURS which is a tourism agency of the owner of Suomu Ski Resort to bring guests from all over the world, mainly Asian guests, to carry out polar experience activities and manage hotels and restaurants. The opportunities for direct contact between employees and guests in the place are everywhere, so human resource management is even more crucial for this ski resort.

Human resource management (HRM) can be defined in different ways. To facilitate the article, the conception of HRM is simplified to the process that involves Human resource planning, Employee remuneration and Benefits Administration, Performance Management and Employee Relations. The essence of developing human resource management is to have an overall view of the process and advance each part of the process.

The research subject in this thesis is Suomu Ski Resort with 20 employees that have an intense need to have stable and skillful and high-performing employees. New perspectives on human resource management is what the operators anticipate. (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020a.) Therefore, this part concentrates on the points and attempts to propose feasible solutions for the issues.

4.2 Measures to Have and Retain Stable and Competent Employees

The high qualities of employees and lower turnover of good performers are chased by all managers. The very first step is to increase the channels of hiring, more websites offering positions can be used to attract qualified labor force. Meanwhile, the request of one position should be as specific as possible to reduce the trouble when an interview is conducted. If more people see the

hiring information, possibilities of getting right workers would be enhanced. Especially in some posts, recommendations from headhunting is worth attention. This is the case in Suomu Ski Resort, where former guests become ski resort employees. Therefore, better service can also attract quality employees.

Through these efforts, the firm may get relatively excellent workers that still need training depending on the situations of different companies. During the internship at Suomu Ski Resort, the author discovered that some employees lacked working coordination. The Suomu Ski Resort operates tourism, hotels and restaurants. Tourist guests are mainly group guests. Each tour group is equipped with a tour guide. The tour guide is responsible for arranging guests to book entertainment items and meals and accommodation, so the tour guide and the ski resort staff are frequently connected. Once there was a problem with the group tour guide and the local guide in the time connection, the guests came in advance, however, the preparation work were not done. In this case, the group tour guide obliged to control the time and notify the local tour guide, who was a staff member of Suomu Ski Resort.

Advanced training is also good for interns. The tourism projects operated by Suomu Ski Resort included arctic ice fishing, aurora trips, dog sledding, cross-country skiing experience, reindeer farms, in which reindeer farms and dog sledding collaborate with others, and the place of ice fishing is not located inside the ski resort. Since the ice fishing and dog sledding are not in the ski area, and generally the driver of the tour group does not know the route, it needs the guidance of the intern. However, some interns have not been trained in advance and have only been there once, so they have misled, leaving the customers to the wrong destination. Work mistakes mentioned above can be avoided by appropriate training. The management needs to clearly know the work process of each job position and where employees need to cooperate, and take into account potential challenges, and then train employees in advance, to turn inexperienced employees into experienced employees and experienced employees into proficient ones.

After stern selection and necessary training, employees are supposed to attain the requirements of employers. But the higher turnover seems an inherent setback in ski resort management since most of ski resorts cannot operate in

summer season due to lack of customers, so workers must find new jobs when the ski resort close. It is very common that that the experienced worker would not come back to work in the same ski resort or other ski resorts next winter season as he has another job that lasts all year around.

Retaining talented workers is difficult and many factors affect this. One of it is the effective interaction between employees and manager. Suomu Ski resort involves tourism industry and hospitality industry, so the customer experience is critical, clients' feedback is conveyed by employees and then the management know the feedback. Besides, employees can also have many good suggestions during their work. But sometimes the management do not plan to improve some situations due to higher expenses. And employees are not content with it because the situations will not change. Over time, employees lose faith in this company and they will not come back to work after the contract ends.

There is a challenge in Suomu Ski Resort due to Hourly pay. The employees record their working time by themselves. This is not to say that the employees cheat on the duration, but they are likely to lack effectiveness because of the hourly pay. Moreover, some employees like receptionist are not always busy while the payments accumulate as time goes, resulting in the anxiety of the employer who reckons his money is being wasted. As a result, the employer arranges the receptionist to do house cleaning with the housekeeper when there are not many things to do at reception hall. The employer is right because they want to take use of money and their employees versatile. The need to be versatile brings more pressure to employees, so it may be helpful to set some rewards and bonus to workers after they do different jobs very well.

In short, if employees work happily in Suomu Ski Resort and feel satisfied with the working environment and living environment, they are liable to stay here and proceed to work next winter season.

4.3 Employee Incentives That Help Boost Performance Management

There are monitors in hotel and restaurant and the supervisor monitors his employees around to supervise his employees, and everything looks organizational and well planned. However, the efficiency is not satisfying the

boss. This is because employees are superficially hard working and they ignore the efficiency some time.

Based on 40 years of motivation surveys it can be concluded that the five top factors (Carolyn 1997):

- (1) good wages;
- (2) full appreciation for work done;
- (3) job security;
- (4) promotion and growth in the organization;
- (5) interesting work.

The last three items are no need to alter in Suomu Ski Resort as job security is guaranteed in Finland and working tasks are stable with no space for promotion, but some measures could be taken on first two. For instance, a new restaurant has been constructed in Suomu Ski Resort, the completion deadline and completion of each stage should be settled and if the construction team achieve the aim, certain reward are about to be given. Incentive system should be instituted in ski resort.

Appreciation is not expensive but useful. If employees do well at their job, employer can praise them in the convention. Employer could discuss the highlight of work with employees and inspire them to keep moving.

Improving food and accommodation will increase employees' performance. The living environment plays a subtle role in making the employees remain. Based on my working experience in a TV station and chatting with other workers in ski resort, after hard work, good meals can refresh us, and we are willing to work harder and continue to work here. Working meals at many technology companies have become the reason for attracting and retaining competent employees. However, the lunch buffet in the restaurant of Suomu Ski Resort is not delicious and the price is relatively high. Many employees are dissatisfied with this, which will affect their work emotions and thus their performance. So, improving the quality of working meals is indispensable.

Letting professional people do professional things without too much interference can improve the enthusiasm of employees. When the author was working in Suomu, the employer had a meeting to assign work to the employees for

cleaning hotel. The assigned tasks seemed to be significantly reasonable, but there is an imbalance between tasks in actual operation. Some employees' work tasks were too heavy, and some employees' tasks were lighter. After implementing this plan for one hour, it was replaced by the original plan. The cleaners' work enthusiasm has been hit, and the work efficiency has not been improved. It is best for employers to set deadlines in accordance with certain standards, and let employees choose specific methods for accomplishing tasks.

In the interview, the owner of the ski resort mentioned that he wanted more new ideas to couple with the problems in the process of human resource management (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020a). It is very efficient to talk to other ski resort managers to get new inspirations. Paying attention to the opinions and feedback of the employees of the ski resort can intuitively solve the problem and holding regular plenary meetings to brainstorm the trouble of human resources management of the ski resort will have unexpected gains. At the same time, understanding and drawing on human resources management methods outside the industry, and transforming according to the attributes of the ski resort can also achieve amazing results. For example, it can use the punch card system used by many technology companies to count employees' working hours.

The authors of this part have less than three months of internship at the ski resort in Suomu, and the number of employees she talked to is limited, and it is also affected by the lack of comprehensive knowledge, so the analysis may not be perfect. In the future, provided that the author would have opportunities to know more about relevant industries, the analysis could be deeper and more insightful.

5. RISK AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Author: Zhuang Zhuo

This part focuses on the risk and crisis aspects of Suomu's management, dedicated on analyzing its current status regarding such aspects and drawing a development plan for the ski resort.

Related concepts are firstly explained. Followed by the case study focusing on a fire accident that took place 5 years ago. Risk Matrix and Five-stage Model for Crisis Management were used to conduct this case study. Resources includes books, journal articles, online material and an online interview.

The study indicated that Suomu's risk and crisis management was insufficiently effective. Therefore, to avoid and minimize damage from potential incidents in the future, making a risk evaluation plan, building a risk culture and forming a crisis management team are advisable.

Keywords: risk, crisis, damage, safety, reputation

5.1 Definitions

Risk, the effect of uncertainty on objectives is not so uncommon in the world of ski resorts. Therefore, risk management, a coordinated set of activities and methods that are used to direct the organization, in this case, ski resort, with regard to risk is very necessary (ISO 31000 2018, 1). According to Wolke (2017, 4-7, 74-76, 89-92), the core of risk management is the ability to identify, measure, analyze and ultimately mitigate and control the risk.

A sometimes confusingly similar word 'crisis management' is also important in the management of a ski resort. Unlike risk management, which normally involves multiple actions to mitigate or prevent the unexpected events that may threaten the organization, crisis management is more focused on quick response to decrease the impact of the crisis and re-establish normality. In short, risk management of an organization is more proactive, whereas crisis management is more reactive. The relationship between risk and crisis management can be described as "Crisis management is what you do when risk management fails." (Caldwell 2011.)

5.2 Models

The model used here to analyze 2015 Suomu fire incident was the Risk Matrix. According to Husdal (2009), DeLoach (2000) acknowledges four ways of dealing with risk by establishing a risk matrix (Figure 2), which takes both risk's probability and impact into consideration, as Figure 2 shows below.

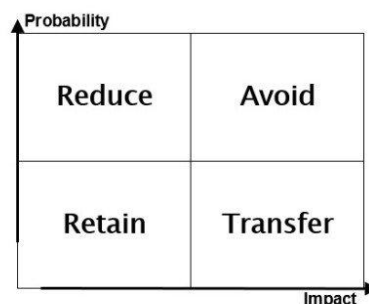


Figure 2 Risk Matrix (Husdal 2009)

Easy to understand, big-impact risks with high probability should be avoided; big-impact risks with low probability are suggested to be transferred while small-impact low-probability risks are sought to be reduced, and the small-impact low-

probability risks can just be retained or accepted. Generally speaking, two methods here are used to deal with risks: either by diminishing the negative impact of the risks or reducing the likelihood of the risks.

The model for analyzing Suomu's crisis management is Mitroff's (1994, 102-112) five stages for crisis management shown in Figure 3 (Xu 2016) as below.

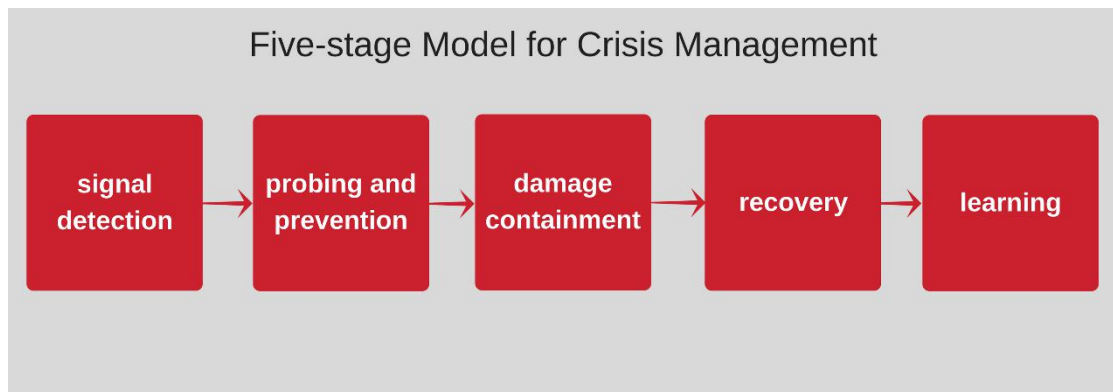


Figure 3 Five-stage Model for Crisis Management (Xu 2016)

Since the crisis management mentioned here is the backup plan when risk management fails to work (Caldwell 2011), here we will only focus on the latter three stages of this five-stage model, which take place only after the crisis happens.

5.3 Case Study

On October 9, 2015, there was a fire in Suomu. Severe damage was caused, though no injuries were reported during the incident, the old part of the hotel with its restaurant premises was almost completely destroyed, the renovated part of the hotel survived the worst damage (Tynkkynen 2015). The value of damage to the ski resort was estimated to be 12 million euros (Simoska 2018a).

Now according to the Risk Matrix (DeLoach 2003), a fire undoubtedly can cause considerable damage, though may not happen very often, and is clearly a low-probability huge-impact risk for a ski resort, therefore, the optimal solution seems to be 'transferring the risk,' which can often be achieved by getting the valued property insured. In the case of Suomu, they did manage to transfer this risk to the insurance company by having both their hotels and restaurant fully insured by OP Vakuutus (Simoska 2018a).

It may seem that the company had done well in preserving its interests in terms of risk management; however, this was still to be considered as a bad example of risk management, because the ability to develop foresight and include unexpected situations in a disaster prevention and response strategy is critical (Ishikawa & Tsujimoto 2009, 57-59). This fire incident would have been completely avoided had Suomu been able to identify the potential risks while carrying out their roof work. The electrician company hired for their electrical work was just a maintenance man and proved to be unallowed to do the installation work without a supervisor (Leisti 2018). Here the company made a mistake by simply assuming the unqualified electrician were able to perform the job, ignoring the potential risk that could cost them dearly in many aspects, which it eventually did. This incident to some extent formed a disadvantage for the ski resort, because tourists' perception of safety and security in the destination constitutes an important competitiveness (Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Roman & Scott 2007, 69-73). Suomu could be viewed as a dangerous place that could not guarantee tourists' safety, the public image was greatly compromised. Moreover, the fact that company caught themselves in the violation of safety regulations (Simoska 2018a) led to another risk when it came to compensation, which is analyzed in the following paragraph of crisis management. Had they recruited qualified workers with more strict regulations, Suomu could have saved itself from the disastrous fire.

In terms of crisis management, the damage containment part was executed rather well, given the fact that they immediately contacted the fire department and saved some of the new part of the hotel and evacuated the buildings before any injuries could happen (Tynkkynen 2015). Damage could have been much worse, thanks to their quick response. However, for recovery part, Suomu's efforts were questionable. The company were reported to conceal the incompetence of this worker from the file they sent to insurance company (Leisti 2018). Such withhold of information were certainly able to affect the insurance indemnity of the company, even worse, the entrepreneur himself was charged of gross fraud and demanded imprisonment by the prosecutor (Simoska 2018a). Though all the charges were dismissed by district court in May 2018 (Tynkkynen 2018), the long journey of police investigations, hearings and trial (Simoska 2018b) were undoubtedly vexing and severely impaired company's

public relations, not to mention all the cost of legal process. In disasters, a company must admit that there will be a negative impact, at least in the short term, any ways of trying to deny or twist it will reduce their credibility (WTO 2007, 68-70). Due to the lack of openness and honesty, efforts they made to recover from the crisis in certain ways made the crisis even worse. According to Coombs (2007, 3-11), three types of threats are created by the crisis, which are public safety; financial loss and reputation loss. In Suomu's case, the damage was concentrated on the latter two. Compared to the financial loss, which was approximately 12 million euros as mentioned before, the reputation loss was far more unfathomable and more likely to have a long-lasting consequence which could lead to potential customer churn. Because there are two aspects of public image damage in Suomu's case, not only as a poor -managing destination but also a fraudulent company. The harm was immeasurable. And as for the learning stage, the company did learn a costly but precious lesson. With the given opportunity of a new renovation plan, the newly built part of hotel sits together with the hotel wing preserved in the fire. Restaurants, hotel rooms and lighting of the slope all have been upgraded to some extent as well. (Korhonen 2017.) According to an online interview with the owner, risk analysis is already currently a part of company's daily basis. A systematic approach of avoiding reputation risk, occupational health risk and slope safety risk has been established since then. On top of that, staying calm is the most significant thing to do when facing the crisis. Also, they shall always think and prepare for the worst scenario, but still develop business while taking risks into consideration. Furthermore, the owner mentioned their preparations for the inevitable risk of global warming, faster and more efficient snowmaking and snow storage system would be their answer for the shortening winter season. (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020b.) It can be seen from here that the incident aroused Suomu's awareness of establishing their risk and crisis management, though a more detailed development plan is needed.

5.4 Development Plan

Based on the analysis on above event and the management system they currently have, a development plan for Suomu's risk and crisis management to minimize the damage was formed in case further unfortunate events take place in the future.

5.4.1. Making A Risk Evaluation Plan

A risk evaluation plan including probability and severity of the risk should be made and carried out first before every important decision were made, such as housing construction, marketing investment, slope upgrading etc. Asking the company itself questions like 'What could be the uncertainty?' 'How likely are they going to happen?' 'How bad it would be if those were to happen?' Then by using it in combination with risk acceptance criteria, make a risk management plan for every individual event. Three regions of risk can be formed: The region where risks are so low that could be considered negligible; the region where risks are so large that considered intolerable; an intermediate region where the risk shall be reduced to a level which is as low as reasonably practicable. (Aven 2012, 7-12, 20-22.) As for the risks in the regions, company can simply ignore them with little consequence or 'retained' as the Risk Matrix (Deloach 2000) suggested. As for the second region where intolerable risks lie, the company has to do rethink or even forfeit their whole plan, for the potential risk is beyond acceptance even there is only slightest chance. As for the biggest intermediate region, multiple approaches should be taken to minimize the risk. Cross-referencing with the historical data looking for pattern to avoid the risk; strictly following safety regulations and using supervisors to overlook the construction; testing different methods' availability and outcome before adopting one; putting insurance on valuable property and so on. Chose the most appropriate approach to lower the risk depending on the specific matter.

5.4.2 Building A Risk Culture

The culture of a company, as an invisible asset, pervades all aspects of organizational life and has a profound impact on organizational success and failure (Flamholtz & Randle 2011, 11-12). To build a risk culture within the company can help all the employees better understand and therefore, avoid potential risks. The risk culture in the company will not only be shown in risk management activities, but also will be manifested in strategic planning, employee training and ethical values developing (Hardy 2014, 177). Employees should be instructed with safe regulations and informed of accidents happened before. It is the Mr. Tirkkonen's responsibility to align business strategy with risk culture and make sure all members of the company can approach risk in a manner that senior management would expect (Unterrheiner 2017). Since most

of the employees in Suomu are seasonal workers, it is important to have such risk culture to provide an instant and familiar outline of the aspects they need to pay attention to while doing their job.

5.4.3 Forming A Crisis Management Team

However, when the risk management unfortunately fails, crisis management must kick in. To execute an effective crisis management, an organization should have a designated crisis management team whose sole duty is to oversee the realization of the crisis management mission (Batchelor 2003, 19). The size, structure and jurisdiction of this team can differ from every organization (Mukhopadhyay 2005, 7-11), considering the situation of Suomu, the owner Tirkkonen himself can act as the crisis manager with some other senior managements act as the fellow crew members. He will also be the spokesperson, who is in the centre of entire operation and the public face (Ruff & Aziz 2004, 97-100), just as he did years ago. The team need to oversee the whole course of the crisis, eliminate the crisis in the cradle if possible; hold emergency meeting if necessary; use the resources to full extent and call for help to diminish the damage. And on top of that, maintain good public relations with openness and honesty to avoid unnecessary reputational damage, for “if the physical effects of the crisis don’t get you, public relations errors could” (Batchelor 2003, 49).

6. SUSTAINABILITY

Author: Yuzhe Li

Including the case study of Ruka Ski resort, the sustainability section briefly introduces sustainable development and discusses what environmental protection measures exist in Suomu Ski Resort today, analyses the impact of current sustainable measures on ski resort operations.

The sustainability section of Suomu Ski Resort covers three parts: ecologically sustainable development, economically sustainable development, and socially sustainable development. Research methods for this section include documentary research, interview, and questionnaire.

Research shows that Suomu Ski Resort lacks in supporting sustainable development. Interviews with chief executive officer Mrs. Yang of the ski resort show that it intends to focus on the development of Ecologically and socially sustainable development and branding in the future.

Keywords: sustainability, environment, economy, social, branding

6.1 Introduction to Sustainability

There is no specific concept of what sustainability is, and all the debates and questions lead to sustainable development in various aspects. Today, sustainability is not limited to environmental factors, and it can range from recyclable packaging to water and air pollution to responsible business and supply chain practices, and much more (Wilson 2018). In economic terms, sustainable development represents the establishment of long-lasting profitable industries without destroying profit opportunities for future generations. In public opinion, people are always concerned about what they can pass on to their next generation, what can they do to keep the world as the way it is in the present time.

The section of development in Suomu Ski Resort covers three aspects: ecologically sustainable development, economically sustainable development, and socially sustainable development.

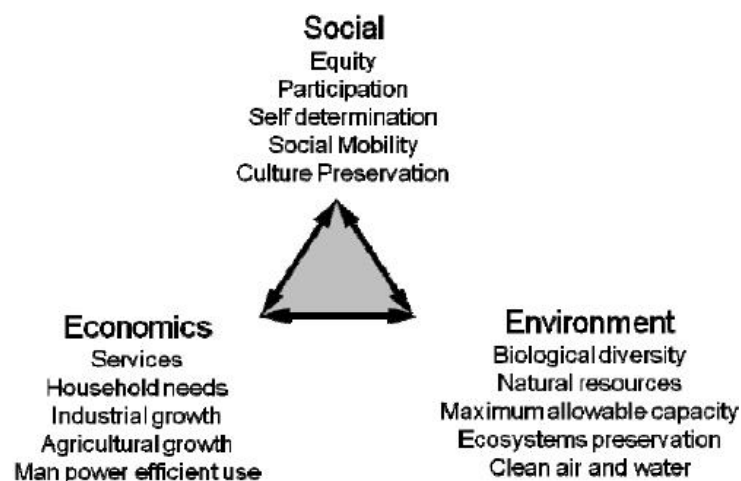


Figure 1. Sustainable development is a balance between social, environmental and economic objectives. (Velo 2007)

Ecologically sustainable development is usually related to the environment in which Ski resorts have many impacts. The consumption of water resources, energy, food supply, natural resources affects and is affected by the ecosystems. (Northrop & Connor 2013, 1) In terms of energy consumption, ski resort facilities rely on fossil fuels to generate greenhouse gases and contribute to global warming. Excessive reliance on artificial snow will increase operating costs as well as wastewater and electricity use. The expansion of a ski resort

came at the cost of cutting down more trees. Over time, a ski resort is not sustainable if it does not use its resources wisely and focuses only on short-term gains.

Meanwhile, developing sustainable development is a long-term approach. Sustainable economic development requires companies to make efficient use of available resources while ensuring steady revenue growth. It requires a company to evaluate its employees and analyze its customer groups and form an effective solution for delivering services that satisfy everyone. High-sustainability organizations have more long-term investors than low-sustainability counterparts. (Eccles, Ioannou & Serafeim 2012) With long-term partners, companies can save funds and use them to improve their services.

There is no specific definition of socially sustainable development, but it connects to corporate social responsibility. Not only that, but the sustainable development of society is also about every individual, company, government, and organization. Society is a process of continuous development. Influenced by the economic level at different historical stages, socially sustainable development has different concepts in different historical periods. Scholars in various backgrounds have different understandings of socially sustainable development, but in general, social sustainability concerns how individuals, communities, and societies live with each other and set out to achieve the objectives of development models (Colantonio & Dixson 2009, 18.)

In general, sustainability is “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (United Nations General Assembly 1987)

6.2 Sustainable Ski Resort in North Lapland

Ruka Ski Resort, one of Lapland's four major ski resorts, has made efforts in the economic, environmental, and social aspects of sustainable development. This part of the thesis is going to study the efforts of Ruka Ski Resort on sustainability issues and use them as examples to inspire Suomu Ski Resort's future approach to sustainable development.

Ruka Ski Resort launched its environmental programme in 2008, and over the years, it became Finland's second carbon neutral ski resort in 2018 following Pyhä Ski Resort.

In terms of ecologically sustainable development, Ruka ski resort has made changes to factors such as energy usage, snow preserving, and waste recycling. Ruka Ski Resort has set up their lighting system on slopes to operate automatically. Besides saving electricity, the benefits of doing so also extend the life of the equipment. At the same time, Ruka also upgraded their snowmobiles from two-stroke engines to four-stroke engines. This type of engine is fuel-efficient. Furthermore, Ruka also has its recycling system. Almost all types of mixed waste can be put inside of wastes container and be transported to a power plant in Oulu.

Since 2016, Ruka has experimented with new snowmaking methods, using January's natural snow to reduce the need for snowmaking in warm, wet conditions during the early ski season. This saves on snowmaking costs and energy consumption.

In order to attract tourists who do not ski, Ruka started Village-2-Valley Scenic Gondola in 2018, which allows tourists to ride the Gondola to explore the east and west sides of the ski resort without having to drive as before.

As previously mentioned, Ruka Ski Resort has the longest snow season in Finland. Extended snow season provides competitiveness, and more substantial competitiveness represents economically sustainable development. While trying to extend the snow season, the ski resort is also upgrading facilities on slopes, such as adding windshields to the ski lifts so that they are no longer affected by the weather. Tourists are more likely to choose a ski resort where weather condition does not change its opening time. In this way, after saving resources, upgrading equipment, attracting more tourists, and expanding the brand, Rukakeskus Oy was awarded a national entrepreneurship award in 2019.

At the same time, Ruka Ski Resort has made contributions to socially sustainable development. In 2018, Ruka Ski resorts paid the second-highest amount of taxes to the government of the Kuusamo area. While continuously generating income, Ruka is also supporting the local community. Starting in

2019, Ruka Ski Resort began to provide free ski passes to 10-year-old children in the Kuusamo area, and Ruka also provides job opportunities to local people and cooperation with local businesses. While bringing benefits to the community, Ruka Ski Resort also opposed mining activities in the Juomasuo region of Kuusamo. It believes that the benefits of tourism are more substantial than mining. (Responsibility at Ruka Ski Resort 2020)

In general, from the above three aspects of sustainable development, Ruka Ski Resort has made its efforts and obtained its benefits and brand value.

6.3 Developing Sustainability in Suomu Ski Resort

According to the online interview, Suomu Ski Resort expressed its willingness to focus on ecological and social sustainability in the future while branding the ski resort. (Tirkkonen & Yang 2020a.)

In terms of ecological sustainability, Suomu Ski Resort currently plans to upgrade its heat exchangers and radiators to save 10 percent of its energy while circulating warm air.

In terms of social sustainability, Suomu Ski Resort will prioritize local employees in the future while focusing on the education and training of employees. The ski resort also plans to join the region's tourism and travel associations and sponsor young alpine skiers.

In the matter of branding, the ski resort intends to attract more visitors with two themes, Suomu-Snow Part of Finland and Suomu-Alpine Performance. Suomu-Snow Part of Finland is a Safari Activities operator targeted for international tourists, mainly in Asia. And Suomu-Alpine Performance is a cluster-based alpine skiing center. It includes world-class alpine coaching, and instructor training.

Altogether, Suomu ski resort will gradually work its way up to a sustainable ski resort in the future by improving energy efficiency, providing jobs, and expanding its business area in Safari Activities and Skiing Center.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed the current situation of Suomu respectively in five different areas: marketing, destination management, human resource management, risk and crisis management and sustainability. Through analysis of the current situation, the suggestions for further development were then given.

To improve its marketing, the paper would suggest Suomu to put more focus on online marketing because online marketing has become more important and effective than traditional marketing. Interaction between suppliers and customers is considered important among customers. Besides, there is a growing resistance of supplier-lead marketing. As a ski resort and also a destination for customers, Suomu used to rely on traditional marketing. Although currently Suomu has various online marketing channels and has planned to develop more channels for online marketing, the paper would suggest Suomu to focus more on online marketing. Suomu make itself distinctive from other ski resorts by providing other experiences and services to customers. As a result, the paper would suggest Suomu keep its unique feature and expand it in the future. Suomu can develop itself as a brand providing customers with the combination experiences of skiing, safari activities, accommodation and also other services.

In addition, Suomu now only has limited facilities to provide services to its customers. As a result, Suomu should build some basic facilities and also entertainment facilities to provide visitors with more services and activities.

Also, the frequency to update information should be balanced between all types of information, as some information such as events and accommodation are updated every one to three days, but the transportation information on the official website can sometimes be found outdated. The outdated information can make customers confused and may have negative influence in their experience. As a result, Suomu should pay attention to all information and update it regularly.

About the destination management of Suomu, the shopping needs of Chinese tourists suggest that more prevalent local products should be laid out and promoted to the tourists with strong consuming intention while keeping the price

at an average level. Alipay service is worth considering as a new payment method for the Chinese groups. For the needs of food and other necessities of customers and staff, a shop will be a good solution to the existing inconvenience. And installing some vending machines in the ski hotel will also be available.

Considering the poor quality of the its website, it is specifically recommended that the entrepreneurs hire professional website designers or managers for its modification. Turning to website outsourcing service suppliers can be another solution. Additionally, Suomu should attach the link of its official website to the web pages of Visit Finland as the other ski resort have already done, which can offer convenience for individual tourists who are likely to search and access to their ski resort. In regard of further cooperation with DMOs, the entrepreneurs of Suomu need to expand their collaboration by taking great advantage of the DMOs' other responsibilities such as unbiased information services, operation or facilitation of bookings and business advice.

Referring to limitation of this research, actual comments and feedback from foreign tourists and Finnish skiers in Suomu would have been obtained if the COVID-19 pandemic had not occurred which led to the early closing of the ski resort. The customers' opinions on their experiences there would have been of great value to learn about both advantages and disadvantages of Suomu and to obtain ideas for its development. Another obstruction was searching reference data of the cooperative DMOs mentioned in Part 3.6. No research in English could be found about Visit Kemijärvi and its coordination with the stakeholders. Meanwhile, the collaboration between Unitours Oy and Suomu Ski Resort which is partly of commercial confidentiality is difficult to inquire and reveal out of respect to the entrepreneurs. In the future, research could be improved by executing quantitative analysis of the customer satisfaction of the experiences in Suomu.

As was discussed in the human recourse management part before, the analysis and research on human resource management is based on the needs of employers: skillful and stable employees and better performance of employees. In terms of obtaining stable and capable employees, it is worth paying attention to selecting employees, training employees and retaining employees. Multi-

channel recruitment, necessary training for new employees and improving the living and working environment, especially the quality of working meals, performance rewards under hourly pay can help employers meet this demand. The improvement of employees' work performance depends on employee incentives. Encouraging and praising employees does not require financial expenditure and can increase employees' motivation. Managers' decentralization allows employees to decide the method of completing the work and clarify the deadlines. The suggestions made by sophisticated employees play an important role in solving the problems existing in the company's human resources management. In addition, managers should be aware of the long-term benefits of successful human resources and build a professional work team in arctic sightseeing activities, skiing and hotels industry to make the ski resort have core competitiveness.

As the paper stated in the risk and crisis management part before, the company's lack of risk analysis and slack safety regulations led to the fire incident which cost them dearly. Later the execution of crisis management though ensured no public safety were compromised, incurred reputation damage to the company. This incident made them realize their inefficiency in dealing with risk and crisis. They started to develop their risk and crisis management ever since, risk analysis has already been taken into consideration on a daily basis, even a plan for the risk of shortening winter has been drawn.

However, a more detailed plan for developing management regarding risk and crisis is needed for the company. A specific risk evaluation plan is recommended. By evaluating the probability and severity of the risk and categorizing them, company should take certain measures to minimize the potential damage based on the different categories. Accept the negligible, rethink over the intolerable and lower probability and severity of intermediate. Moreover, building a risk culture within the company is also recommended, which can help employees better understand and approach risk in a manner senior management expects. This culture can also help prevent company from making risky decisions. Last but not the least, a crisis management team is needed. This professional crisis management team led by CEO himself will oversee the whole post-crisis period, minimizing damage, talking to press and

maintaining public relations. These efforts shall be useful for Suomu to develop a more advanced risk and crisis management in order to avoid unnecessary danger and reduce the harm.

The Suomu ski resort's expertise in sustainability is not as well established as Finland's four largest ski resorts, but there is some space for development in terms of ecological sustainability and social sustainability. After the ski resort has completed its branding, the company can take the long-term view to keep the ski resort in profit and give back to the local community.

As stated previously, sustainability is a complex concept. Sustainable development is more than just protecting the environment; it requires companies to find a balance between economic, environmental, social and other factors.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Questions 1

Appendix 2. Interview Questions 2

Interview Questions 1

Part 1. Marketing

1. Through which channels Suomu is advertising online at the moment?

- Instagram Twitter
 Official website Facebook
 Others: _____

2. What issues are considered most important when advertising online?

- Transportations Basic facilities
 Events Atmosphere
 Accommodations Nature environment
 Entertainment activities Others: _____

3. How often approximately does Suomu update its information online?

- 1-3 days
 Every week
 Every month
 Every season
 Others: _____

4. Is online marketing or traditional marketing more effective for Suomu

- Online marketing
 Traditional marketing
 Both are effective
 Other: _____

5. Does Suomu have plans to provide more services to visitors?

- Yes No

6. If the answer is "Yes" for the last question, please specify, what is the plan?

- Building more basic facilities (eg. a shop)
 Providing more entertainment facilities (eg. pubs)
 Others: _____

Part 2. Destination Management

1. Who do you regard as the main competitors?

Travel agencies, such as _____
Safari companies, such as _____
Other Ski Resorts in Lapland, such as _____
Other competitors: _____

2. Which groups are your target clients?

Countries & Areas: _____
Ages: _____
Income range: _____

Education Background: _____

3. How do you attract and satisfy these people?

- Upscale ski slopes
- Various safaris
- Hospitality
- Natural scenery
- Price
- Attractive travel packages
- Events and activities
- Others _____

4. Do you cooperate with any DMOs/ DMMOs (Destination Marketing or/and Management Organizations)? If so, what are their names?

- Yes, they are _____
- No, we do almost everything ourselves.

5.(Please answer this if you choose “yes” to the last question) In which aspects do these DMOs/DMMOs work on? And how do you assess the effects they make?

Responsibilities	Grade from 1-5, Fail-Success
<input type="checkbox"/> Destination promotion, including branding and image	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Campaigns to drive business, particularly to SMMEs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Unbiased information services	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Operation/facilitation of bookings	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Destination coordination and management	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Visitor information and reservations	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> R3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Training and education	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Business advice	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Product “start-ups”	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Events development and management	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Attractions development and management	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy, research and development	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

6. What kinds of E-business tools do you use?

- E-business platform, such as _____
- Database, such as _____
- Other systems, such as _____

Part 3. Human Resource Management

1. How many employees are there in your company? _____
2. What is your company's human resource planning? (like Functions or main tasks of each department, Salary System, Performance appraisal etc.)
3. In the process of human resources management, what do you think is the most urgent need to improve?
 - Human resource planning (Recruitment, Selecting, Hiring, Training, Induction, Orientation, Evaluation, Promotion and Layoff).
 - Employee remuneration and Benefits Administration
 - Performance Management.
 - Employee Relations.
4. In the process of human resources management, what are your unresolved difficulties, please be as concrete as possible.
5. How do you plan to improve or solve the company's problems in human resources management?

Part 4. Sustainability

1. How would you rate the importance of each of the factors in terms of sustainability?
(Please use a scale where 1 is "not important" and 5 is "very important")
 - Environmental protection 1 2 3 4 5
 - Supply chain sustainability 1 2 3 4 5
 - Comprehensive quality of staff 1 2 3 4 5
 - Sustainable development management system 1 2 3 4 5
 - Social welfare 1 2 3 4 5
 - High-quality products 1 2 3 4 5
 - Business partners 1 2 3 4 5
 - Others: _____ 1 2 3 4 5
2. How would you rate the performance of each of the departments related to Suomutunturi in terms of its contribution to sustainability?
(Please use a scale where 1 is "poor", 2 is "fair" 3 is "satisfactory" 4 is "good" and 5 is "excellent")
 - Accommodation (Hotel, Chalets...) 1 2 3 4 5
 - Ski Resort (Slopes, Ski Lifts...) 1 2 3 4 5
 - Catering (Restaurant, Bar, Café...) 1 2 3 4 5
 - Activities Provider (Suomu Safaris) 1 2 3 4 5
 - Transportation (Ski Bus) 1 2 3 4 5
 - Others: _____ 1 2 3 4 5

Interview Questions 2

Questions regarding Risk and Crisis Management

- 1.Does the company have a risk management plan for anticipating and avoiding potential risks and/or a crisis management team dealing with occurred crisis?
- 2.What were the countermeasures after the fire incident in 2015? And how effective those countermeasures were? (Use a scale from 1 Not at all effective to 5 Extremely effective)
- 3.What was the lesson learned from this accident? Does it affect the way of company seeing and conducting risk and crisis management?
- 4.What is the company's stance on inevitable global warming and what are the company's preparations for shorter winter and less snow in the future?

Questions regarding Sustainability

- 1.How will the company develop a sustainable ski resort in terms of ecology?
2. How will the company develop a sustainable ski resort in terms of society?
- 3.How will the company develop its branding in terms of Suomu- Snow part of Finland and Suomu – Apline performance?