

**CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT
IN A TOURISM COMPANY**

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this thesis was to study customer relationship management in a tourism company. The aim was to provide external insights of the operations to Lomalinja Oy Tampere, which was chosen as the case company. The overall objective was to selectively combine areas of customer relationship management in order to have a cohesive and successful understanding of the topic.

The data of this study were collected from literature, the internet and by using an open interview. The aim of the interview was to give the respondent freedom in answering questions which support qualitative research approach. The results of the interview were adapted in findings and analysed throughout the thesis. The theoretical section examines customer relationship management and marketing in the field of tourism.

The findings support the original thought that customer relationship management is diversely maintained in the case company. The results also show that it has been possible to stabilize the position of customer relationship management both in the operating area among competitors as well as in the consciousness of customers. Major importance of customer relationship management is an explicit division of its areas that are applied to reach the most profit through the most suitable methods.

Research of customer relationship management is generally done continuously in various types of companies. The results can be used in studies for improving the operations to manage the challenges that a tourism company meets. Further research for the case company is suggested in many areas to monitor its success also in the future.

Key words: customer relationship management, marketing, tourism

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1 INTRODUCTION

This bachelor's thesis centralizes on customer relationship management and on strategies by which cohesive customer oriented marketing in tourism is achieved. Aim of the study is to determine development in theme tourism and to research the challenges that a tourism company of today meets.

The goal is to understand the challenges and changes in customer relationship management from a point of view of a travel agency which is specialized in theme tourism. Previous research has not been conducted for the case company making it an interesting topic of research.

This research provides insights about patterns related to operations of a tourism company. This thesis offers discernments which may be used for further development in companies operating in tourism industry. Perspectives of customer segmentation are also included in the study to meet the requirements of comprehensive customer relationship management.

Qualitative research approach is implemented in this study where descriptive and analytical research methods are used. An open interview and its findings were used in collecting the data. The interview was implemented by using a free respond method to achieve more general discussion which supports qualitative research. Findings were analyzed with the help of extended marketing mix and by utilizing a model of Porter's five forces.

2 LOMALINJA OY AS A CASE COMPANY

In this chapter Lomalinja Oy is introduced as a company. Chapter explains the focus of the research and the concepts and theories that are applied throughout this thesis. Research questions are revealed and the data methods used are described. Final sub chapter shows the structure of this thesis.

2.1 Focus of the research

The topic of this thesis is customer relationship management in a tourism company. Customer centricity is no longer a company's choice, but in truth a prerequisite for a company's success. This is a factor that functions as a main idea in interest to conduct research about the topic. The authors chose Lomalinja Oy Tampere as a case company. Lomalinja Oy is a travel agency specialized in theme tourism. The company is part of Länsilinjat concern, founded in 1977. Länsilinjat concern owns 60%, sales manager Sari Mäkinen 20% and officer manager Leena Siukola 20% of the company (Mäkinen, Sari, 2011). Lomalinja Oy is a company producing inclusive package tours. It buys tourism services from their producers and assembles them to market package tours which are suitable for customers (Renfors 2008, 15, 56.) A package tour is defined as a combination of travel services, transport and accommodation (Syratt 1995, 3). Those retail agents who adopt also standards of activity of tour operators are likely to succeed in the future (Renfors 2008, 76). Lomalinja Oy has accepted and combined these two models which make it a modern travel agency with great possibilities to develop. The specialist network of the company is notably wide and that is what it emphasizes. Its slogan, "travel with a specialist", means in a nutshell the specialists who as guides open new perceptions to the travelers and lead them to new accomplishments. Two years ago Lomalinja Oy became a registered trademark and started to develop tailor-made sales to continuously meet the needs of a customer. Lomalinja Oy especially was chosen because it has an active customer relationship management system and it has managed to show profitability and success. In

2010 the gross profit growth of the company was 35% and turnover increased with 50%. As a criterion for selection of this company was also the point that it differs from other package selling travel agencies operating in the Tampere region with a superior offerings of theme tours. The aim was to gain a better understanding of the factors that are essential in the process of customer relationship management. This thesis examines the challenges and development of travel agency business of today and travelling customs of consumers.

The authors considered that the topic is of interest to be examined and a subject that needs to stay attuned to the times and where the development of tourism companies' operations is vital. This thesis designs to provide a basis for further research of marketing in case of a wide product range, and of achieving new potential customers and productization of customer service and expertise.

2.2 Concepts and theories

The main concept of this thesis is customer relationship management, commonly known by the abbreviation CRM. In this thesis CRM is mainly analyzed from a process point of view, where a goal is to create the necessary elements for customer relationship management and customer interaction. Ronald S Swift (2001, 12) describes customer relationship management as an enterprise approach to understanding and influencing customer behavior through meaningful communications in order to improve customer acquisition, customer retention, customer loyalty and customer profitability. In the last few years customer relationship management has become a phenomenon which emphasizes the determined management of customerships in the company. The company simply needs its customers to secure its existence. (Mäntyneva 2003, 9.) A more vivid definition to describe the challenge of customer relationship management process is to say that one needs to develop a helicopter mind which is constantly in touch with day-to-day customer dealing, yet is capable of rising above it all regularly (Burnett 2001, 105).

CRM and marketing are in close interdependence with each other. As where marketing in general is about operations of the company (Kotler & Keller 2012, 10), the focus and emphasis of this thesis is in customer oriented marketing and more specifically relationship marketing. Customer oriented marketing indicates to the election of customer targets and needs of the company to contemplate previously gained knowledge, as well as the probability of utilization of customerships (Mäntyneva 2003, 91). The focus of relationship marketing on the other hand is on building bonds and ties between the organization and its customers to improve feedback and ultimately enhance the prospects of customer loyalty. The term was introduced in the service marketing literature by Leonard Berry in 1983. The interest in relationship orientation in marketing is about 10 years older. (Grönroos 2000, 23.) Relationship marketing seeks to convert clients into becoming supporters, those who have positive feelings towards the supplier, and even advocates those who may actively recommend the supplier to others. Overall aim is to get the customer and the company to work together for mutual benefit. (Hooley, Piercy & Saunders 2004, 447.) To achieve these benefits it is required that the customer contacts are based more specifically to the needs and preferences of a customer. In case of an individual customer, sales volume and profit margin are optimized in relation to the customer offers. Mäntyneva (2003, 76) states that the quality image of customers about the quality of the service gets better because the company is able to offer a product that is significant to the customer. The objective of customer oriented marketing is to guide the allocation and content of marketing so that all customerships of the company are optimized. (Mäntyneva 2003, 39.)

Lomalinja Oy is a travel agency which specializes in unique theme tourism packages. Theme tourism is defined as travels which are intertwined with particular themes (Teemamatkailu 2004). These travels could also be described as special interest holidays, meaning people coming together to share a common interest, or to take the opportunity to learn something completely new. A special interest holiday can add zest to the vacation for the tourist who is looking for more than sun, sand and sea. (Syratt 1995, 31.) Expertise is a concept that strongly supports organizing and carrying out theme tours. The concept expertise comes up very diversely in everyday speech. Sipilä (1991) defines it as specialists who produce professional services. A specialist could

also be defined as a person who is able to analyze the situation or a case, make conclusions of the analysis and build up a plan to solve the problem or to control the situation. Professional services then again are related to arduously analyzed problem solving and to creative development of new issues. (Sipilä 1991, 17, 21.) Porter's five forces model (Porter 1998, 29) is introduced in this thesis when dealing with competition keystones. The Porter's five forces tool can be defined as a simple but powerful tool for understanding where power lies in a business situation. It helps in understanding both the strength of the current competitive position, and the strength of a position a company is considering moving into. Conventionally, the tool is used to identify whether new products, services or businesses have the potential to be profitable. (Porter's five forces 2012.)

2.3 Research questions

The main question behind this case is: what is required from a tourism company to manage customer relationships successfully? Closely related to the main question are the sub questions that aim to cover issues of how to learn from the customers effectively and how to manage wishes and needs of the customer in the constantly developing field of tourism, and in this case especially of theme tourism. Without proper marketing the main question is not thoroughly covered so the research also seeks an answer to what is required to handle the challenges of marketing tourism services. Customer segmentation and profiles are linked to all the previous issues.

2.4 Data and methods

This research has been carried out by using the qualitative research approach. This method seeks out the 'why', not the 'how' of its topic and aims to be descriptive and analytical. Qualitative research approach is used to gain insights into people's attitudes, behaviors, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyles. This takes into consideration what people say, the knowledge they have and what they understand. The idea is to

research the conscious mind. Additionally it is about what people mean, need or desire and about getting into emotional drivers. Previous affairs are linked to the research of meaningful behavior of people. Qualitative approach respects the culture aspect which means taking notice of the culture within which people and also brands live. Research is then aimed to share meanings, norms and codes. (What is qualitative research 2011.)

Wells (1991) has a definition of qualitative research that is close to the idea the authors had in the first place. Wells (1991) stated that “it does not produce truths, factual, data-based results, nor does it lend itself to being conducted in a series of clearly defined and separable steps. Although, this does not mean that it should be conducted in a well-planned systematic way.” Wells sees qualitative research as living and evolving, a source of insights and ideas, continuously arising, at any time.” (Wells 1991, 39 according to Ryan 1995, 96.) Descriptive studies stem from substantial prior knowledge of marketing variables. For this type of research to be productive, questions should be designed to secure specific kinds of information, related perhaps to product performance, market share, competitive strategies and distribution. (Hooley et.al. 2004, 138). Figure 1 illustrates the deeper idea of the method.

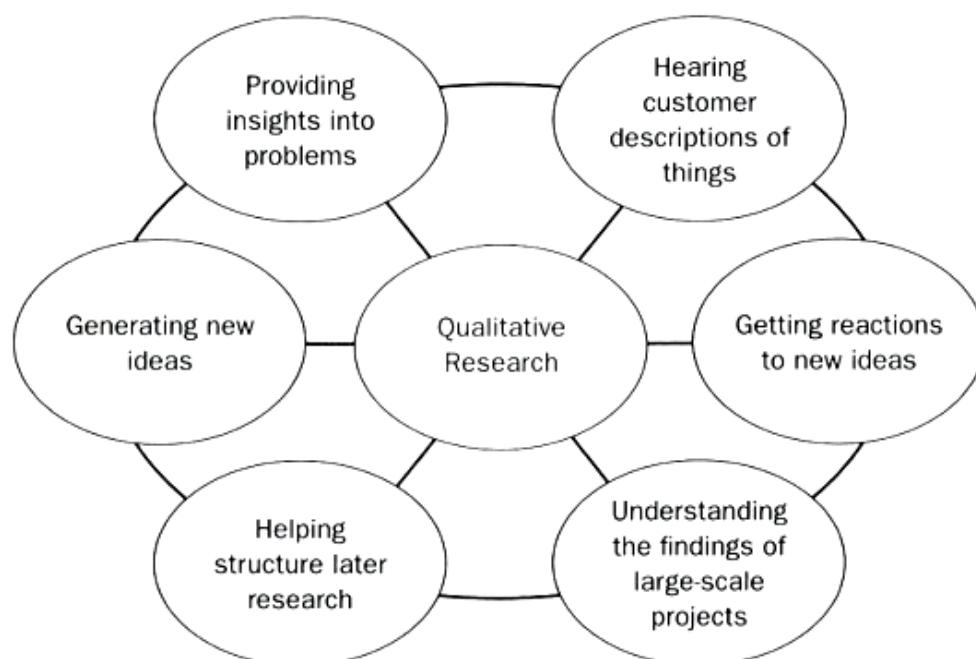


FIGURE 1. Uses of qualitative research (Hooley et.al. 2004, 188).

The primary data used in this thesis are literature, internet and an open interview with the Lomalinja Oy's sales manager Sari Mäkinen. The open interview, also known as free respond method is described as giving the respondent a great deal of freedom in answering questions from some general points of discussion. Open questions are more general than closed questions and qualitative research involves less structured interviews in which the purpose is to get the respondent to talk freely about the issue. (Holloway 2004, 84.) This approach of collecting information can also be described as an individual depth interview. The approach is used extensively for deeper probing of motivations, especially in areas of a confidential nature or on delicate subjects where it is necessary that rapport and trust is built up between the interviewer and the respondent. (Hooley et.al. 2004, 188). No questionnaires were delivered to the customers of the company because the primary idea of the authors was to provide external insights to the company about the functions of CRM. The travel brochures of the company were analyzed and used to gain information for the research.

2.5 Structure of the thesis

In Chapter 3 the focus is on the development of theme tourism and travel agency industry. Chapter 4 concentrates on customer segmentation and customer profiles in a tourism company. Chapter 5 centers around the whole research and considers the customer relationship management in business and marketing planning. In chapter 6 the conclusions, development ideas and recommendations for future research are described.

2.6 Validity and reliability

The credibility of a research is usually measured with two concepts linked to each other, reliability and validity. Validity can then again be divided into inner and outer validity. Inner validity means how well the indicators used in the

research measure what they are meant to measure. Outer validity tells how well the results of research can be generalized with the sample to the groupings. Reliability measures whether the given results are accurate and consistent. (Validiteetti ja Realibiliteetti 2009)

In this research validity is used in evaluation of questions. Logically, the nature of the questions asked is critical to the reliability and validity of the interview. If the questions are not related to the issues to be examined, we should not expect validity to be high. If the questions are not used in a consistent way among interviewers, we should not expect the results of the research necessarily to be comparable, because each interviewer has, in fact, collected different information about the interviewees. (Interview validity and reliability n.d.). Validity is properly implemented when target group and questions are accurate. Assessment of validity usually directs attention on question of how well the research approach and methods used correspond to the phenomenon which is to be examined.

For the applied research approach to be valid must the preference be in the appearance of phenomenon and in question formulation. (Validiteetti ja reliabiliteetti 2009). Authors constructed the questions that would give a basis for the positioning of the company and for evaluating its input to CRM. The authors got straightforward answers to direct questions and this contributed in reaching validity. None of the questions were left unanswered in a manner that the interviewed sales manager was not able to answer to the question. From the answers to the questions the authors got a basis to continue the research and in addition they noted that the answers supported authors' original thoughts about the issues considering CRM. Naturally it gave deeper insight of the process. Authors used their original ideas on each question and answer and based on the new information gained analyzing was done. Although there were clear reasons for the selection of the case company, authors could not know in advance what methods of CRM are being used. Therefore authors needed to be critical from the beginning. Based on the questions contrived and answers gained from the case company, it can be stated that the discovered results in comparison to original thoughts of the authors about CRM and its processes seem to be right.

In alignment of reliability research approach consonance needs to be taken into consideration. This is about finding out how different indicators measure the same thing. In observation of repeated phenomenon one needs to be accurate. How others understand the purpose and framework of research is related to objectivity and subjectivity. All the observations done in research need to be continuously similar. (Validiteetti ja reliabiliteetti 2009). Authors have not included the customers' perspectives of how they feel the CRM is functioning in the case company. Analyzing the feedback from the customers would have probably provided more criticism but the idea of this research was to offer external insights to the case company only.

Accuracy of findings is based on the time this research was carried out. The strategies and operations in the case company develop continuously, hence in a couple of years quintessential operational models are likely to diverge. Authors have endeavored to natural continuum each time findings were made so that there would be conformity throughout the research. Structure of the thesis was limited to chapters that base on the answers gathered from the case company and on considerations of the challenges that were an essential part of them.

3 DEVELOPMENT IN THEME TOURISM AND TRAVEL AGENCY INDUSTRY

In this chapter the authors will take a closer look on the development in travel agency industry. Focus is on theme tourism offerings of today and what are the role and potential of theme tourism in tourism industry. The chapter includes insights about the traveling habits of customers and it emphasizes expertise, customer service and relationships as an asset for a tourism company.

3.1 The emerge of theme tourism

Mass tourism started after the social, economical, cultural and technological changes of the Second World War. Typical characteristics of it were mass production and standardized package tours. Travels were being produced as mass products, such like cars. Development of mass tourism was also affected by the rise of travel agencies. Transportation, accommodation, food, excursions and other attractions were included in the package. Travel agencies were needed because air service became more common and the airlines rarely had any own bureaus in the cities. These travel agencies started to produce great amounts of standardized package tours. (Ahtola, Koivunen, Korpela, Kostiainen & Syrjämaa 2004, 224-228.)

As a phenomenon theme tourism or special interest tourism is not new. Grand tour –travels emerged already in 1600's. These travels included a learning objective and a special interest, and were far away from traditional mass tourism. (Ahtola et.al. 2004, 50) In turn the terminology could be said to be new and more common today. During last decades the field of tourism has fragmented in many ways and offerings have diversified. Mass production has made a return to individuality; nature, culture, and wellbeing tourism as well as experience tourism and adventure tourism have made their way. (Ahtola et.al. 2004, 50, 294.)

Lomalinja Oy provides travel packages from customers' basic needs for a vacation breakaway to tailor made theme tourism packages. Both are still popular considering sales, although as a new idea the wish of the company is to "gather groups to the edges of the world where customers can utilize and develop their personality." (Mäkinen, 2011.) According to Anne Kleemola (Teemamatkailu 2004) different themes could be roughly divided to 12 categories:

- eco tourism: basically all the travel in any destination, as long as sustainable development and environmental responsibility are taken into consideration
- experience tourism: primary objective is to provide experiences to the traveler
- wellbeing and fitness tourism: aims to promote quality of life and health, as well as physical and mental well being
- culture tourism: willingness to know the cultural heritage of the destination as a motivator. Culture tourism takes into consideration perishability of a destination, respecting historical and cultural values. A culture tourism destination can be an event or any place made by man/human
- sports tourism: outside local inhabitants utilize exercise services of the destination. Motivator of the travel is participating in sport activities or events, or following such events
- nature tourism: used in tourism marketing usually to describe all the travel focused on nature, hence under this concept goes all the activities made in the nature
- rural tourism: products of rural tourism can be for example farm tourism, bed and breakfast traveling or visit to a park of domestic animals

- nostalgic tourism: nostalgic appearance of destination or travelers longing to the past work as a travel motive
- shopping tourism: primary objective is to do shopping, for example trips to Estonia, where Finns travel in purpose of getting lower price products
- heritage tourism: travelers go to destinations which upkeep traditional lifestyle or where traditional lifestyle knowledge and items are valued
- culinary tourism: all theme traveling where the primary objective is getting to know and enjoy different food and beverages
- adventure tourism: focuses on unique nature or culture, versatile activities or extreme activities, and where the customer's primary motive is to experience something remarkable, exotic or challenging

The list should be considered as introductory, since new themes develop rapidly. As Sari Mäkinen (2011) stated, only imagination is the limit for evolving new ideas to themes and there are more opportunities than time to carry out all of them. The most popular theme tours of Lomalinja Oy are the cruise experiences, in other words themed ship tours suitable for all ages. Culture tourism is also of high popularity in the case company, and a few important points of views are good to comprehend in order to gain proper insight of it. In its broadest and most accurate sense, culture tourism concerns the way of life of a place and how this is experienced by its visitors. Issues such as authenticity and the careful retention, or judicious enhancement and development of a distinctive local character and sense of place are increasingly becoming critical factors to success in culture tourism. Visitors are far more discerning and widely traveled and concerned about the growing similarities of many destinations. And it is not uncommon for local residents to share the same concerns in relation to any local development trends heading in this direction. Future tourism success is tied to not becoming overtly touristy. (Special interest tourism 2007)

The most challenging theme of Lomalinja Oy to accomplish is art and it is also the most sensitive target for failure. Reasons behind are interesting and tell about the ways of how a customer experiences the travel in total. Factors of failure are the environment, weather, teachers, guides and all that the customer considers as relevant in the travel, whether it is dependent or not dependent of the travel agency. (Mäkinen 2011.) Two general satisfaction driven factors could be mentioned. Both affect customer behavior and tell about the gap between expectations and the reality. First there is the nature of involvement; meaning that the more committed a person is to a course of action, the higher the degree of success. Secondly there is the role of risk, meaning that going to new places generates a degree of risk, and some are more likely to take risks than others. (Ryan 1995, 42-43). The customer may also fail in setting goals and thus feel dissatisfaction with organized tour or program.

3.2 Outlooks and challenges

Challenges are considerably big in travel agency industry. Overcapacity, seasonal fluctuations, high expenses and low contribution margins are characteristic features in the field. Intermediate travel agencies (operating as intermediaries) have faced severe challenges in the past decade. Travel agencies no longer have a monopoly situation in the market or in distributing information considering travelling or ticket purchase. It is crucial that a travel agency and specialists are ahead of the customer by their own development. (Renfors 2008, 37, 48.) Lomalinja Oy implements this with a positive attitude and by being unprejudiced.

Development of tourism affects customer relationship management in different areas. Customers are even more demanding and conscious about what is happening in the world and they want a travel agency and a specialist to meet them in these issues. Lomalinja Oy has a ground rule to always aim to serve the customer in the best possible way. In Lomalinja Oy the interest towards theme tourism is stable and increasing but the challenge is naturally to know, for how long. The field of tourism is being developed by strengthening tourism networks and co-operation with different actors, by supporting the growth of enterprises,

by developing education in the field and by updating the infrastructure of tourism centralization. (Elinkeinotoiminnan kehittäminen matkailupolitiikassa 2011).

Today online travel agencies make their part to the challenges. Online travel agency is defined as a company whose profits come mostly from the sales made in internet. The travel agency activity is in this case moved to the internet as a whole. Reasons behind the popularity of online travel agency activities are the safety of purchase, ease of use in navigating and comparison of services. (Renfors 2008, 24-26.) Online agencies, however, face challenges in marketing. There are two important things to be noted. First, many online businesses spend plenty of money attracting people to their website, but not enough making sure that these connections are converted into sales. Secondly, small businesses often neglect marketing to existing customers. (The marketing funnel 2009).

Then again online travel agencies do not have professional personnel to who customers could contact when needed and it could be counted as a downside. The challenge of online travel agencies is to gather comprehensive, reliable and real time supply of services, which are inviting and distinguishable from competitors. (Renfors 2008, 26.) The asset of Lomalinja Oy to this is its devotion to quality and to service quality of the personnel. For example in the year 2012 the aim of the company is to focus even more on customer service development. This is a challenge for the company and management. A tool to be used to achieve set goals is to identify ways to provide superior customer value. (Hooley et.al. 2004, 562). Anyhow, within internet also the monopoly role of travel agencies in travel booking has disappeared. Information and bookings are available to all which again partly proves that consumers are even more self-directed.

It is impossible to say for how long the interests towards theme tours will last, and it is a continuous challenge and a constant area of follow-up. Future for theme tourism at the moment of the release of this thesis is more auspicious than endangered. The sales of Lomalinja Oy is increasing and new ideas develop all the time. Also the World Tourism Organization has predicted that

nature and culture travels become more popular and the popularity of tourism centers increases in the coming decade. (Ahtola et.al. 2004, 294). A clear element that affects the future of tourism are the new customer segments. The aging population is growing larger and is more prosperous than before. Tourism industry with other sectors of society must be prepared for this consumer-driven capability, active and demanding customers who have time to travel. Similarly, tourism will have to manage the more differentiated customer groups. Generations and the different ways of life separated by customer segments require different services, and they cannot be treated as one market. This will require the industry to identify the sensitivity of the new customer segments and their wishes or requirements, as the ability to act as user- and demand-driven. (Suomen matkailustrategia 2010.)

3.3 Traveling habits of customers

Customer buying behavior has changed continuously during past decades and will continue changing also in the future. Customers wait for and expect reliable and durable products with quick, efficient service at reasonable prices. Different customers have different wants and needs, and hence companies have an opportunity to select segments where their offerings most closely align with those needs and where they can focus their activities to create a competitive advantage. (Hooley et.al. 2004, 557.) Already in the history, key prerequisites for tourism have been the attractiveness of a destination, availability of a destination, change in wealth of people, increased leisure time, actions of tour operators as well as goals of it. A concept of contrasting needs to be taken into consideration. A tourism company has to acknowledge the cultures of customers. What is exotic to one might be mundane to another. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 217.).

From the point of view of an individual, a key element is also the motivation of a traveler and how a traveler and inhabitants of the destination have met, during different times and all over the world (Ahtola et.al. 2004, 14). However, the linkage between motivation and behavior is not automatic, and in many cases the actual holiday is long enough to permit a range of different activities, each of

which might meet different needs, some of which may not have been considered at the time of actually booking the holiday. In the reporting of the satisfaction to be derived from the experience, unless the requirement for the relaxation motivation is high, it is likely that there will be little recall of the events of the day, and compared with peak experiences, will be scored as a source of only moderate satisfaction. Yet, it is a common mode of behavior for tourists, and hence must fulfill some need. Holidays involve the fulfillment of motivations, but motivations become goals, goals determine behavior, and, in the search for satisfying holiday, behaviors engage to secure the success of a satisfying holiday. (Ryan 1995, 42, 55, 61.) Individual behavior is complex but it has been shown to be possible to identify patterns of generalized group behavior among consumers sharing common characteristics. (Hooley et.al. 2004, 115).

Travelers choose a destination by the association they have about it. The image of a destination is affected by the individual tourist's image of the added level of service and in advance by advertising and marketing to create the image. (Hokkanen et.al. 2002, 27). Independent travels have affected package tours. Decision making concerning travels are made even hastier and travel plans are made off the top of one's head. (Hopeasaari 2007, 12 according to Renfors, 2008, 51) . These perceptions are in agreement with Sari Mäkinen (2011) who also states that part of the travels including high-priced holidays are purchased at short notice. Vacations are no longer perceived as an escape from everyday life but they are also more about self-fulfillment. (Renfors 2008, 52).

The sales of Lomalinja Oy is consisting of more than 50% of theme tours (Mäkinen, 2011) to which the company puts constant effort but it still includes ordinary package tours in its offerings. What makes these ordinary package tours not that ordinary is the creative development of Lomalinja Oy which makes it possible for a customer to gain more experiences through implementation of one's own hopes. Even of their package tours, customers want experiences that appeal to their emotions, such that they cannot experience in normal life. Simply, a customer of today is a personality, who "follows, senses, speaks and hears" (Mäkinen, 2011) and customers appreciate diversity. This is related to multiple senses and it involves all the senses by what a product can be felt, tasted, smelled, seen and heard. An experience

product ought to offer stimulus to all senses in different parts of the process. Sensations and experiences should be in balance with each other and in accordance with the theme. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 217).

The future image and keeping up with development in Lomalinja Oy is supported by the fact, that theme tours arouse interest among customers. More like the challenge is to know, how long the interest will last. Even so, a company needs to stay attuned to the wishes and needs of a customer. What comes to customer relationship management, the importance of knowing and learning about travelling habits of the customer is vital. According to Vahvaselkä (2004, 95-98) the main challenge of customer relationship management is the comprehensive apprehension of the process, which causes changes and learning challenges to the organization. The choice of a customer must always come first and the traveler can also benefit from a closer working relationship between a tour operator and a travel agent where product knowledge is concerned (Syratt 1995, 3).

What comes to the relation between the price and a customer, according to Kotler (2005, 72) buyers can be divided into three groups:

- a price-savvy consumer
- a consumer who is ready to pay somewhat more for better quality or service, but only to a certain extent
- a consumer who always demands high quality and service

It is worth noticing that visitors are rarely one-dimensional in terms of their interests and needs. Even when commonly visiting a friend or relative. For example, food will always be on the agenda, as will some kind of social interaction or other form of personal fun, relaxation, entertainment, sightseeing, discovery and learning. Regardless of why they were initially drawn to a destination, when given the opportunity and choice, visitors will more often than not combine several of these tourism experiences in one trip. By doing so they are able to gain the richest and most enjoyable experience possible and the greatest overall benefit including value for money. (Special interest tourism, 2007)

3.4 Expertise as an asset in customer service and relationships

Being able to differentiate is an essential part of keeping up with the fast pace of the development of travel agency industry. A tourism company needs to respond and react to this challenge. As special features in travels of Lomalinja Oy are the experts of different fields. They as guides open new perspectives and views to travelers, share information and also help the travelers to achieve and find new skills. All in all the intention of Lomalinja Oy is to create superior value for their customers and to find solutions to customer's problems. Solutions involve creating new products and services. (Hooley et.al. 2004, 563).

Today Lomalinja Oy has 30 specialists working on regular basis for the company. At the time of writing the thesis, on the website of Lomalinja Oy there were to be found over 60 specialists, which tells about the variability in interest in a positive way. For each theme there is a specialist in that specific area. The group of specialists consist of for example military history researchers and connoisseurs, archeologists and photographers, as well as performing artists. What is more, the company has numerous amount of experts and travel guides who have great knowledge about a particular country. These guides make it come true that an individual as a customer is respected. The aim is to get customers to express their feelings the way it is helpful and satisfactory for them. One uniting point is also that these guided tours bring like-minded people together which helps to create relationships. As theme tours develop in the company, it aspires to seek new specialists to its team. Closely related to the work and to the importance of expertise is the service quality the company cherishes and how it affects to customer relationships and helps to maintain the company to achieve loyalty among customers. These aspects carry an important role because customer retention is becoming a key predictor of profitability. It is important to find the difference between customer retention and customer loyalty, in connection with the relationship each of these has with customer satisfaction. Customer retention is essentially a measure of repeat purchase behavior and there are many reasons why customers may come back

even if failing in providing them with a high level of satisfaction – they may have no choice or they may not know any better. Customer loyalty, however, is more to do with how customers feel about us. Customer loyalty in sense is more closely related to customer satisfaction. (Hooley et.al. 2004, 444.)

Customer retention calls for comprehensive customer service, meaning the expertise and sales work in general has to obey quality standards. This is achieved by providing superior service. Customers measure their experiences to the criteria of the service they expect to receive. The quality of a service provision, and subsequently the level of satisfaction of the customer, is directly related to the difference between expectations and experiences. (Hooley et.al. 2004, 452.) Selling is solving problems of customers, helping the customer and introduction of the services. For this reason sales operations need to be straightforward and efficient. Personal selling is a natural continuum for active sales and most of the time the most important communication tool of the company. Personal selling is communication based on personal contact and oral presentation skills and the aim is to create sales. Personal sales can be carried out in various situations. It is good to consider how to affect the marketing of a company by the personal communications already before the customer is present, when the customer arrives, when the customer is present, when the customer leaves and after the customer has left. (Boxberg, Komppula, Korhonen & Mutka 2001, 48). Each employee in the company is making interaction marketing. That is why it is important to bear in mind that interaction marketing determines the success of marketing. Valuable customer service means realizing small things and about how you get a customer to leave more satisfied than one was when arriving. A good customer servant is able and has courage to solve problems creatively. In many cases customer's personal opinions and wishes can be used in problem solving. (Hokkanen et.al. 2002, 103.) A customer mirrors the first impression to one's own expectations and images about the place and the situation (Boxberg et.al. 2001, 93). An expertise company needs to develop a planning process for marketing. Long-term goals need to be set, from where the short-term business plans can be derived and from which the reachable outcomes can be measured. There needs to be a clear statement and vision about what the company is aiming to be in five years and what strategies take the company there. (Kotler 2005, 120.)

Selling in Lomalinja Oy is field sales. In field sales the results are based on the efforts, quality and destination accuracy of a salesperson. Sellers need to find the customer and recognize the hidden needs of customers and offer solutions to them. The sales of Lomalinja Oy is also retail sales, to the extent that a customer comes to a salesperson and the marketing is two-step. A company needs advertising primary to get customers to come inside the company. After this the efforts of salespersons and pitch marketing solve how much the customers will buy or will they buy anything. (Isoviita & Lahtinen 1998, 248). The most important source of information for the customer is the own staff of the company and partners who are part of the production of services. In customer service the salespersons meet their customers every day and gain experiential information about the customer wishes, hopes and reactions. This knowledge is called tacit knowledge, experience knowledge originating from professionalism. This is all part of the idea of service orientation which is responsible for the business idea of the company and is the offset of activity of a tourism company. Service oriented thinking tells why the company is on the market and what will it do in the future. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 178, 205.)

4 CUSTOMER SEGMENTS AND PROFILES

Chapter four introduces customer segmentation and customer profiling in view of the advantages, challenges and pitfalls in it. It also reveals marketing concepts that customer orientation offers.

4.1 Segmentation process and customer profiles

Customer relationship management is not cohesive or functioning properly without clear segmentation and without awareness of the company in recognizing the customer segment with most purchasing power. Segmentation is about pursuing better economical profit because generally it is more profitable to sell certain products or services to targeted markets than only one certain product or service to everybody. However, not all customers for the company are potential. The most important questions in defining customer segments are:

- Why the customer buys the product?
- What are the characteristics of the persons in the customer segment?
- From where and how are they found?
- How we satisfy their needs in tourism?
- What size of customer groups makes adequate volume to the company to operate profitably?

Segmenting is successful if the people inside the certain group are similar. They should also differ from target groups of the competitors. (Hokkanen et.al. 2002, 34-35). Segmentation is a particularly useful approach to marketing for the smaller company. It allows target markets to be matched to company competencies and makes it more likely that the smaller company can create a defensible niche in the market. (Hooley et.al. 2004, 294.)

The most basic and often used method of segmenting a market is demographic approach. The underlying principle is that the age, gender, occupation, level of

education, religion, social class and income characteristics determine, to a large extent, a potential buyer's ability to enter into an exchange relationship or transaction. (Segmenting the tourism market 2008) Customer-oriented marketing is completed by directing the sales and marketing of the company to the most high-powered places and customer segments. The point is to identify distinct segments as sizable groupings of consumers or business customers with similarities that respond to marketing efforts. (Wood 2003, 54.)

Lomalinja Oy does use this approach as a base for segmenting but at the same time it attends customers' common areas of interests and offers various different themes which make it possible to sell tailored travels, according to the wishes of a customer. This could be considered as an option and a benefit for both the customer and the company. Keeping this in mind, Lomalinja Oy strongly utilizes a psychoanalytic approach which is a deeper approach to segmenting. This involves the subdivision of a market on the basis of personality or lifestyle. This is determined by an analysis of the activities, interests and opinions of the consumer. Lifestyles or pattern of behavior are a synthesis of the motivations, personality and core values held by individuals. Predicting behavior of tourists by using a psychographic approach has evolved in response to the weaknesses and limitations of the segmentation methods outlined above in helping marketing decision-makers to get inside the mind of their tourist consumers and to understand more clearly the factors that drive their behavior. (Segmenting the tourism market 2008).

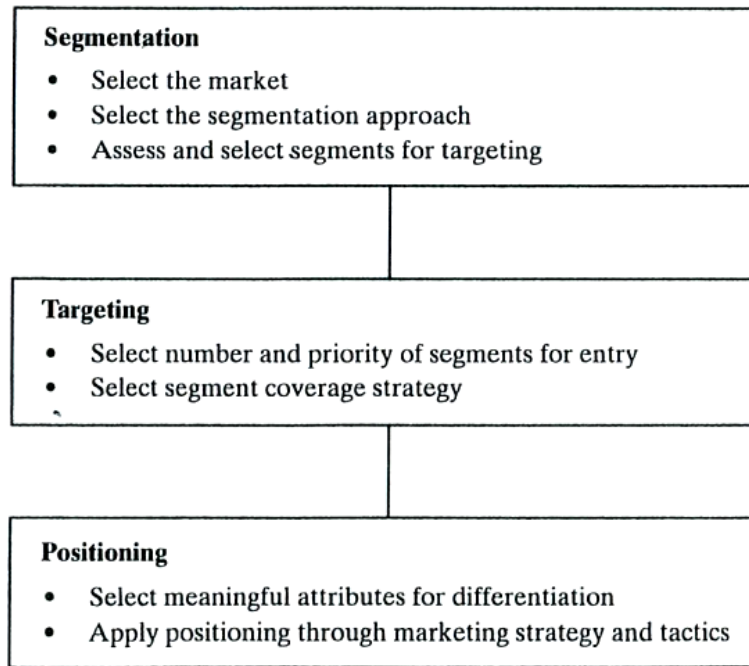


FIGURE 2. Segmentation, targeting and positioning (Wood 2003, 55).

As shown in figure 2, segmentation lays the foundation for targeting, decisions about what market segments to enter and the segment coverage strategy to use. The target market is the segment of the overall market that a company chooses to pursue.

Organizations use areas of qualitative research such as focus group discussions and in-depth interviews for many purposes. Marketers research new product and packaging concepts, attitudes to the current products of a corporation and customer service, brand perceptions, pricing policies and channel choices, and the creation of marketing communications such as advertising campaigns and sales promotions. (Dibb & Simkin 2008, 92).

Creating a customer profile is one method of describing the individuals who comprises the target market. A customer profile can provide a clear picture of the type of a person or a business it is planning to serve. (Customer profile 2011) These customer types are generated to represent the typical users of a product or a service, and are used to help the project team make customer centered decisions without confusing the scope of the project with personal opinion. (Advantages of customer profiling, n.d.).

A typical customer for Lomalinja Oy is a person aged from 55 to 68 years, mainly already retired and also a wealthy and a well-resourced individual with a will to fulfill oneself. The sales of the company is naturally directed mostly to this customer profile and segment. This target group has a lot of potential to become loyal customers. Seniors have even more purchasing power and they can be seen as individualists with a desire to experiment. In the future seniors will put effort even more on their health. This potential for consumption is good to realize in the tourism industry, since observing the senior target group is a solid part of a comprehensive palette of offerings. (Ahtola et.al. 2004, 297). Older travelers tend to involve themselves with the host environment because this is the type of behavior with which they have become accustomed. (Ryan 1995, 58) .Today the aging of the generations and low population growth is vital to consider. It has been predicted that around the year 2017 the amount of over 65-years exceeds the amount of under 20-years in Finland. (Ahtola et.al. 2004, 297).

4.2 Customer orientation in adding value

Customer orientation is a marketing concept that aims in maximizing the marketing success. Cohesive customer oriented marketing is dependent of correct segmentation. This chapter will take a closer look at this process in the light of its ultimate importance to deliver value added products and services. There are four basic stages for customer orientation that very well encapsulates the process of a company.



FIGURE 3. Delivery of value added products (Customer orientation 2010).

Figure 3 helps to illustrate how to achieve the goal by these four steps.

1. Develop

- Development has to be done keeping customer needs in mind
- Products should be customer oriented
- The development cycle time should be minimal

2. Manufacture

- As per the product, the manufacturing should be such that it gives the best products to the customer
- Quality should not be compromised
- Manufacturing cycle time should be reduced

3. Market

- Identifying and targeting the right customer
- Processing the demand as early as possible
- Customization of the products for the market

4. Deliver

- Deliver to the target customer
- Reduce delivery time
- Value for money products

Customer oriented marketing is even more strongly boosted and supported by the help of marketing funnel which as a marketing strategy is a powerful way of thinking about the marketing of a company and especially the process in which sales is created. It was developed in 1898, by E. St. Elmo Lewis. It follows that both value added product and importance of sales in customer relationships are covered. (The marketing funnel 2009).



FIGURE 4. Theoretical customer journey towards the purchase of a product or service. (The marketing funnel 2009).

Figure 4. illustrates the importance of word-of-mouth when the objective is effective customer retention. The marketing impact of word-of-mouth communication is usually huge, frequently greater than that of planned

communication. Word-of-mouth means messages about the organization, its credibility and trustworthiness, its ways of operating its services and so on, communicated from one person to another. As services are often based on an ongoing customer relationship it is useful to understand word-of-mouth in a relationship context. Word-of-mouth communication from a relational perspective is based on long term experiences of consumers and on behavioral commitment. Their word-of-mouth communication reflects the nature and value of their perception of relationship episodes or service encounters, as well as psychological comfort and discomfort with the relationship. It varies depending on how strong the relationship is. (Grönroos 2000, 269.)

Lomalinja Oy benefits greatly from word-of-mouth communication. The challenge of the company is to market all the services available equally effectively. Although the advertising and marketing has been effectively spread to magazines and made visible for people, word-of-mouth marketing will assist them to consciousness of customers. If a strong relationship develops with a given customer, advocacy between the firm and the customer may also develop. Such customers recommend the firm to their friends and colleagues whereby they thus invite their friends and business associates to share the service experience with them. They become advocates of the service offering. (Grönroos 2000, 269).

Marketing funnel model is linked to CRM by customers and the culture of exceeding of customer expectation. It is about understanding and managing the people impact on the culture of the organization. Customers are being recognized and treated as partners. To put it simpler the value of relationship building is valued and the service is considered as a value adding activity. It takes a while for people to begin to trust service companies or retailers online so a company should initially provide means to allow a relationship to develop. Once in the marketing funnel it is then marketed to prospects and they are encouraged to make a couple of lower value purchases. Having seen the quality and/or benefits first-hand you'll be in with a good chance of moving those customers towards the bottom of your marketing funnel. In simple terms, all you have to do is to attract many prospects in at the top – as a solution

customers and therefore profits should come out at the bottom and marketing efforts should be focused there as well. (The marketing funnel 2009).

4.3 Challenges in customer segmentation

Customers are different, and treating them all as if they were the same, results in poorly targeted offers, lower sales and dissatisfied customers. The ideal segments are cohesive, as everyone in a segment has similar behavior and preferences are actionable, because you can identify which segment a customer is in and respond appropriately. (Customer segmentation 2011).

As a ground rule it would be important to bear in mind that customer base at any point in time will contain some valuable customers, some less valuable ones, some new customers, some old ones, some young, some old, some rich, some less rich, some poor, some price sensitive, some not, some extremely loyal, some not loyal at all. The list goes on and on. (Customer Segmentation: Problems, Solutions 2003).

The most challenging customer segments for Lomalinja Oy at the moment are young adults because the price level is relatively high for the needs of this segment. From the authors viewpoint the service provided and the needs and wishes do not meet enough, since this customer segment seeks for more freedom in their designed travel or holiday. It is not necessarily that young adults do not appreciate the service and themes of the packages provided, but a complete service consisting of the price, guided tours, the themes and the destinations are not the primary objective for a travel of the youngsters of the today. If there were especially designed theme tours for this customer segment and all the requirements were closer to meet the young adults' wishes and customs, the traveling habits might change. The disadvantage of a demographic approach is that it easily leads to significant stereotyping that usually hides important variations in tourist behavior. Not only do these techniques ignore other key influences on behavior, they do not consider the wide variation in needs and wants of tourists even in small geographic areas or demographic groupings. (Segmenting the tourism market 2008). Behavioral

segmentation does not give enough insights into how it could influence a purchase decision of a customer. This approach also aims at analyzing and predicting the behavior of existing customers since past behavior often does help predict future behavior. Identifying the right metrics for segmenting customers may be harder. The challenge, however, lies in targeting new customers. Since the segmentation is based on existing customer behavior it becomes quite difficult to tie it back to criteria that can be used to identify potential customers in the same segments. This is all about lack of customer acquisition. Solution to challenges of segmentation is to treat segmentation as an ongoing process rather than as a destination. (Customer segmentation 2011).

What comes to dangers of segmentation there are few important points to avoid. A company cannot ignore potential audiences. By leaving out certain segments, a company may not be able to maximize the potential. A company should take care of not forgetting about the individuality. Just as every individual is unique in some way, shape or form, it is hard to classify people into behavioral segments. Another problem that can arise during the process of segmentation is cannibalization, in which one segment overtakes another so nothing is gained and in the worst case, sales decreases or there is a risk of sending a wrong message or a risk of an occurrence of brand dilution in too many segments of the market. When developing segmentation plans a company considering these challenges is likely to avoid the traps. Always learn more about your audience; ask questions that provide thorough insights in helping to develop an overall strategy. (Challenges of segmentation 2009).

5 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Following chapter describes customer relationship management in business and marketing planning, containing extended marketing mix and introduces Porter's five forces model. A sequel technology usage and after sales operations are described. Final part handles general marketing challenges and specially the challenges of the case company.

5.1 Customer relationship management in business and marketing planning

CRM stands for customer relationship management which is a marketing tactic providing personalized satisfaction of customer needs at every point of interaction between the customer and the company (Kotler & Keller 2012; How to Relate the 4Ps. 2011).

The marketing plan is a subset of the marketing strategy, which in turn is a part of the business plan and strategy. All planning starts from a base of knowing where the company is now; who are its competitors and who are its customers. Planning involves taking decisions based on this knowledge and determining where the company wants to be; who will be its future customers, how it will reach them and what revenue and profit targets it seeks to achieve. (Holloway 2004, 24.) Planning is not the same as strategy, although the two are often used interchangeably. Strategy is about the direction, approach and implementation of desired marketing of the organization whereas planning is usually about the formalization of the strategy and ideas into a manageable sequence of activities that are linked, coherent and capable of being implemented in the light of the resources that are available. (Fill 2002, 285.)

Marketing process is a continuous and perseverance activity, implementation and follow-up. The same alignment needs to be kept long so that a positive image is formed. Additionally the quality has to be constantly at the required level. Marketing plan generally covers a one-year period, although some may

project activities and financial performance further into the future. The seven broad steps in developing marketing plan are:

- analyzing the current situation
- understanding markets and customers
- establishing segmentation, targeting and positioning
- determining objectives and direction
- developing marketing strategies and programs
- tracking progress and activities
- implementing and controlling the plan

Marketing objectives should include targets for managing customer relationships because these are so critical to the success of the company. Depending on the industry, the strategic direction and the mission of the organization and resources, marketers may set targets for acquiring new customers, retaining customers, increasing customer loyalty and customer satisfaction. (Wood 2003, 71.)

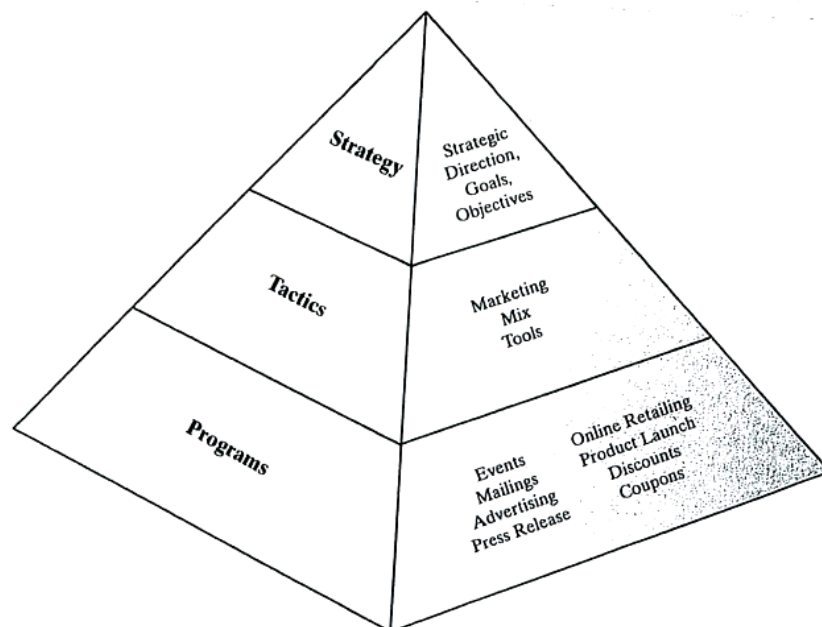


FIGURE 5. Strategy pyramid (Wood 2003, 74).

Figure 5 illustrates the main areas of strategies, tactics and programs. In programs only part of the tools are mentioned. Strategic planning in business and marketing planning is realized once a company has evaluated its marketing position. It has broadly speaking, three directions to which it can move. Strategically these are divided to:

- low price leadership
- product differentiation
- market focus

As an alternative to price leadership a company may choose to specialize in certain kinds of products which are not provided by its competitors. It may also opt to focus on quality, justifying a higher price than the large competitors by adding value. This will require a heavy emphasis in the marketing plan on quality control to ensure that standards are maintained. Lomalinja Oy developed a new marketing plan for the year 2012 and it aims to improve the customer service. This tells about the constant awareness of keeping up with the changes and up to date cultivation. In market focus the decision is taken to concentrate on one or more specific markets. Low price leadership is excluded in this case, since it is aimed for big and powerful companies, undercutting its rivals on price (Holloway 2004, 36-37).

Apart from many operational monitoring procedures, organizations should regularly review their strategic goals and plans. Strategic control is about the marketing audit, and it claims to identify unclear or inappropriate objectives, or strategies, to encourage improvements in expenditure, planning, execution and control, and to determine whether the organization is taking advantage of new marketing opportunities as they arise. (Holloway 2004, 375.)

5.2 Extended marketing mix

The concept of marketing mix is one of the most important in marketing; indeed it can be called the core of all marketing planning. The marketing mix is defined by Kotler as “the set of controllable tactical marketing tools that the firm blends

to produce the response it wants in the target market". In this thesis two concepts for marketing mix are used: 4Ps and 7Ps. The 4Ps of marketing was originally elaborated and introduced by Jerome E. McCarthy around 1960 in the first edition of a marketing textbook, and he came up with the 4Ps of marketing by condensing the elements in the marketing mix model elaborated by Neil H. Borden into four main categories. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 47).

It is essential to balance the 4Ps or the 7Ps of the marketing mix. The first four elements in the services marketing mix are the same as those in the traditional marketing mix. The concept of 4Ps has been used for a long time for the product industry while the latter has emerged as a successful proposition for the services industry. (The 7P's of Services Marketing 2008). In this thesis the focus is on services marketing and hence the extended marketing mix is applied instead of the traditional 4Ps model.

Because the expectations of customers are different, customer service situations are different and travel agencies are different the next customer might buy a totally different product. Services are each time different, depending of different persons and situation elements. The differences between products and services lead to acknowledgement of different factors and perception of emphasis. Due to immateriality of services, wishes and needs of customers are emphasized in marketing of services and in controlling them. A tourism company can affect the expectations and conception of services with the help of marketing communications. The objective of marketing communications is to create images for desired target groups. Conceptions are used to make intangible products tangible. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 190-192.)



FIGURE 6. Extended marketing mix (Services marketing mix 2011).

The product must provide value to a customer but it does not have to be tangible at the same time. Basically, product development involves introducing new products or improving existing products. Lomalinja Oy has succeeded to create new services and the company has taken its place in the markets successfully. A brand belongs under the product and is a considerably wide concept. It involves other elements than brand itself, such as the image of a company and how well-known the company is. A brand can be defined as follows; a brand is not a product. It is the appearance of a product, the purpose of it and the direction. A brand defines the identity of a product in time and place. According to another definition, a brand is an individualized product, person, service or place, where buyers discover meaningful, unique added value which responds to the needs of them (Kotler & Keller 2012, 10). In service sector, creating a brand equity calls for productization of services. Services need to be absolutely of uniform quality so that the brand identity can be formed. Launching a new product is the riskiest undertaking in marketing (Holloway 2004, 152). The authors excluded new product development since in this thesis it has a role of only a potential topic for further research. The least risks are taken by the company which chooses to modify an existing product or service to make it more attractive to the present market by adding additional benefits for instance. If the product or service is losing its appeal to the present market, it may be feasible to reposition it, to direct its appeal to a different market segment. (Holloway 2004, 152.)

The goals of pricing are to secure adequate sales and desired market share to reach a proper level of profitability, to block destructive price competition and price war as well as to create the wanted price image. Pricing must be competitive and must entail profit. The pricing strategy includes discounts and offers. Pricing is a key tool to achieve the marketing objectives of an organization. When the target market has been clearly identified, pricing bands will become easier to determine. (Holloway 2004, 166, 177). The price of the service has to meet the ability and willingness of the customer to pay it in each demand situation and at the same time be productive for the producer to be able to it leave enough contribution margins. Besides the producer has to continuously develop the product to preserve the position and readily improve it. (Boxberg et.al. 2001, 135.).The price is the sole component of the marketing mix that has an immediate effect to turnover and profit. (Kalka 2005, 101). The use of other competitive tools cause costs. Competitors react to our prices, whether they are low or high. The pricing of competitors needs to be followed, but it should not become an obsession. The way competitors react to our prices varies. They might not do anything or they can change their prices or other elements of their marketing mix. (Isoviita & Lahtinen 1998, 177.) A traveler experiences a package tour as an adventure that one evaluates as a whole entity and of what one pays a certain price. (Boxberg et.al. 2001, 27). Price is used to tell the value of the product or service and it directly impacts competition. Ground rules of pricing are using the knowledge of markets, demand, costs and competitors as well as setting goals and follow-up. (Hokkanen et.al. 2002, 59).

Considering the challenges and threat of substitutes, the most important criterion for selection of online travel agencies has turned out to be inexpensive prices and this assigns them an edge to some extent. However, customer buys the product only if its benefits are considerably higher than the price. Commonly heard is the argument that the price is the main element in purchasing. This considering the case company has proved to be wrong. Although there is a strong evidence that the price is the major factor in many travel decisions, it is by no means the sole criterion. (Holloway 2004, 172). Sari Mäkinen (2011) stated that today it is good that a customer compares prices and is more aware of the price-quality ratio. At the same time the price consciousness of travelers

put the professional skills of a tourism entrepreneur to a test. (Hokkanen et.al. 2002, 14). Price acts as a guide to quality and where consumers have the means to make comparisons with other products, price must be perceived as neither too expensive nor too cheap. To let the price lie outside an acceptable range, customers will either reject the product or service outright, or will seek much more information before committing themselves to a promise. (Holloway 2004, 162).

Lomalinja Oy uses premium pricing. The intention is to set up a price high in long term, using price as an indication of quality, or symbolic value, as with the case of high-status holidays. What comes to price in relation to service management, a company has to comprehend a customer perspective to the factor. It is worth understanding that customers do not buy goods or services, they buy the benefits goods and services provide them with. They buy offerings consisting of goods, services, information, personal attention and other components. (Grönroos 2000, 3.)

Promotion includes the various ways of communicating about the benefits of using a particular product or service rather than just talking about its features. Promotion is the element of the marketing mix which is entirely responsible for communicating the marketing proposition. (Marketing Mix 2008). In this thesis the authors chose to describe two approaches that best fit the case company. These are relationship marketing and direct marketing. Relationship marketing often results in increased word-of-mouth activity, repeat business and a willingness on the customer's part to provide information to the organization. (Smith & Taylor; Relationship marketing 2010).

Direct marketing is an important tool for promotion which comprises activities such as direct mail, telemarketing, mail order, direct response advertising and email marketing. Direct marketing provides a unique range of benefits because it enables you to engage directly with your audience - whether they are prospects, leads, end users or existing customers. (Advantages of direct marketing, n.d.). Direct marketing exploits the growth in new technology, and can create a completely new distribution channel direct to the customer or end user. A company needs to discover the advantages of direct marketing for the

business. Lomalinja Oy has provided newsletters to thousands of their best targeted customers. It offers customers up-to-date information about the offerings of the company and also tells that a company is able to provide new information all the time and this keeps the image of the company interesting. The downside of it, however, is that it can easily only remind of the existence of a company and help contacting when considering the opportunities. In practice the significance related to decision making can remain low because it does not reach the buyer at the moment when the service is needed. Kotler (2005) has stated that using well-known people in promotion can be seen as one promotion tactics to sales. Lomalinja Oy utilizes this tactics when they have celebrities as visiting guides on tours.

Place refers to the place where the customer can buy the product and how the product reaches out to that place. This is done through different channels, like internet, wholesalers and retailers. A service company needs to make planning for availability. The decisions of availability are divided into outer and inner availability decisions. The division is based on the physical premises of service companies which have a greater meaning than for industrial enterprises. Outer availability is especially significant in customer acquisition. The inner functionality secures the satisfaction of a customer. Outer availability means the factors, by which arriving of a customer to the company is eased. The aim of inner availability of a service company is that a customer can easily and pleasantly do business in the company. These factors are the service environment, versatility of offerings, presentation, brochure and guide material, accessibility of personnel and its willingness to be in service, and the impact of other customers. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 10).

Internet marketing has come to stay. Each company should develop a website for it which embodies its visions, objectives, history, products and many other things. It also needs to be obvious how to easily contact the company. The website must also contain regularly new information so that the visitors willingly return to the website. The graphic used needs to be interesting. A website is a window to the organization, and hence it needs to be planned carefully. Considering Lomalinja Oy, with most of the customers being over 50 years old, the website needs to be simple and easy to use. Today it is important to also

take social media marketing into consideration and include visual aids to the site. The internet promotes the segmentation of markets and the strength is to have a website which is specialized to a certain market segment. There is a question raised, of who benefits the most from the internet, customers or the company. The answer of Kotler is customers, and that is because the prices are becoming more transparent. (Kotler 2005, 24, 48, 117, 118). Lomalinja takes part every year at a travel fair, which is one of the most important fairs in Finland. This event is a powerful promotion factor for the company.

People refer to the customers, employees, management and everybody else involved. It is essential for everyone to realize that the reputation of the brand that you are involved with is in the hands of people. (7P's of marketing mix, n.d.). People are the most important element of any service or experience. Services tend to be produced and consumed at the same moment and aspects of the customer experience are altered to meet the individual needs of the person consuming it. People buy from people that they like, so the attitude, skills and appearance of all staff need to be first class. People have an important role in service delivery, they are relied upon to deliver and maintain transactional marketing and people play an important part in the customer relationship. People are the transactional interface between the company and its customers so people deliver the service and they collect money, as it gets paid on behalf the company for the service (Marketing mix 2008).

As the service element becomes increasingly important as a means of differentiating organizations and their product offerings, the value that the employees bring to the customer interface becomes a vital aspect of the marketing mix. The impact that people make or bring to the marketing communication process is substantial in terms of organizational identity issues and the projection of corporate identity issues. (Fill 2002, 462).

Process refers to the methods and process of providing a service and **it** is hence essential to have a thorough knowledge of whether the services are helpful to the customers, if they are provided in time and if the customers are informed in hand about the services. To improve the probability of retaining customers, organizations are increasingly turning to techniques of relationship

marketing. In a relationship oriented approach to marketing, many elements of the marketing mix toolbox are still highly necessary, because it includes variables for service competition. (Grönroos 2000, 241).

Physical evidence refers to the experience of using a product or service, for example brochures serve this purpose. A company needs to figure out a way how its customers know in advance exactly what they are buying. Physical evidence is the material part of the service. Strictly speaking there are no physical attributes to service, so a customer tends to rely on material cues. There are many examples of physical evidence, including some of the following; buildings, equipment, signs and logos, annual accounts and business reports, brochures, the website, and even the business cards. (Marketing mix 2008).

The travel brochure is an important marketing tool. In general, when one thinks of a travel brochure, one conjures an image of a listing of package holidays, or a descriptive booklet on a destination, and these forms of brochure remain the most important single tool in travel and tourism marketing. Much of the information a brochure contains is designed to answer the questions a consumer would otherwise have to raise either with the service providers or their intermediaries, such as a travel agency.



PICTURE 1. Pictures from the travel brochure of Lomalinja Oy. (Lomalinja 2012).

Many brochures also have a symbolic role, acting as a substitute for a product or service which cannot be physically seen or inspected prior to purchase. The design of the brochure cover is the key to persuading consumers to consider any product. Monitoring of distribution is a vital task; no out-of-date brochures should be available anywhere. The brochure is the public face of the organization, out of date prints have a negative influence on the image of the company. (Holloway 2004, 286, 301.)

5.3 Competitive position and competitors

Generally in the competition among travel agencies the contribution margins are small and the risk factors are high. Lomalinja Oy considers the competition to be an advantage and a threat at the same time. What makes it useful is the competition in a well mannered way and co-operation. The growth rate of the market, in this case the growth rate of theme travels is rapid and gives

Lomalinja Oy a strong advantage considering specialization. A great advantage for Lomalinja Oy is also the point that it is the only travel agency in the Tampere region specializing mostly in theme tourism, which gives it a cutting edge to competitors. In other words other travel agencies can imitate operations of Lomalinja Oy but will not be able to be the leaders in the field. Granting, the company needs continuously growth strategies.

The competitive advantage of travel agencies is providing professional services to fulfill needs of customers. (Amadeus 2007 according to Renfors, 2008. 56). A competitor analysis is imperative for a company considering to have a basis for building a future strategy. Analyzing competitors help marketers better understand market dynamics, anticipate what rivals will do, and create more practical marketing plans. In practice a company starts by identifying current competitors and just as important, possible sources of competition in the near future, to avoid being blindsided by a new entrant (Wood 2003, 34.) An effective way to be involved in the rivalry is to implement a competitive positioning strategy. This is the act of designing the offerings of a company and the image so that they occupy a meaningful and distinct competitive position in the target customers' minds. Moreover it is about making choices that ensure a fit between chosen market targets and the competencies and assets the firm can deploy to serve those chosen targets more effectively than competitors. Naturally, customer aspirations are to lead the whole strategy. While positioning and segmentation are different concepts, ultimately they are linked by customer needs. In the sense that the most robust form of segmentation focuses on the customer benefits that matter most to different types of customers, while the strongest competitive positions to take are those where customers recognize that a supplier or service is the one they choose because it best meets their needs. (Hooley et.al. 2004, 266-267, 567).

One of the main strategies of Lomalinja Oy is the differentiation strategy which is a generic competitive strategy in which the company narrows its competitive scope to achieve competitive advantage in its chosen segments. In very few cases the products of one organization are attractive to all consumers in the marketplace. It therefore makes good sense to target the products to specific

types of consumers, for which the product offers specific benefits, thereby making it more distinctive from its competitors. (Dibb & Simkin 2008, 7).

Viewpoint of Kotler (2005) is that small businesses have four main ways to overcome the competition against big companies:

- developing to be a specialist in a certain niche
- being flexible on bidding a product and construction
- offering superior service
- making the interaction with a customer personal

Lomalinja Oy emphasizes the productization of services. Customer oriented specification of products and services is the most important competitive tool of marketing. Product contemplation and productization of intangible benefits and experiences and a vital issue so that a traveler understands what kind of services one is buying. Once a tourism product is properly thought through and its content is clearly described from the point of view of various parties, it is easier to sell to customer and retailers. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 220-222).

Porter (1998) suggested that five main forces shape competition at the level of strategic business units and that a systematic analysis of each in turn can help managers identify the keys to competitiveness in their particular industry. (Hooley et.al. 2004, 118). These forces help to analyze everything from the intensity of competition to the profitability and attractiveness of an industry.

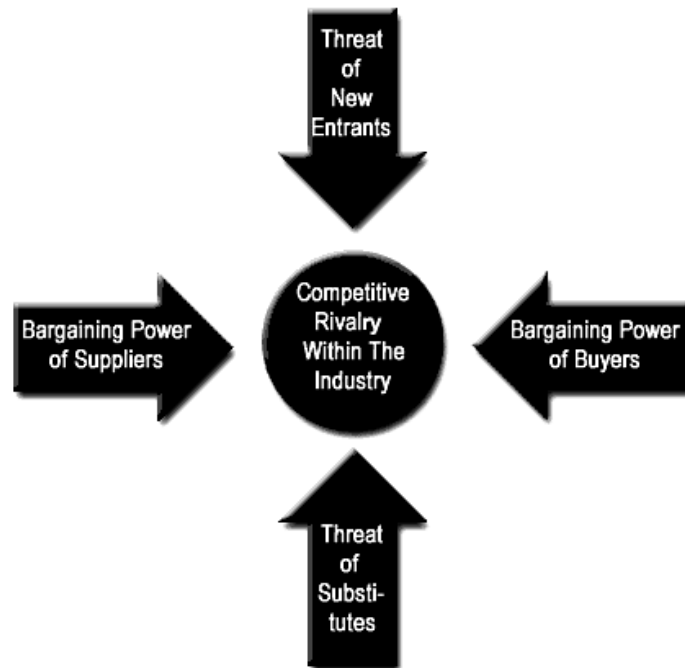


FIGURE 8. Porter's five forces model (Porter 1998, 29).

As can be seen in figure 8, there are five important forces that determine competitive power in a business situation. First there is supplier power where suppliers provide materials necessary for a company's production. The degree of their influence depends on few factors that basically can be seen as a reflection of the buyers' power factors. This force is the power of suppliers to exalt the prices of inputs. In case of a manufacturer, its buyers are normally not the individual customers, most likely they are companies or retailers. However, they possess the same buying power over the selling companies. They create demand, only with different manners. This is the power of customers to reduce prices.

Direct rivalry is a competition that comes from other companies operating in the same area and selling similar goods. It can sometimes be problematic to specify who the direct competitors are due to smaller or bigger differences in areas of production or target groups. It can also be the quality or prices that put the rival away from your league. Basically this means the strength of competition in the industry. Threat of the new entrants is one of the competitive forces. Threat emerges from companies that do not yet compete directly but might do so by introducing new line of production, refocusing on a new target group, or merging

with other manufacturers. The main factor defining the level of threat from newcomers is the industry entry barriers. This force is the ease with which new competitors can enter the market if they find out that a company is making good profits, and then reduce their prices down. Threat of substitutes in an industry refers to products or services that share most common characteristics. This is the extent to which different products and services can be used in place of your own. (Market research 2010, 19-23; Porter's five forces 2009).

In case of Lomalinja Oy, the existing travel agencies have already taken their place in the market and at least travel agencies specialized in theme tourism are not in sight in the near future. The operations of Lomalinja Oy can be mimicked but its services and products are already valued and in consciousness of customers. The competitive rivalry within the industry for Lomalinja is mainly about co-operation and peer support. The answer of Lomalinja Oy to the threat of substitutes is its clear line and giving priority on expertise. Selling regular package tours needs however some value adding strands because these kind of packages are sold by every travel agency operating in the area. Bargaining power of suppliers for Lomalinja comes all up to a proper co-operation and to a certain trade by which a company can develop and apply the products to its benefit.

The main idea of the five forces is to show that every business exists in an environment that includes far more players than direct competitors only. A company must find its position in this system in order to assess existing threats, to set the pricing objectives and evaluate own prospective profit and loss.

5.4 Effective technology usage in customer relationship management

In the future, the success of a company depends on effective data acquisition and on creating new information, hence the availability of information is becoming to be a key strategy for many companies. With increasing knowledge it is easier to understand the customer and providing distinctive services gets simpler. (Renfors 2008, 32.) Technology has also impact on the strategies that a company applies. Strategic influences mean such changes taking place in

business environment that affect customers of the company and the relationships between the company and the customers. There are few questions that a company can set to balance with changes:

- Are changes to be expected in own business environment?
- What is the significance of the changes to the company?
- Has there been changes in customer buying behavior?
- Are the competitors already preparing to the changes?
- Is there a threat of new competitors?

By answering previous questions a company can tentatively evaluate its position from the point of view of own business. (Hellman 2003, 32). With constant enthusiasm and aspiration to develop customer service a company can prepare for an effective usage of marketing and for customer acquisition. Information technology has changed dramatically the activity of tour operators revolutionizing the opportunities to interact with interest groups. (Bubalis 2003 according to Renfors 2008, 52). With the help of information technology tour operators can easily be in interaction with their customers and offer services in a more flexible way and more personally to them. The importance of information technology in tourism, especially of the World Wide Web, has increased tremendously over the past years and this trend will certainly continue. However, since the technology itself is now available to almost everyone, its use alone does not necessarily bring a competitive advantage anymore. (Information technology in tourism, n.d.) Various high tech information and communication technologies are in use in the tourism sector around the world. They are used for tourism product development, marketing, distribution and training of tourism sector personnel. These technologies are indispensable in order to find out and satisfy the ever changing requirements for tourism products and services. Collaborative filtering is a data mining type of software. This type of application uses the power of customer databases to identify customers who have similar profiles, interests and travel patterns based on previously accumulated customer knowledge. The findings are used for direct marketing. Knowledge-based software is based on the belief that people want more choices but they just do not want to be burdened with those choices. This type of software takes criteria set by customers and goes into digital databases.

This type of software not only automatically finds information for customer but also narrows down the choices and lets customers find the best deal.

Technological support enables the personnel to produce better service. Appropriate technological and physical resources, such as computer systems, documents, tools and equipment may at the same time improve working conditions and enhance the motivation of the employees to give good service. (Grönroos 2000, 380). Lomalinja Oy has in use a new ComGate system for customer follow-up which emphasizes the importance of graphics, which again makes it easier to follow-up the statistics about customers.

5.5 After sales operations

The idea of after sales marketing is that a customer with whom a company has done business is treated with a personal touch. (Isoviita & Lahtinen 1998, 52). A salesperson needs to be active in post marketing of a product. Contacting the customer after an implemented travel and going through the development and realization of it with the customer creates an image of a reliable partner who wants to develop services for a long-term customer relationship. (Boxberg et.al. 2001, 20).

Taking care of after sales operations, as in further development of customer relationships, is highly important. Customer care does not end when the customer leaves the premises of the company or has paid the bill, but the customer is also to be remembered later. A customer needs to be commended for choosing the specific company and by after sales be reminded about the company again. Personal contacting, letters and various customer benefits and advantages can be used as tools. The most important task of after sales operations is to commit a customer to the company and via this achieve additional marketing by using recommendations of both old and new customers. (Hokkanen et.al. 2002, 31). There are many reasons for losses of business. If clients suffered a bad experience when travelling with a particular tour operator and the outcome was unsatisfactory, or if they have friends who had a horrific

tale to tell, there will be no repeat business from those clients. (Renfors 2008, 4).

Bad reputation is far more widely known than a good one. A customer will be disappointed if a product or product quality does not meet the standards portrayed in advertising. It is difficult to convert a disappointed customer into a purchasing customer again and harder still to make the same customer a loyal customer in the future. The aim of after sales marketing is to make incremental sales and to verify the customer relationship. It also needs to ensure and develop regular customer interaction. (Isoviita & Lahtinen 1994, 24, 51).

5.6 Marketing challenges

Creating more integrated information of important customers is a challenge to marketing. If contacting information history of a customer is not saved, a company will not face a 360 degree image of current or potential customers. This will limit the opportunities to create new interesting offers and messages to a certain customer. Kotler raises the question of how will the marketing be profitable if all the 4P elements are not under cohesive and integrated management of planning. This means in those cases that marketing takes care only about the market promotion when other functions in the company determine the product, pricing and distribution. A challenge is also to balance between low costs and high quality competition and responding to it. (Kotler 2005, 28).

A suitable tool for Lomalinja Oy against marketing challenges is to emphasize the learning perspective. For a company succeeding in creating happy encounters where one learns something new, a lasting relationship is being created. The joy of learning is permanent joy. Travel industry relies heavily on repeat business. The same people go on holiday year after year, often several times a year; other people stay at home. (Renfors 2008, 4). A situation where a customer visits a company once but the second time chooses something else is not wanted. The best travel experiences arise when a person is not changing

the place but the place is changing the person. This makes one more happy and has taught one something. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 157, 199).

A company should use questions to gather information which it can then use to position a product or service more effectively. Too many salespeople assume that they fully understand their prospects' problems. One needs to ask questions at the right time about the right things in order to get the information needed to make the sale, or otherwise one might lose credibility and lose the sale forever. (Asking the right questions, n.d.).

6 CONCLUSIONS

Marketing needs to become and remain flexible and responsible to change. At a strategic level everyone in the organization should place customers at forefront of their minds. (Hooley et.al. 2004, 567.) The streamline of customer relationship management is to offer what the customer requires, not what the organization can make. The idea in Lomalinja Oy is precisely to offer what the customer wants. Whether customers seek for ordinary package tours or theme travels, the aim is to get the customer to notice that one needs not to purchase only one option, but one can combine the offerings.

The main idea of the authors was to research a successful travel agency and the chosen case company turned out to be a good selection in the light of examining CRM. Lomalinja Oy meets the requirements of versatility by aiming to be unique in the future. The company investigates considerations of customers and aims to find out the changes by adapting them to their operations. This is implemented through the basis of gained feedback and previous knowledge. Lomalinja Oy is keeping up with the new technology challenges by finding the right strategies for processes that are right for the company and focuses on them. A company needs to utilize connectivity and systems that support a business centered approach on its customers and use them both internally and externally with suppliers.

During the survey there were three aspects that most distinguished the products of Lomalinja to its benefit. These are the authenticity, a story and distinctiveness. Authenticity makes a product credible and supports the productization of culture on which Lomalinja Oy focuses. A story supports strongly the authenticity. Different elements of a tourism product are intertwined with a story which gives a product and experience a common social meaning and content. A good story offers a customer a good reason to experience exactly the product of the chosen company. Distinctiveness means the uniqueness of a product. It is seen in customer orientation, flexibility and in the possibilities of a customer to tailor the product for oneself to match their own predilections and preferences. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 217). These are all aspects of a successful marketing strategy that includes targeting,

positioning and differentiation. (Kotler 2005, 41). This again is directly linked to proper segmentation. In order for a company to reach this it needs to have suitably skilled personnel, general marketing skills, understanding of segmentation and impact of it, as well as technical skills.

The future of travel agencies cannot be predicted but there are a few arguments that are securing that the position of them will remain. A travel agency is able to receive the best prices when making larger volume contracts with producers than private customers. Independent travels are even more common; however, a travel agency will still reduce the insecurity of a traveler and guarantee benefits of its customers. Furthermore, not all the reservations can be done through internet because of their complicated content. This is why especially travels that require special arrangements and travels to more rare destinations are made personally through intermediate travel agencies. (Renfors 2008, 54). A product consisting of various complex elements still often needs consultation with a salesperson or with a service provider to increase the sense of security.

A typical customer for Lomalinja Oy is a person over 50 years and as customer groups of older people are generally growing in size, the future position for the case company should not be too threatened. Tailor made tours make customers require additional information from the company. Moreover, older customers do not necessary thrive on using machines but respect the service of people, who still have a central position in service processes. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 182). Then again a downside is that going to a travel agency takes time. Attention needs to be put to after sales operations, so that customers are kept up to date on all the latest information that is relevant, special reductions, country information and special interests for groups and individuals. (Syratt 1995, 197).

The authors have an idea that that the popularity of package tours might be increasing in the future. Package tours, in which everything is arranged for the traveler, meaning flight reservations, programme, transport between airport and hotel on arrival, and again on the day of departure (Syratt 1995, 4), might not be an idea that young people will be avoiding. This anyhow requires that the package tour is reasonably priced and that an individual has enough freedom. A

tourism company needs information about travelers as buyers for marketing planning. It needs to follow up the consistency and models that could be utilized in marketing. Even though the products, services and experiences are to be transferred to internet or to electronic portals it will not change the overall essence in human behavior. The elements that are to get more popular in the future are values that highlight ecological, ethical, international and educational aspects. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 139-140, 155.)

A tourism company gains a better understanding of its customer markets by using CRM and it enables better marketing and advertising efforts. New technology opportunities need to be exploited to simplify data analysis of customers in the company. A website is in a major role and attention needs to be put in designing it. What the authors think is good on the website of Lomalinja Oy, are the personalized content and customer account preferences. The content of the website could also divide opinions of being personalized to being too difficult to understand. Complexity is good to be avoided considering the older customers, so they would not feel like failing in finding information or buying a tour through the website. Adding the sent newsletter to the customers, planning and tracking of a new marketing campaign together with the website is visible. Today the importance of social media is escalating. On the website of Lomalinja Oy video material of its tours could be found and the website is keeping up with the changes and it is not lacking the new coming innovation but taking advantage of it. The company ought to sell its services to everyone in the best possible way and not assume that some groups of people do not want some services or products. Whether one pays discount price or full price, the service should always be sold in equal enthusiasm.

As a final statement from the point of view of the authors, a consideration is that CRM is in addition to its usual advantages and functions also about mixing errors, stress and culture. These all combined create enthusiasm and interest to research different CRM processes in specified tourism companies.

6.1 Development ideas and recommendations for the case company

Lomalinja Oy has already included in its offerings tours aimed for children. The authors have the opinion that the group of young people is not impossible to achieve either in the future. Surely it is a first challenge to find out how the reputation of the tours for children will turn out to be and will the sales be profitable. The authors state that it is important to bear in mind that the reputation of package tours might not vanish at all but with a right productization of tours the company may reach the younger target group, too. Especially if the sales to the strongest target group remains stable, it is a good opportunity to include different services and products in the package tours.

Whilst the website of Lomalinja Oy was studied and analyzed throughout the process, the authors think that giving more consideration to targeting in designing a website could make it simpler and still cover all the offerings the company wants to offer. Increasing the amount of social media will not do harm but is a great visual point.

6.2 Suggestions for further thesis work

Internet is part of the service process, hence the authors think of internet marketing as one good issue of further research. Other potential issues are brand management and researching consumer products by brainstorming new possible products, because there is a possibility of aiming products and services to a new potential target group, namely to young people. An issue related to the biggest challenge in marketing of Lomalinja Oy is how to market all the offerings equally effective and make them visible. It would be of interest to research this in order to find new solutions in addition to the already existing ones.

Lomalinja Oy is concentrating on improving customer service in the year 2012. This is a challenge to the company. Hence it would be a good topic for further research to find out whether the company has succeeded. This kind of research could include also customers' point of views in analyzing the challenges and

possibly productization of expertise. This means defining the services provided to a customer, planning, development and productization in a way that customer benefits are maximized and profit outputs of an expertise company are reached.

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APPENDIX

HAASTATTELUKYSYMYKSET

Olennaista tietoa, mitä yritys haluaa että siitä mainitaan?

Miten yrityksen omistusprosentit jakautuvat?

Haluaako yritys, että henkilökuntaa mainitaan?

Yleistä asiakkuudenhallinnasta, mikä on yrityksen näkökulma?

Mikä on prosentuaalinen määrä teemamatkoja tarjoomasta?

Miten muut matkat jakautuvat?

Mitä teemoja matkoissa korostetaan?

Mitkä asiat voivat estää asiakkaan halun ostaa tai käyttää palvelua?

Mikä saa asiakkaan ostamaan?

Mitä asioita asiakas arvostaa?

Pakettien suunnittelu; miten teemamatka muodostuu?

Keitä ovat Lomalinja Oy:n kilpailijat?

Miten kilpailu nähdään ja otetaan vastaan, hyöty vai uhka?

Miten voi varautua teemamatkojen suosion jatkumiseen? Mitä seurantakeinoja?

Millainen on hyvä myyjä? Mitä myyjä tarjoaa?

Miten tulla asiakkaiden tarpeita vastaan?

Kuinka paljon matkoista myydään paikanpäällä?

Mikä on Internetin ja kotisivujen rooli?

Miten Lomalinja Oy hyödyntää asiakassegmenttejä?

Tyypillinen asiakasprofiili?

Palautelomakkeen merkitys? Millainen käytössä oleva lomake on nyt?

Mitä muita keinoja on seurata asiakkaan toiveita ja odotuksia kuin palautelomake?

Mikä on teknologian rooli yrityksessä?

Mitä järjestelmää yritys käyttää? Mikä tekee siitä hyvän?

Miten jälkimarkkinointia toteutetaan ja hallitaan?

Mitä markkinointityökaluja yritys käyttää?

Millainen on yleinen markkinointimalli?

Mikä on haastavin asiakassegmentti?

Mikä on haastavin teemamatkasegmentti?

Mitkä ovat strategiat ja tavoitteet yrityksessä?

Millainen on yrityksen markkinointisuunnitelma?

Miten markkinointisuunnitelmaa ylläpidetään ja päivitetään?

Mitkä ovat yrityksen haasteet ja tulevaisuuden näkymät?

THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General information, what does the company want to be mentioned?

How are the ownership percentages divided?

Does the company want that the personnel are mentioned?

Generally about customer relationship management, what is the point of view of the case company?

What is the percentage of theme tours from the offerings?

What is the division of rest of the travels?

What themes are emphasized?

What are the factors that can prevent the client's desire to buy or use the service?

What gets the customer to buy the product or service?

What issues are appreciated by customers?

Planning of travel packages; how is the package formed?

Who are the competitors of Lomalinja Oy?

How is the competition seen? Is it a threat or an advantage?

What can be done to predict the popularity of theme tours? How is it followed?

What is a good customer servant like? What does the servant offer?

How to reach and meet the hopes and needs of a customer?

How big part of the travels is sold on the spot?

What is the role of internet and website of the company?

How Lomalinja Oy utilizes the customer segments?

What is a typical customer profile?

Meaning of feedback form? What is the form like at the moment?

What other ways of follow up is there to manage hopes and needs of a customer than the feedback form?

What is the role of technology in the company?

What system does the company use? What makes it good?

How are the after sales operations implemented and managed?

What marketing tools does the company use?

What is the general marketing model?

What is the most challenging customer segment?

What is the most challenging theme travel segment?

What are the strategies and aims of the company?

What is the marketing plan like in the company?

How is the marketing plan maintained and updated?

What are the challenges and future outlooks of the company?