E-marketing Analysis with Web-Page Focus

Case: Tour Organizer X

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This Bachelor's thesis evaluates the e-marketing used in the case company focusing on the web-page analysis. The aim of the study was to analyze the web-pages and discover improvement ideas for the case company. The thesis consists of a theory section and a part where theory is applied to the case company's e-marketing. In the theory marketing and e-marketing theories are discussed. In addition the qualitative methods used for the thesis are presented. In the empirical section the marketing theories are used for evaluating the e-marketing in the case company and the web-pages are analyzed.

The case company's personnel were interviewed for company information and e-marketing used in the company. The study was conducted by benchmarking other tour organizer web-pages and comparing them to the case companies' web-pages. For finding out customer perspective to the web-pages a group of graduating tourism students were recruited for focus-group discussion. The researcher also analyzed e-marketing of the case company by using marketing theories. The purpose of using these methods was to find out development ideas and present customer perspective to the web-page for the case company.

Benchmarking and focus-group discussion revealed aspects on the web-page that could be improved. The results showed which of the aspects on the web-page received most positive feedback and which most negative. E-marketing analysis based on the marketing theories brought up development ideas. The research resulted in practical development ideas for the commissioner of which could be mentioned improvement ideas concerning the layout and the structure of the web-pages.

The conclusion of the study was that the web-pages respond partly well in the customers' demands but the company's web-pages need further development. The aim of the research was to find practical development ideas for the commissioner and by using different qualitative methods the research aim was reached.

Key words: marketing, e-marketing, web-page analysis, qualitative methods

Anita Högbacka

Internet-sivuihin keskittynyt sähköisen markkinoinnin analyysi matkanjärjestäjälle.

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Tämä opinnäytetyö arvioi toimeksiantajayrityksen sähköistä markkinointia keskittyen yrityksen internet-sivuihin. Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantajana oli eräs matkanjärjestäjäalan yritys. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli analysoida internet-sivuja ja löytää parannusehdotuksia yritykselle. Teoriaosuudessa käsitellään markkinoinnin ja sähköisen markkinoinnin teorioita. Lisäksi esitellään tutkimuksessa käytettyjä kvalitatiivisia menetelmiä. Empiirisessä osuudessa markkinoinnin teorioita on sovellettu yrityksen sähköisen markkinoinnin arviointiin ja internet-sivut on arvioitu vertailuanalyysin ja ryhmähaastattelun keinoin.

Toimeksiantajayrityksen henkilökuntaa haastateltiin yrityksestä ja yrityksen sähköisestä markkinoinnista. Tutkimus suoritettiin tekemällä vertailuanalyysi muiden matkanjärjestäjien internet-sivuista ja vertaamalla niitä toimeksiantajan internet-sivuihin. Asiakasnäkökulman selvittämiseksi ryhmähaastatteluun rekrytoitiin ryhmä valmistuvia matkailun opiskelijoita. Yrityksen sähköistä markkinointia on myös analysoitu markkinointiteorioiden pohjalta. Näiden menetelmien käytön tarkoituksena oli löytää kehitysideoita ja esitellä yritykselle asiakasnäkökulma internet-sivuihin.

Vertailuanalyysi ja ryhmähaastattelu osoittivat alueita, joilla olisi tarvetta muutokselle tai kehitykselle internet-sivuilla. Tulokset osoittivat alueet, jotka saivat eniten positiivista palautetta tai eniten negatiivista palautetta. Sähköisen markkinoinnin analysointi markkinoinnin teorioiden pohjalta toi esiin kehitysideoita. Tutkimuksen tuloksena saatiin käytännöllisiä kehitysideoita toimeksiantajayritykselle, joista mainittakoon internet-sivujen ulkoasun parantamiseen ja rakenteen selkeyttämiseen liittyvät kehitysehdotukset. Tutkimuksen johtopäätöksenä oli, että internet-sivut vastaavat osittain kiitettävästi asiakkaiden vaatimuksiin, mutta yrityksen internet-sivut tarvitsevat vielä kehittämistä.

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to analyze e-marketing of Tour Organizer X focusing on the analysis of the company web-page. By qualitative methods the aim was to evaluate the web-page from customer perspective. The first part of the thesis consists of marketing and e-marketing theories and the theory of the qualitative methods used for the research. In the second part the company and its e-marketing are introduced. Theory is taken into practice and web-pages of Tour Organizer X are analyzed by the benchmarking method and focus-group discussion. The marketing theories are applied for e-marketing and web-page analysis.

In benchmarking the author compared the Tour Organizer X's web-pages with other tour organizers' web-pages operating in Finland. Criteria for creating trust through web-pages and AIDA marketing method were used as a base for group interview with graduating tourism students in order to get development and improvement ideas from customer perspective. The topic of web-page analysis emerged on the Travel Fair 2013 where the author worked in Tour Organizer X stand. Regarding the comments and opinions of travel fair visitors the subject was considered important for developing the business of Tour Organizer X and analyzing their web presence. Tour Organizer X was chosen as the case company because of its start-up status and its relatively new presence on the tour organizer market in Finland. As the company has recently started operating there has been marginal feedback from the customers' perspective on the usability of the web-pages.

2 Marketing

Marketing is a process that creates value to the customer and in return brings value to the company (Kotler & Armstrong 2009, 29). It is an exchange process that includes two or more parties. All of the parties have something valuable to offer for one another. This makes the base of a transaction. (Fill 1999, 2). According to businessdictionary.com (WebFinance Inc. 2013) marketing concept means "Management philosophy according to which a firm's goals can be best achieved through identification and satisfaction of the customers' stated and unstated needs and wants".

Customers are in the center of the business and without them the companies would not have reason to exist. In order to reach the customers successfully the company should know properly who are their customers and what they need and want. The company has to deliver satisfying offers for their customer groups and reward the customers for purchasing their products. However marketing does not operate only based on the customers' needs and wants as the business includes also other stakeholders like members of staff and investors. In the

end marketing the business is balancing between all the stakeholders needs. For example the marketers need to find a price for the product that brings profit for the stakeholders but also is appropriate for the customers. (Blythe & Megicks 2010, 4-5.)

2.1 Marketing mix

Marketing mix a tool used by companies to make choices in bringing a product or service into a market (Mind Tools Ltd. 1996-2013). Its' purpose is also to influence the demand of a product (Kotler & Armstrong 2009, 76). Traditionally the marketing mix consisted of four key issues that come to marketing also called as the 4Ps. The 4Ps come from Product, Price, Promotion and Place. Later the 4Ps increased to 7Ps as People, Process and Physical Evidence were added. (Chartered Institute of Marketing 2009)

Product should bring value to the customer and company must think from the customers' perspective what they want to buy. It can be either tangible or intangible. (Chartered Institute of Marketing 2009, 4).

Price has to be competitive but also bring profit to the company. It is the only element in the whole marketing mix that brings revenue to the company as the other Ps mean costs. With price the company put itself in certain marketplace. For higher price the customers expect better quality. Price is used for comparing the company with the competitors. (Chartered Institute of Marketing 2009, 4-5).

Place is important criteria for the customer when choosing a product. "The product must be available in the right place, at the right time and in the right quantity−". Place means the channel which you use to show the product for the customer. (Chartered Institute of Marketing 2009, 5).

The place does not necessarily mean a physical place where the customer can go to buy a product. In modern world customers can choose if they want go to a shop or do the shopping from home with their own computer. Internet is the most popular tool for making purchases at home. The company can choose whether to have a physical location, web-shop or having a combination of different channels. (Molenaar 2012, 22).

Promotion means communicating to the customer about the companies' operations and the products it is serving. It should make the customers notice the companies' product and make them willing to buy the product from you instead of some other company on the market. Successful promotion gives the customer a chance to communicate with the company instead of the company only giving information to the customer. The promotion should ensure the buy-

ers about the usefulness of the product for them. Regardless of the nature of the promotional material it should be user-friendly and has to make the customer to pay attention to it. The information flow is important also inside the company as in this way the employees can distribute more effectively the information further to the potential buyers. (Chartered Institute of Marketing 2009, 5-6).

Promotional materials have turned into more individualized messages. Internet has enabled recording customers' buying behavior and use of loyalty programmes. Company can then use collected customer information for more personalized communication with them. (Molenaar 2012, 21).

People are a key element when creating an image of the company. Every time a customer is in touch with a staff member of a company it is a moment of truth on how the customer perceives the company and its products. The staff members need to therefore be well educated for the job and in addition have an appropriate mind set. Many buyers think that there is no difference between the product and the people serving it. Company can add value to its product by delivering extra services like giving after purchase advice and counseling. (Chartered Institute of Marketing 2009, 6).

"**The Process** of giving a service, and the behavior of those who deliver are crucial to customer satisfaction" according to Chartered Institute of Marketing (2009, 6). Customer values that everything works in the process. The elements of properly working process are short waiting times, effective information flow and good service. Working process is vital because usually it gives the first impression of the company either in positive or negative light. (Chartered Institute of Marketing 2009, 6).

Physical evidence gives customer a strong clue about what to expect of the product. It is in particular important when it comes to intangible products in other words services. The physical evidence can reinforce the customers' image about the product or be against it. As products are different by nature the physical evidence should go in harmony with the product. Physical evidence also means testimonials and case studies about the product. These previous experiences from others who have used the product can help the customer in decision making. (The Chartered Institute of Marketing 2009, 7)

In modern world there has been criticism about the marketing mix model of marketing. The 4Ps critics have remarked that the model works best with the consumer products and is not as valuable when it comes to services and business to business marketing. In the traditional 4Ps only promotion allows the customer to communicate with the company. (Godson 2009, 9-10).

2.2 Marketing planning

According to Canwell & Sutherland(2009,125) "A marketing plan is a detailed document which aims to itemize and quantify actions that need to be taken in order to pursue marketing strategies." Marketing planning includes steps that should be followed in order to make the plan that is flexible and feasible.

1. Analysis

   The process begins by finding out in what situation the company is at the moment therefore it knows where to go from there. This is essential for the next steps in marketing planning because otherwise it is difficult to move on. The company has to know its roots and analyze carefully where it is at. (Canwell & Sutherland 2009, 125).

2. Planning

   Planning includes setting goals for the marketing plan and the desired outcome. In this stage plan is made. Plan is detailed and the planners describe how the desired outcomes are going to be reached. (Canwell & Sutherland 2009, 125).

3. Implementation

   In the third step it is important to ensure that all the persons involved in implementing the marketing plan know their duties and responsibilities. The processes and structures are recognized which enable the plan to stay in the intended timetable. In addition a budget is made for all the operations needed. (Canwell & Sutherland 2009, 125).

4. Control

   For controlling the market plan there has to be working feedback systems: "Inevitably things will change-no plan survives first implementation, because it is impossible to foresee everything. Flexibility and monitoring are therefore essential" (Canwell & Sutherland 2009, 125). The plan usually does not meet its desired goals. The plan therefore needs to be re-evaluated and the targets checked. The targets can be fixed according to the performance so far. (Blythe & Megicks 2010, 16-17.)

2.3 Segmentation

Segmentation means dividing a mass market into more manageable units that help the company to choose marketing strategies that satisfy the needs and wants of the potential buyers. Segmenting means for the company determining the opportunities on the market and developing marketing plans that meet customer needs. Buyers have various reasons for purchasing a product and finding out the reasons allows the company to target for specific target groups. (Fill 1999, 200-202.) For example one customers' reason for reserving a holiday could be reducing stress and for other getting involved in different activities. Blythe & Megicks (2010,

156) state that the purpose of the segmentation for the company is to invest the resources in a way that gives it an advantage compared to the competitors.

There are three stages in customer segmentation. First the company needs to research and identify different customers on the whole market. Next the company has to put the customers in segments by using the most relevant needs, behaviours and characteristics for the business in question. In the third stage the company chooses the segments that are going to be targeted. Because of the limited resources the company needs to choose the segments that are going to be profitable and possible to reach. Cutting out the undesired customer groups helps optimizing the limited resources. (Blythe & Megicks 2010, 156).

There are different bases for segmentation. According to Blythe & Megicks (2010, 139) market segment "─is a group of people with similar needs and characteristics." The most commonly used segmentation method is demographic segmentation. In this method it is presumed that individuals' demographic background like age and occupation determine his ability to buy a product. Geographic segmentation is based on the assumption that buyers' needs vary depending on which area they live geographically. Geodemographic segmentation combines elements from both demographic and geographic segmentations. (Fill 1999, 203-204). Psycho-analytic segmentation is according to Fill (1999, 204) "─the subdivision of a market on the basis of personality or lifestyle." In behavioural segmentation the customers are divided to groups depending on their purchase behaviour. The main bases for segmentation describe the subjects of the benefits for the customer, purchase situation and customers' buying behaviour. Segmentation can also describe the attitudes of the customer and the readiness for making a purchase. Segment groups do not exclude one another but instead companies can use a combination of different segmentations. (Blythe & Megicks, 2010, 157-159).

2.4   Relationship marketing

According to Godson(2009, 30) the methods that help in meeting customer expectations include "─getting to know them better, keeping them loyal and ensuring customer satisfaction." Each new customer means costs for the company in marketing budget. Therefore it is profitable for the company to make multiple sales to the same customer. (Abingdon 2005, 18-20)

The core idea of relationship marketing is to keep the old customers loyal to the company rather than focus on getting constantly new customers. It also focuses on lengthening the customer relationships. The aim of the relationship marketing is to get satisfied customers. A satisfied customer creates a situation where both parties benefit from the relationship. Company can have also relationships with competitors that ensure customer satisfaction. Regard-

ing the customer as an active party helps to maintain and make relationships. (Godson 2009, 19-20).

In a relationship with customers it is crucial to show them what kind of value you can deliver them with your product (Linton 2011, 235). The customer should feel like they get more gain from buying the product than they need to do sacrifices. The price for the buyer includes the price of the product, other costs that are caused from buying the product and the possible risk of the purchase. (Godson 2009, 42). Buyers have several reasons for not buying a product and by eliminating the risks and concerns the customer is more likely to make a purchase. Some examples of the ways to offer the customer reassurance include giving a money-back guarantee or the method "buy now, pay later". (Abingdon 2005, 43-45). The company can add value to the customer relationship by being more accurate in meeting customer expectations and creating feelings of trust and bonding with the customer (Godson 2009, 42-43).

2.4.1   Meeting customer expectations

Finding out the specific requirements of the customers based on background research enables segmenting large groups and then marketing for these segments. From the relationship marketing point of view this approach is more for the companies' benefit and does not give value to the customer. Relationship marketing focuses on creating products and marketing that see customers as individuals. Customers get value from postponement, personalization of products and marketing communications also known as mass customization. In postponement the final product is made for customers order and taste. The components are ready but put together in the last minute. Personalization allows the customer to make a personal touch in a mass product. Personalized mass marketing takes into account for example the customer previous purchase behaviour and can make personalized offers based on it. (Godson 2009, 43-48).

Successful brands have met the needs of complex customers by adding value to their products. The companies have managed to do this by "―adapting to customer lifestyles." (Godson 2009, 11.) Customers want to been seen as individuals instead of being part of a mass. They have become harder to please and are more resistant to the marketers' messages. (Godson 2009, 11).

2.4.2   Creating feelings of trust and bonding

For successful creation of relationship marketing the feelings of trust and bonding are equally important. As Brink & Berdnt (2008, 38) say "According to the Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing, relationships exist through the retention of trust and commitment; thus, when both commitment and trust are present – not just one or the other – they produce

outcomes that promote efficiency, productivity and effectiveness". In relationship trust means relying on the other party and having certainty that the relationship will not disappoint you or let you down. (Brink & Berdnt 2008, 38).

Trust and satisfaction are bonded in the relationship therefore trusting the other party and feeling that the promises are being kept creates satisfaction. Feelings of satisfaction can be obtained either by own direct experience or by listening to the views and experiences of other people. The quality of the service and the length of relationship also affect the satisfaction level. For customers it is important to know that the company stands behind its words and can deliver what has been promised. Especially when selling services the trust factor becomes important as the customer can not be certain how the company will keeps its promises. Trusting the company can lead to commitment for its services or products. If the company fails in appearing trustworthy for the customer the relationship can end or at least it can take a big effort to win back the customers' trust. (Brink & Berdnt 2008, 38-39).

2.5   Characteristics of tourism marketing

Middleton (2001, 49) says that "—the principles of the body of knowledge about marketing and its main theoretical elements hold good for all types of product." However services marketing like tourism differ from marketing tangible products. The main differences in services marketing compared to goods marketing are intangibility, inseparability, variability and perishability. (Opperman & Weaver 2000, 213).

Intangibility means that the potential buyer does not get a possibility to have a tangible experience before purchasing the service product. The services products "cannot be seen, tasted, felt or heard prior to their purchase and consumption (Opperman & Weaver 2000, 213)." As a consequence the physical evidence in the services sector grows in importance. Even with physical evidence the customer only has a lead of what to expect of experience. Also positive word-of-mouth and testimonials become source of information for the potential buyer. The challenge in selling and marketing services is that once the customer has used the service it cannot be given back in the case of dissatisfaction with the product. The intangible nature of the service products makes it a risky purchase from the customers' perspective. (Oppermann & Weaver 2000, 213). Services are challenging to price especially because the buyers use the price as a clue of the services' quality (Gilmore 2003, 10).

In the services sector production and consumption of the product happen the same time. In other words the services are inseparable. This is why the moments when customer and staff member meet each other have high importance. Staff members have to be properly trained for facing the customers. (Oppermann & Weaver 2000, 213). In services the customer is in-

volved in production of the product because for the service to happen the customer and seller have interact. Other customers as well can affect the experience of the service. (Gilmore 2003, 11).

Variability in services is consequence of different variables in human interaction like the state of mind of the staff or customer at the moment of service. All the small bits make the service experience one of a kind moment. The services quality level can change for example with staff members' level of stress or the customers high expectations of the service. (Oppermann & Weaver 2000, 214-215).

Perishability means that unlike tangible products "—services cannot be produced and stored for consumption at some future point in time (Oppermann & Weaver 2000, 215)." In services it is challenging to make a balance between the demand and supply (Oppermann & Weaver 2000, 21).

3 E-marketing

E-marketing is abbreviation from the word electronic marketing (Pride & Ferrel 2012, 282). E-marketing definition according to Rana (2009, 1) is "using digital technologies to help sell your goods or services." Pride & Ferrel (2012, 282) use a broader definition saying that e-marketing is "the strategic process of distributing, promoting, pricing products, and discovering the desires of customers using digital media and digital marketing." E-marketing describes the process where any kind of technology is applied for the purpose of reaching companies marketing aims (Chaffey 2004, 318).

E-marketing enables transferring and sharing information between customer and company. Company has a possibility to enter markets that were before e-marketing hard to achieve and making marketing more targeted. In addition to these benefits using e-marketing helps the company to stay competitive and access inexpensive digital communication resources. (Pride & Ferrell 2012, 282-283). As Siebel (2001) says it is essential for the companies' survival to give customer opportunity to communicate with the company by using internet and e-mail.

Internet has several characteristics when it used as a marketing tool. It enables recording large quantities of information without depending on the physical location and used for effective "searching, organizing and disseminating such information". Internet is used for communication purposes and presenting the products in a way that is more effective than printed material. For companies it can provide a delivery place for its products. One of the benefits is also the comparatively low price for entering a market. (Fletcher et al. 2004, 13).

The e-marketing tools presented in this research are based on the information of the interview with the company. The main emphasis is on web-page as marketing method and web-page design. In addition social media, search engine optimization and ad banners are presented as they are tools that are used in e-marketing of Tour Organizer X.

3.1   Web-page

People have various reasons for visiting a web-page. They are used for making purchases, exploring information or applied for communication purposes. (Molenaar 2012, 137). In marketing web-pages are a representation of the company and a tool for connection with the customer. Company web-pages can be a combination of different using purposes for the customer because they can use it as an information source, place for buying a product or to take contact with the company. For the company connection with customer via web-page can mean for example receiving feedback and doing marketing research on the page. Company web-page can also be used as information source for media. (Newlands 2011, 74-75).

According to Buhalis et al. (2012, 213) "a successful web-site should, therefore, take customers' interests and participation in to consideration, in order to capture information about their preferences, and subsequently use that information to provide personalized communication and services." The information search is an essential stage for the customer when choosing a product and it can lead to more certainty and trusting that the product is a good choice. In addition in tourism products the careful information search of the customer can lead to higher quality holidays. The many benefits of the information to the customer include for example improved interaction between the customer and local culture. (Buhalis et al. 2012, 207).

For keeping the commercial web-page interesting for the customer it needs to copy the concept of information source web-page therefore it needs to provide fresh information for the visitor (Molenaar 2012, 153). Molenaar (2012, 153) says that "This dynamism can be created by varying the product range or by having special offers." The customer should find the new information easily on the web-page and the company has to communicate to the customer about the new information available. The company can communicate with the customer in form of newsletters that are preferably personalized. Using the data of customers' buying history makes them more likely to go to the web-page again. E-businesses need to have an easy access and the consumers should be encouraged to visit the page by communicating with them and providing links. (Molenaar 2012, 153-155).

3.2   Social media

According to Wilson (2010, 1) the definition of social media consists of "any of the online tools that allow people with similar interests to share information, learn from others, or network in an open process". Social media for business is therefore about the ability to use the available technology in order "to reach out and connect with other humans, create a relationship, build trust, and be there when the people in those relationships are ready to purchase our product offering" (Safko 2010, 17). Social media marketing can be defined "as a form of viral or word-of-mouth marketing." Compared to traditional word-of-mouth marketing the word-of-mouth with social media can spread for example when hundreds of people read a review. (Barefoot & Szabo 2010, 13-14).

Compared to the traditional one-way marketing the social media marketing is about communication and giving everyone the opportunity to share content in the Internet without paying for it. For the companies it means a possibility to use various social media channels for getting in contact with the customer. Social media is used by big companies for enhancing the brand but equally small companies can create a brand without large funds. Some of the ways to use social media for marketing are "blogs, microblogs (Twitter), social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn), media-sharing sites (Youtube, Flickr), social bookmarking and voting sites (Digg, Reddit), review sites (Yelp), forums, and virtual worlds (Second Life)." (Zarrella 2010, 1-7).

3.3 Search engine optimization

One definition of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is "practice of improving and promoting a web site in order to increase the number of visitors the site receives from search engines" (SEOmoz, 2012). Using SEO is important for the company because most of the visitors find the web-pages through the most popular search engines Google, Bing and Yahoo!. The search engines are the most used channels for finding any kind of information from commercial to purely information purposes. Search engines can capture the people who are trying to find the kind of the products that your company offers. Search queries are the search words that are used for looking the information. The amount of traffic on the web-page can depend on the search engines therefore the company should use search engine optimization for ensuring that the potential customers can easily find the page. (SEOmoz 2012). Search engine optimization can increase the revenue of the company as is stated on Network Solutions (2013) "Studies have proven that top placement in search engines generally provide a more favorable return on investment compared to traditional forms of advertising such as, snail mail, radio commercials and television."

3.4 Ad banners

According to Wilson (2009) banner ad is "an ad graphic linked to the URL of the advertiser. These are sometimes static images, but animated rich-media banners do much better." Ban-

ner ads are a form of e-marketing and the purpose of using them is to get people to visit a certain web-page. By clicking the banner ad the potential customer is led to the web-page via direct link. (Mashable, Inc).

Company can measure the success of banner ad by counting the Click Though Rate (CTR) that tells how many times the banner ad has resulted in going to the web-page. The rate depends on the type of business and varies between 0.20% and 10%. The rate is higher on web-pages that are aimed to certain costumer groups. However Cost Per Sale determines the effectiveness of the banner ad and informs about how many of the visitors have actually made purchases on the web-page. Cost Per Sales can be followed by tracking methods and they show which web-pages and ads have been most successful in terms of sales. (Wilson 2009). Banner ads can increase sales on the web-page but in addition they are form of branding product and the company. Even if seeing the banner ad does not result in visiting the web-page it makes the companies' name visible for the potential customer. In future the customer can remember the companies' name when purchases of the companies' industry become timely. By having the brand visible to the customer he can be encouraged to choose the companies' products above those of a competitor. (Wilson 2009).

4   Research methods

As Dawson (2006, 28) says "research methods are the tools you use to collect your data." In this research various qualitative methods were chosen in order to get deeper understanding of analyzing web-site designs and other forms of online marketing. The methods used for conducting the analysis were focus-group discussion, interview, observation and benchmarking. The purpose of using different methods was to get many perspectives to the topic and this way to get a realistic overall picture of online marketing in the case company. First the available qualitative methods were studied in order to get an understanding which of them would be the most appropriate for the study. Next the use of methods was planned and then applied for the research. In the last stage results were analyzed and linked to the study.

4.1   Qualitative research

In this research a qualitative approach was used to conduct the study. Qualitative research data is displayed using "words describing attitudes, feelings, opinions, ideas, customs and beliefs— (Greetham 2009, 180-181)." Using qualitative methods for research can give in-depth data and new ideas and points of view to the subject. In marketing qualitative research is used for exploring customers' behavior and thoughts. Qualitative research is characterized by taking small groups to the research whereas quantitative research examines large volumes. (Aaker, Day & Kumar 2002, 178-179). The reason for examining smaller groups in qualitative

research is that it regards data about "attitudes, behaviour and experiences" significant for the study. Interviews and focus group discussions are some examples of the techniques used for conducting qualitative research. (Dawson 2006, 14-15).

4.2   Interview

According to Schostak (2006, 10) "--the interview can be described in terms of individuals directing their attention towards each other with the purpose of opening up the possibility of gaining an insight into experiences, concerns, interests, beliefs, values, knowledge and ways of seeing, thinking and acting of the other". When choosing the interview method for collecting information about the company background the semi-structured interview method was chosen. Unstructured methods purpose is to "achieve holistic understanding of the interviewees' point of view or situation" (Dawson 2006, 28). Structured interview in turn is used for quantitative research purposes. In semi-structured interview an interview-schedule is made in order to get structure to the interview but the same time the interview is adaptable. (Dawson 2006, 29-30. Because the interviews purpose was to get answers for particular questions and to get to know the company and its online marketing better the semi-structured method was considered to be most appropriate for the research.

4.3   Focus-group discussions

According to Kumar et al. (2002, 184) "A focus-group discussion is the process of obtaining possible ideas or solutions to a marketing problem from a group of respondents by discussing it". In focus-group discussions a relatively small amount of participants (5-9 people) are chosen. The group should have "both similarity and contrast". Moderator leads the discussion but takes a less active approach in the discussion than in a face-to-face interview. He allows the participants in the group to communicate with each other and invites them to say opinions about themes chosen for the research. Group discussion can activate the participants more as they have an opportunity to comment and relate to other participants' points of view. Benefit of group discussion is that it can be more unprompted and sincere than face-to-face interview. (Kumar et al. 2002, 184-186).

Designing a group discussion begins by turning the aim of the research into questions that are essential for the study. The questions can then be used to make a base for the discussion. It is recommended to have the discussion move from general themes to more precise themes. (Kumar et al. 2002, 186-188). Moderators' role is to lead the discussion and get a side-tracked conversation back on the themes that are relevant for the study. He has to stimulate the discussion without pushing the participants to tell their opinions. In order to have a successful focus group discussion the moderator needs to pay genuine interest to the participants and

use language that is appropriate and easily understandable for the group. Flexibility and controlling the group dynamics are also important abilities for moderating the discussion. (Kumar et al. 2002, 188-189).

4.4 Observation

Observation is used as a method to get clues about a certain subject therefore the researcher needs to decode the material to get relevant information for the study. There are many ways to understand the observation material and to decode them. (Alasuutari 1995, 39). According to Cengage Learning (239) "In business research, observation is a systematic process of recording behavioral patterns of people, objects, and occurrences as they happen." The observation can be done either in uncontrolled or controlled method. Uncontrolled observation means doing the observation in natural environment following unprompted behavior whereas controlled observation is done by using technical equipment to collect precise data (Kothari, 2004). The advantage of observational method is that the researcher can see how the people behave in reality rather than collecting data based on what the people say about how they behave. Making observations can be the beginning of a research where a hypothesis is made. On the other hand observational studies are difficult to repeat and can be effected by researchers' bias. (holah.co.uk).

4.5 Benchmarking

According to Coers et al. (2001, 1) "Benchmarking is the process of comparing and measuring your organization against others, anywhere in the world, to gain information on philosophies, practices, and measures that will help your organization to take action to improve its performance ". Benchmarking can be used for comparing "the products, services and practices of an organization". The company can choose whether to make comparison to the competitors or to the leaders of the market. Comparing to competitors gives a picture of companies' own resources. When comparing to leaders on the market the currently greatest achievements are found out. (Stapenhurst 2009, 4).

The purpose of doing benchmarking is to look for places were development is needed in the company and to determine how the other companies are creating success. The information gathered from benchmarking can then be used for making progress in the company. (Web Finance, Inc. 2013). Benchmarking can be used as improvement method by first identifying the place of improvement. Then the company looks for a competitor or market leader that has already succeeded in the area of improvement. Next the operations that lead to success of the company are analyzed. In the end the company can use and modify the acquired information for its own development purposes. (Stapenhurst 2009, 16).

5 Tour organizer X introduction

Tour organizer X is a new start-up company that has started operating in December 2012. The physical location of the tour organizer is in central Helsinki. The companies' expertise is in island holidays and at the moment it sells package holidays to Balearic Islands in Mallorca, Ibiza and Formentera. In future it has been planned to take new island destinations in the selection. The hotel range varies from one-star to five-star hotels. Tour Organizer cooperates with hotel chain Hotel Pabisa. The biggest variety of choice is in Mallorca which is also the biggest island of the three islands on offer at the moment. First holidays will start in April 2013 to Mallorca and the summer season will last until the beginning of October.

Picture 1 Map of the Balearic Islands (Map of Spain 2003)

Tour organizer X offers something for everyone. The theme packages make sure that the customer finds holiday for his taste. Three examples of the theme packages represent how the holiday packages have taken the age groups' wishes into account when choosing the components for them. (Tour Organizer X web-page)

Family Packages accommodation is in 4-star Hotel Pabisa Bali with all-inclusive meals and drinks, flights and transportation. In addition the package includes entrance fees to Aqualand waterpark, visit to the Palma Aquarium and access to minigolf field at Pabisa Beach Club. In Senior Package accommodation is in 4-star Hotel Isla de Mallorca, flights, transportation and breakfast on board included. In addition the customers have a half-day trip to the Valdemossa village, 10% discount in specified restaurants and visit to Es Baluard museum. Young Package accommodates the customers in 3-star Hotel Pabisa Sofia with all-inclusive meals and drinks, flights and transportation. Package includes also entrance fees to Aqualand waterpark, visit to the Palma Aquarium and access to minigolf field like the family package. Added

to the Young package are free, unlimited drinks in Oberbayern and Bierkönig-bars and a ride on a banana boat. (Tour Organizer X web-page).

Besides the packages that are based on customers life situation Tour Organizer X offers packages that are themed by hobbies or other activities. Customer can choose for example diving and fishing holiday or holiday that includes green fees for golf fields. The customer can book a holiday without the extra services or a specific theme so that the holiday includes only accommodation, flights, transportation and possible meals at the hotel. The products are designed on the bases of the destinations therefore the holiday range of each destination depends on what the destination offers in form of activities, sights and sports. For example Ibiza is better suited for young people as it offers nightlife and beaches whereas Mallorca has more cultural sights and activity possibilities and is therefore suitable for different type of travelers. The customers' requirements and wishes have been listened to in product design. Because of the requests of families there is a good variety of family-friendly hotels and rooms that can fit in also bigger families in the same room or apartment. When reserving the holiday the customer can make special requests that can then be sent forward to the hotel. (Tour Organizer X web-page and Interview with Sales Manager).

As the company has only recently started operating and the first holidays have not yet been implemented it is difficult to say which are going to be the most important customer groups. However the aim has been to attract mainly customers who are over 40-year-old. Otherwise the marketing is targeted to different customer segments as there are theme packages for young, seniors, families and packages according to different activities. (Interview with Sales Manager).

Relationship marketing has not yet been practiced fully as the company has just started operating. In the future it is planned to practice relationship marketing by doing questionnaires and developing a loyalty programmes. The loyal customers will be remembered by sending them for example regular newsletters. (Interview with Sales Manager).

The personnel of the company include the people working in the Helsinki office in marketing, sales and customer service. In addition there will be tour guides and destination managers in the destinations serving the customers. In each of the destinations there is an agent who helps the personnel in the issues regarding the destination. In recruiting the personnel the demands for qualifications include experience in customer service especially in the tourism field. The staff member should have a friendly and hard-working attitude. Even though the experience and education matter in recruiting the most important factor is the character of the potential staff member. From the character of the applicant can be seen if he or she is

suitable for the customer service work as many of the other skills and tasks can be learned at work. (Interview with Sales Manager and Marketing Manager).

5.1   Interview with Tour Organizer X

The sales and marketing manager were interviewed in order to get information about the company, its products, e-marketing and web-pages. The companies' sales and marketing managers' perspective gave the companies' point of view for the web-pages. Together with the research from the customers' perspective it gave more versatile picture of the web-pages. The interview consisted of two parts. In the first part the sales manager was interviewed about the company information, products and customers. In the second part the sales manager and marketing manager together answered to questions about e-marketing and web-pages of the company.

Part 1: Company information and product planning
1. What is the business idea of your company?
2. What kind of products do you offer? How and on what bases do you choose the components to your packages?
3. How do you acknowledge customer requirements?
4. Which are the most important customer groups? How do you segment the customer groups?
5. How do you create customer loyalty?
6. What is your personnel like? What are your requirements for qualifications? (amount of personnel, departments)

Part 2: E-marketing and customer satisfaction
1. What e-marketing channels do you have? Which e-media do you use?
2. Do you practice relationship marketing? How do you use it in e-marketing?
3. What kind of criteria you use for the web-page design?
4. How do you motivate customers to reserve through your web-page?
5. Do you follow how the customers use the web-page? How you follow the traffic on the web-page?
6. Can you say what has been the customers' satisfaction feedback on your web-page? How do you get information about customer satisfaction feedback?

5.2   Empiric data from the Travel Fair

Author was working for four days in Tour Organizer X stand during the travel fair 17.1-20.1.2013. Visitors were observed in uncontrolled environment at the stand. Regarding the

research of e-marketing the author focused on observing the visitors web-page use and comments about the web-page.

Visitors were curious of the unknown name and were asking if it was a new company. When they were explained that the company had only operated one month at that time they usually commented "no wonder I had not heard about it". Some visitors said that they had seen an ad in Helsingin Sanomat- newspaper and others had passed by or visited the office in Helsinki.

Web-pages and the brochures visual look got positive feedback. However there was also room for improvement according to some of the visitors. For example many were misled by the picture of golf-ball on the first page and thought that Tour Organizer X implements only golf tours. There were comments that the usability and clarity of the web-page could be better. In some visitors opinion the web-pages' booking system was complicated to use when they had tried it at home. In addition some of the visitors commented that the travel packages would need more detailed description for example the scuba diving package information about which company organizes the tours.

5.3   E-marketing of Tour Organizer X

E-marketing of Tour Organizer X includes the web-page with the reservation possibility. Social media channels which are used for e-marketing are Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. In Facebook the company has own pages where they post offers and news about the company. The company also has paid ads on Facebook. In Google key word optimization is used for get more efficient search results. In addition Yahoo is used. For attracting customers' to the company web-page the company uses ad banners for example in mtv3.fi web-page. The ad banner can include an offer for making it more interesting for the customer.

Tour Organizer X is systematic in collecting information about visitor numbers on the web-page. Visitor numbers and the time when the web-page has been visited can be seen in charts. According to the charts the company can think about the reasons behind variation in visitor numbers for example why in certain time the visitor numbers have been lower. Then they can think about how could the situation be improved and the visitor numbers increased again. Facebook is followed by which links and offers have led to the visit of the web-page. In the companies' opinion e-marketing channels are more efficient for following the visitor numbers than traditional printed marketing materials. The company can presume the amount of people who have seen the printed marketing material only from amount of reservations and inquiries made.

The tour organizer has got feedback straight from their partners and from the customers about the web-page. Because the web-page has opened recently the tour organizer is in a stage where they make changes and improvements. Web-page is analyzed for what works and what does not. The web-pages have got both positive and negative feedback from both partners and the customers. In the companies' opinion the web-pages differ from other tour organizer web-pages by having the segment section on the page. The segment section has received positive feedback from the customers as well. The customer satisfaction feedback has been received mainly when the personnel have interacted with the customers. Feedback system might be developed for example by asking the customers to fill in survey on web-page and in turn they would get discount.

5.4   Marketing mix: E-marketing in Tour Organizer X

The use of elements of marketing mix or seven Ps can be seen on the Tour Organizer X web-page. The elements are also analyzed based on information from the Tour Organizer X interview. The first P the product is the range of different holiday packages and flights. The services included in the holiday packages are part of the companies' product. Products that the company offers can be clearly seen in the theme box on the web-page and are made according to interests or life situation. Products are presented by using illustrations and destination pictures. The information of the products can be found through reservation link or clicking the illustrations or pictures of destinations.

The second P the price can be seen for example in the offers that change on the background. Further the prices can be found by going to reservation and choosing the holiday or flight. As the price is used for comparing the company with the competitors it is useful to have the best prices on the first page where they catch the potential customers' attention and could effect in the decision of choosing Tour Organizer X products above the competitors. Different prices that are according to for example the stars of the hotel tell the customer what kind of quality to expect of the holiday. Tour Organizer X has helped the customers also by giving in themes the option for luxury or budget holiday.

The third P the place means the environment where the product is presented. In this case it is the web-page but Tour Organizer X also has a physical location. The company has used combination of places in presenting the product.

Promotion means the way that the company communicates to the customers about their products and company. On web-page the products are promoted by presenting offers on the first page. The presentation is clear and user-friendly because of the structure and colors on the web-page. Tour Organizer X uses pictures of the destinations and written descriptions of

the holiday packages and destinations to convince the customers about the usefulness of the holiday. Tour Organizer X uses also other e-marketing channels to promote the products and the web-page. The channels that have been used are ad banners, social media and search engine optimization. These channels promote the web-pages and aim in getting more visitors to the web-page.

People in other words the staff are not clearly seen in Tour Organizer X e-marketing and web-page. This element of marketing mix could be seen in the office of the company and in the destinations where the tour guides will be working. In the interview with the company it was mentioned that the demands for the staff are above all right kind of mind-set towards customer service. Other qualifications are experience or education in hospitality industry.

Process on the web-page includes the reservation experience and how well do the web-pages work. Payments could also be included in the process element. On the web-page the customer is not directly in contact with the personnel of the company but instead with systems on the web-page. The customer could be in contact with the personnel via e-mail or phone and here the availability of personnel and the fastness of service in important for giving a good impression. In the physical office naturally the process of customer service can be more clearly seen.

In the office of Tour Organizer X the physical evidence can be seen. The researcher has visited the office and seen that the colors in the office go in harmony with other marketing material and web-pages. Physical evidence is also the design of the web-page and the pictures of the destinations. As the customers can only get clues of the service and experience on the holiday the pictures can show them what to expect. The web-page could also in future use customer testimonials from holidays to give the new customers physical evidence.

5.5   Marketing planning: E-marketing for Tour Organizer X

According to Canwell & Sutherland (2009,125) the four steps of doing a marketing plan include analysis, planning, implementation and control. The marketing planning steps can be applied for e-marketing because it is also a form of marketing.

The first step analysis on which this research has concentrated on is finding out the companies' situation at the moment. In this research the companies' current situation of web-pages are analyzed by benchmarking and focus group discussion. For making a full analysis also the other e-marketing channels should be carefully analyzed. This could include analysis of social media, search engines and ad banners. The information can be used for further steps in marketing planning process.

In the next step the plan is made and goals are set (Canwell & Sutherland 2009,125). In Tour Organizer X case the goal could be for example to get more visitors on the web-page and consequently get more reservations. If the goal would be for example increasing the amount of visitors on the web-page by 10% the company should think about the strategies that are going to be used to reach this goal. The strategies could include taking new forms of e-marketing to use like making a blog of tour guides for the company or finding new web-pages for ad banner advertising. One strategy for getting more reservations could be making the web-pages more user-friendly.

The third step is the implementation of the plan (Canwell & Sutherland 2009,125). In Tour Organizer X the personnel would be informed about their duties and responsibilities. For example one person would be in charge of creating a blog and another person would concentrate on finding places for effective ad banner advertising. In the third step the budget is made therefore it would be counted how much the use of the strategies will cost. It would also be planned how to stay in the timetable for implementing the strategies.

The fourth step of controlling can be a constant process going on in the marketing. It includes evaluating the plan according to reached outcomes. (Canwell & Sutherland 2009,125). For example if Tour Organizer X would exceed its goal of getting 10% increase in visitors by 2% it could set a new goal for 15% increase. Then the company could also evaluate again what has worked so far and what could be changed. For example if it would be noticed that having a tour guide blog is not giving any results but only consumes time it could be left out and the resources could be concentrated elsewhere.

5.6   Segmentation: E-marketing in Tour Organizer X

According to the Tour Organizer X web-pages and interview with sales manager Tour Organizer X has segmented its' products to many kind of customer groups. This can be clearly seen in the front page where the theme box is presented.

As Fill (1999, 200-202) says customers have various reasons for purchasing products. In Tour Organizer X web-page it can be seen that they consider the different needs of the customers by making holiday packages according to hobbies and interests. Tour Organizer X is therefore using psychoanalytic segmentation where the customers are segmented according to lifestyle (Fill 1999, 204). On the other hand there might be too many options for the customers to choose from and this way the resources of the company are spread in too many places. It came up in group discussion (Chapter 7.2.2) that the potential customers felt confused about the amount of variety and that they could be part of many themes. In behavioral segmenta-

tion the customers are grouped according to their buying behavior (Blythe & Megicks 2010, 157-159). In Tour Organizer X web-page there are themes for "budget and luxury" that represent segmentation based on buying behavior.

In Tour Organizer X theme box it can be seen that the company has used demographic segmentation where the customers are grouped according to demographic background. The themes that are used to group the customers according to age are "young" and "senior". The "family" package is also segmented in demographically. In addition Tour Organizer X could take "couples" in their demographic segmentation.

Geographically the customers are segmented to Finland because all of the content on the web-page is in Finnish at the moment. It is logical as the flights leave from Finland. On the other hand the foreigners who live in Finland geographically do not understand the content of the page. Therefore at least English and Swedish should be added as language options.

5.7   Relationship marketing: E-marketing in Tour Organizer X

Relationship marketing aims to add value to its product by meeting customer expectations and creating feelings of trust and bonding. Also its purpose is to eliminate the customers feeling about risky purchase. (Godson 2009, 42-43). In Tour Organizer X the risk is eliminated by giving an "open sale" as the booking is not valid until the booking fee has been paid within a week from reservation. The rest of the amount is paid one month prior the holiday. This way the customer can get a feeling that they can still cancel the reservation without having to pay the whole payment.

The customer expectations are in Tour Organizer X met by organizing the holidays in themes. The customer can choose from different packages that already include services. As emerged in the group discussion about the web-pages the option for ready holiday packages could be clicking the interesting themes and the system would give a suggestion of holiday and the extra services (Chapter 7.2.2). The strategy would be using the last minute approach where the product is made for customers taste in the last minute (Godson 2009, 43-48). The customers would feel that they are getting a personalized holiday and the company could get more revenue from offering extra services. The personalization of the holiday would add value for the customer as they would feel being served as individuals and getting something tailored for their taste.

For creating feelings of trust and bonding Tour Organizer X is planning to create a loyalty programme and sending newsletters to the loyal customers as discussed in the interview with the companies' sales manager. In addition Tour Organizer X could present testimonials of custom-

ers on the web-page once the holidays have been started. As the customer cannot experience the holiday before going on it he can get a clue from other customers' experiences. (Oppermann & Weaver 2000, 213). Other suggestion of the researcher is to have a blog for the tour guides where they tell in an interesting way about their life as tour guides and positive experiences in the destination. The tour guides could post photos from the destination and the customers could follow the blog before the holiday. This would give a face for the service and positive expectations of the awaiting experience.

6   The results: Web-page analysis by benchmarking method and development ideas

Three tour organizers' web-sites were chosen for benchmarking and comparing purposes. Tjäreborg, Apollomatkat and Aurinkomatkat were chosen because they have similar kind product range as Tour Organizer X and have similar kind of operations. The tour organizers have products from flights to package holidays. Benchmarking was used in order to find out similarities and differences between tour organizer web-pages and find out what aspects could be used in the group interview concerning Tour Organizer X web-page.

Web-pages can gain trust of the customers that can lead to purchase by various methods. According to Molenaar(2012,127) the criterias are the following.

1   A clear design;
2   A good look and feel;
3   Simple navigation;
4   A quick buying process;
5   Various payment possibilities, including payment in arrears;
6   Carrying the home shopping quality mark;
7   Clear terms and conditions of delivery; and
8   Transparency in the delivery (possibility of viewing the logistics process)
     (Modeled table Molenaar, 2012, 127)

Molenaars' criteria for gaining trust of the customers through a web-page

Company	Tour Organizer X	Tjäreborg	Apollomatkat	Aurinkomatkat
	Dominating colors are yellow and blue. Background is white with round, colorful ob-	Dominating colors are orange and blue. Background is cloudy sky, a view from air-	Dominating colors are orange and blue Many small images according to theme,	Dominating colors are orange and blue. Background is in grey and white. Big constantly

A good look and feel / Clear design	jects. Pictures include round objects for example beach ball. Illustrations of theme holidays and destination images. First element that catches attention is image of golf ball.	plane. City and beach images, illustration of city, photo of staff in customer service. First element that catches attention is big photo with an offer.	hotel images, medium-size picture of couple and child. First element that catches attention is medium-sized photo including offer.	changing picture in top of the page, small pictures with current offers, and medium-sized picture with an offer. First element that catches attention is reservation block.
Simple navigation to information links	Direct link to Facebook and Facebook page news in bottom left. Top block includes destinations, hotels, travel packages, extra services, events and company information.	Direct link to Facebook Like-page under reservation box. Top block includes tour options, hotels, offers, extra services, own pages and FAQ.	Small link to Facebook in bottom left. Top block includes tour options, hotels, offers, reservation, before the trip and company information.	Link to Facebook with landscape picture. Top block includes destinations, holiday types, flights and hotels, extra services and offers.
Simple navigation to contact information	Map of office location, customer service number in small print in bottom of page.	Real time customer service chat in middle left and contact link in small print in the bottom of page.	In top and bottom of the page.	In top and bottom of the page.
Quick buying process	Reservation box is in top right corner.	Reservation box is black and white in top left.	Reservation box has light blue background, white and black in top left corner.	Reservation box is orange, white and black in the middle of top page.

Various payment possibilities	Credit card, bank transfer, internet payment, paying by cash/card in the office, gift voucher, payment from abroad.	Payment by logging in to your own pages or giving reservation number only for making the payment.	Credit cards, bank transfer, internet payment, paying by credit card in the office.	Credit cards, bank transfer, internet payment, payment in the office by credit cards and checks. Own credit system and possibility to open account for holiday savings.
Clear terms and conditions of delivery	Link on first page.	Link on first page.	Link on first page.	Link on first page.

Table 1 Benchmarking results of tour organizer web-pages

The web-pages were examined from customer perspective and researcher evaluated how the design affected on researchers' personal user experience on the tour organizers' web-page. Molenaar's (2012, 127) criteria for gaining trust of customers on the web-page was used to analyze the design, look, navigation and important information on the web-page. The criteria for carrying the home shopping quality mark was ruled out as it was not considered relevant for tour organizer type of business. Also the criteria for transparency in delivery (possibility of viewing the logistics process) was left out because the service is provided online.

In addition to Molenaars' criteria the web-pages were analyzed with the AIDA-method. AIDA is a marketing method that comes from A- Attention, I-Interest, D- Desire and A-Action (Sugget, 2013). In each of the aspects the web-sites were evaluated from the AIDA perspective and using Molenaar (2012, 127) criteria.

Similarities in using the colors and positioning the information on the page were found when benchmarking the tour organizers' web-pages and comparing them to Tour Organizer X. The dominating colors in each four are blue and orange or yellow which are contrasting colors and therefore attract attention. The colors of the web-site contents follow the same color theme. Logos of Tour Organizer X and Aurinkomatkat have logos with round image and company name in the middle. Color of the logo is the dominating color for the web-page also. The background is in each of the benchmarked companies' neutral and only Tour Organizer X had

various pictures of objects on the background. Tour Organizer X, Tjäreborg and Apollomatkat had a picture or pictures that represented a holiday like beach ball, sand, water and cloudy sky from airplanes' perspective. These pictures create a desire to go on a holiday. The designs create "a good look and feel" to the web-site (Molenaar 2012, 127).

The first thing that catches attention in Tjäreborgs and Apollomatkas web-site is big or medium-sized photo with an offer and Aurinkomatkat has a clear reservation block that separates clearly. Tour Organizer X on the other hand has a picture of a golf ball in top middle of the page that gets noticed first. The blocks that encourage customer to reserve a holiday get space and differ strongly from background. Adding an attention-grabbing picture in the background of an offer catches focus in Tjäreborgs and Apollomatkas web-site. Aurinkomatkat has positioned the reservation link on the top of offer picture. The reservation link is the first aspect that can be seen on the web-page.

All of the tour organizers use pictures of the destinations on their web-pages. Tjäreborg, Apollomatkat and Aurinkomatkat have images of people on their front page whereas Tour Organizer X uses more illustrations and landscape pictures. In addition Tjäreborg has an image of staff member representing the online customer service chat. Photos of smiling people make it easier for the customers to imagine themselves on a holiday. Images of people also tell to which age group are the holidays aimed therefore customer can know if he can identify with that group.

Apart from Tjäreborg all the travel agencies had "Like our Facebook page" link in the bottom of the page. Tour Organizer X has the Facebook page news on display while other tour organizers use simpler images. The most eye-catching is the Aurinkomatkat Facebook-link as it is bigger in size than the others and has appealing picture of exotic destination on background. Also the text "Join Aurinkomatkat people" ("Liity aurinkomatkalaisiin") adds the sense of real community.

The reservation block is in every tour organizers' web-page on the top of the page. Tjäreborg, Apollomatkat and Aurinkomatkat use the classic combination of black text in a white background that makes it easily readable. In Tour Organizer X web-page it is more difficult to read the text as the text is blue with a yellow background. The yellow text seems to blend in the blue. Customer-friendly reservation block boosts into action to reserve a holiday.

In Tjäreborg, Apollomatkat and Aurinkomatkat pages the top block have direct links to the current offers that helps in navigating. The top blocks have similar kind of information that regarded the destinations, holiday packages, hotels and extra services. Tjäreborg has in addition a link to frequently asked question (FAQ) and Aurinkomatkat similar before the trip in-

formation. Link to information that most customers want to know before their trip adds the user-friendliness to the navigation of the web-site as the customer does not have to wander around different pages.

All of the tour organizers have contact information in the bottom of the page. Apart from Tour Organizer X, the other travel agencies have additional link to contact information. Apollomatkat and Aurinkomatkat have the other link to contact information in the top of the page. Tjäreborg has real-time customer service chat that makes it even easier for the customer to get in contact with a staff member of the company.

In conclusion the web-pages use AIDA method by using reverse colors and big pictures to catch attention on the web-site. When customers' attention has been caught it turns into interest to go on holiday. Tour organizers use appealing pictures of the destinations to keep the interest of the customer. From the pictures customer can move on to more information about the destination. Using happy and active people in the ads gives customer a picture what kind of personal benefits he can get from purchasing the holiday in other words desire for the product. In addition interesting information and more detailed descriptions create desire to go to the destination.

Sugget(2013) states "After demonstrating the product, and convincing that you need it, they close the sale with an amazing offer". Tjäreborg, Apollomatkat and Aurinkomatkat have offers displayed on their first page that encourage customer to take the action, in tour organizers' case to make the reservation on the page. Positioning the reservation blocks in attention-catching place also invites the customer to take action. Contact information that can be easily found from the web-page can make the customer act and contact the staff of the company. Social media links are on the web-page to invite customers to take an action to join the groups. This way customers' attention can be caught in future via their own Facebook page for example by giving a tempting offer.

Benchmarking of other tour organizer web-pages created some ideas that could be used or applied for Tour Organizer X web-pages. As the other tour organizers' have been longer on the market they might have found some ways of improving their web-pages. Therefore Tour Organizer X could get some ideas of what could be developed.

In benchmarking the other tour organizer web-pages it was noticed that the tour organizers use neutral backgrounds that still have some link to holiday for example sand and view from airplane. In one of the companies' the background was one-colored and this made the content on the web-page clearer. Tour organizer X could change the background for example to beach picture or have the background in white color that would make the colors of contents

stand out. The neutral background makes the other tour organizer web-pages also look calm-er.

The benchmarked tour organizers use a lot of pictures on their web-pages. This could be ap-plied for Tour Organizer X by having less text in the bottom of the page and using the freed space for pictures. Even though Tour Organizer X has already a changing picture with offers in the top part of the page they could use more pictures that include offers in the lower part as well. The benchmarked tour organizers use pictures of people on a holiday which could be applied for Tour Organizer X.

For better navigation Tour Organizer X could add a FAQ or "before the trip" link on the top of the page in order to make it easier for the customer to find necessary information. Contact link could also be added in the top part of the web-page as in some of the benchmarked com-panies. Tour Organizer X could have a real-time customer service chat like on Tjäreborg web-page. On the web-page of Aurinkomatkat the link to Facebook looks appealing because it has a holiday picture on the background and the text "Join Aurinkomatkat people" ("Liity Au-rinkomatkalaisiin"). In Tour Organizer X the link to Facebook could also be made more inter-esting by adding a picture on the background. As the company is new the visitors could be encouraged to like Tour Organizer X on Facebook by having a competition of holiday voucher.

7   The results: Web-page analysis by focus-group discussion

The aim of the focus-group discussion was to research how the customers perceive Tour Or-ganizer X web-pages in terms of how motivated they would be to reserve a holiday from the web-page. Molenaars' criteria for gaining trust through web-pages were used as the base of the discussion. In addition the conversation took into account the AIDA method. The focus-group discussion was generated from the researchers' benchmarking method used for compar-ing the contents and design of the Tour Organizer X web-page and three other travel agencies on the market. The research question for the group discussion therefore was how do the cus-tomers perceive the Tour Organizer X web-pages, how this affects their purchase decisions and what improvement ideas there are from customer perspective?

7.1   Planning focus-group discussion

Planning stage of the focus-group discussion involved orientating to the theory of the research methods. Focus-group discussion theories were applied as guidance for how to make a suc-cessful focus-group discussion and what should be taken into consideration while performing it. Six graduating tourism students were chosen for the focus-group discussion. In the means of generating similarities and contrast, all of the students were studying the same subject

and for contrast in the group it included both men and women. Fours student were Finnish speaking and two were English speaking. The English speaking students were taken to the discussion because even without knowing Finnish they could evaluate the structure of the page. Graduating tourism students were chosen since they have interest in travelling and have as well professional knowledge about tourism. In other words they are both tourists and tourism professionals. Volunteering students were at the time of research performing Study and Field Trips course therefore all of the students were in any case looking information from web-pages to plan the study trip. The research was timely taking into consideration the process of making bookings on the course. Before the discussion the questions were tested with a person who was not going to participate in the discussion. The reason for testing was to test the clarity of the questions and that the questions were understood in the correct way. The wording of some questions was remodeled but otherwise the questions remained the same.

7.2   Implementing focus-group discussion

The focus group discussion was held 25.2.2013. Therefore the opinions and comments about the web-page are based on the content available on that date. The length of the discussion was 35 minutes in total and it was recorded. The questions for leading the discussion were chosen from the companies' interest of what do customers actually think of the web-page. The focus-group discussion was also customer-oriented as the aim is to develop web-pages as customer-friendly as possible. First the group was informed about the code of conduct of the discussion which included speaking clearly and loudly enough, staying in the topic that is being discussed and letting everyone room to speak. Also it was recommended that everyone would comment something on each topic discussed. The moderator then introduced Tour Organizer X web-pages and translated the main information links for the English speaking participants as the web-pages are only in Finnish.

The discussion started with general discussion about Tour Organizer X, tour organizer web-pages in general and participants travel booking habits. From the general topics the discussion moved on into more detailed questions that would produce information that is of Tour Organizer Xs' interest. Group was introduced to two main topics that were web-page evaluation through Molenaar (2012, 127) criteria of creating trust through web-pages and AIDA marketing method. At the end of the discussion the conversation was summarized by asking the participants for improvement ideas for Tour Organizer X and their general impression of the web-page.

7.3   List of questions for the focus group discussion

For starting the conversation general questions were chosen for orienting and preparing for the conversation.

General questions

1. Do you know Tour Organizer X? If yes, how have you got to know it before this research? (Where, when, marketing, media)
2. Do you prefer using online booking services, booking by phone or going to the physical location? Why do you prefer this option above others? What are other benefits? What are the minuses?
3. What aspects create user-friendly tour organizer web-page?

AIDA method on web-page

4. A-Attention: What catches your attention on the Tour Organizer X web-page? (first impression) Why it catches your attention?
5. I-Interest: What keeps your interest for staying on the page? Why?
6. D-Desire: How does the web-page create desire to make a reservation? What methods are used?
7. A-Action: How does the web-page encourage in taking action in other words making a reservation?
8. How does the web-page succeed in using the AIDA-method? Could some of the aspects be used in a more effective way?

Molenaar's criteria for gaining trust through web-page

9. Clear design/Good look and feel: How would you describe the look and feel of Tour Organizer X web-page? Does the web-page have a clear design? How this can be seen?
10. Simple navigation: How easy is it to navigate on the web-page? Can you quickly find all necessary information? What information links you consider necessary? Which are unnecessary?
11. Quick buying process: What can postpone your reservation decision when considering the web-page?
12. Various payment possibilities: What payment method do you use most often? Are there enough payment possibilities?
13. Clear terms and conditions of delivery: How easy is it to find information about terms and conditions? How does it affect your reserving decision?
14. What is your general impression of Tour Organizer X web-page? What would you change? What do you like about the page? What do you dislike?

7.4   Results of focus-group discussion

All of the six participants did not know Tour Organizer X before the research. All of the participants prefer using online booking services above other options like going to the physical location or booking by phone. The mentioned considered benefits of online booking were that the booking is not time-bound, efficient and fast. Personalization, comparing the options and various opportunities were as well mentioned. One participant mentioned con of online booking is that when dealing with technical equipment something might go wrong but with travel agent the booking is safer. Pros of booking with travel agent were that they can share their experience, advice and give more personalized services. The travel agent can according to participants know information that you can not find on the internet. The aspects that create an user-friendly customer tour organizer web-page were from the participants' perspective up-to-date information, good structure, easy to navigate to necessary information and clearly displayed prices.

7.5   Discussion of AIDA-method

The topic of how the AIDA-method is applied on the web-page gave information about what catches customers attention, what keeps their interest in staying on the page, what creates the desire to make a purchase and in the end what creates action in other words making a reservation on the web-page.

The most frequent answer for what catches the attention on the web-page was the colors. One participant mentioned that "I like the colors that yellow and blue. They go well together." Second was the layout of the page. The layout was described as "not that busy", "clear" and that "the layout and information are clear". One participant mentioned the theme box and other the pictures of wine barrel and bicycle as the most eye catching aspect of the page.

The segments section was the top thing that would keep the participants' interest in staying on the page. Secondly the interest was kept with the offers on the first page. The layout and colors were mentioned as the answer to the question about what catches the interest. In the words of one participant "It's bright but not too bright. Relaxing… You want to continue browsing through the web."

The participants mentioned the pictures as the most important part for creating desire to make the purchase. As one of the participants said "—pictures kind of say what is there so I don't have to start thinking of what is there like shopping, nightlife… So it's kind of having all the information that I need to know." The participant refers to theme box pictures. The participants did not make difference between which pictures they meant by saying that the pictures are important as there are both illustrations and photos on the web-page. Seeing the

low prices was mentioned once during the discussion of the topic as was having the reservation box clearly on display.

The topic about how the web-page encourages in taking action in others words making a reservation raised criticism about the amount of text in the bottom of the page. According to the participants it made the page look "heavy", "kind of boring" and "dodgy". As one the participants mentioned that "I also think that it is very important that when you put this information about the destinations that the information is just a short one. -- then you have this read more next to it, you wanna click it if you have something that you desire that draws your attention to the destination." The aspects that actually encouraged in taking action were according to one participant the pictures with "beaches and people enjoying their holiday" as well as the text "Search for a trip" ("Hae matkaa"). Although according to the participant the text could also be changed in something more appealing with the suggestion of "Find your trip now!".

The summarizing question about the participants' general impression about Tour Organizer X and their web-page raised criticism towards the theme pictures. Like one of participants said "I think it fails in some of the pictures, like the night-life." to which other participant commented "Yea, now it looks like a kindergarten birthday party." The point about too much text in the lower part of the page was mentioned again and it was said that it could be more user-friendly. One of the participants commented that all in all the web-page has "-- succeeded very well" in using the AIDA method.

Based on the answers of the participants about the AIDA-method the most positive response came from the use of colors, layout and pictures. These components on the web-page grab attention and in addition create interest and desire. The offers on the first page were also thought to be interesting and encourage in action of making reservation. Largest frequency of negative comments concerned the amount of text in the lower part of the page as it made it less appealing for the participants. Therefore this would diminish the interest that participants have for the web-page. The participants thought that the top part of the page seemed more interesting compared to the lower part.

7.6   Discussion on Molenaars' criteria for gaining trust through web-pages

The discussion about Molenaars' criteria for gaining trust through web-pages raised some of the same topics that were already discussed in the first part of the discussion. The reason for the same topics emerging was that the Molenaars' criteria corresponded with some of the aspects in AIDA-method. For example some participants said that clear design caught their attention on the web-page and partly the same answers were repeated when asking "How

would you describe the look and feel of Tour Organizer X web-page?". The repeated topics showed that which were the most important aspects of the web-page for the participants and which parts raised most criticism. Even though some of the topics were noticeably more discussed than others the participants brought new points of view for the discussion and reacted to other participants' comments. The most discussed points were the theme box, the design and colors of the page and criticism of the lower part having too much text on it. For example if some of the participants criticized the theme box others reacted by agreeing or adding new point to the critic. This way some of improvements ideas were found out too.

In discussion about Molenaars' criteria for clear design, good look and feel positive feedback was given as previously for the layout and design of the page. In one participants' opinion the web-page has "−good structure, very clear, you can find what you are looking for." The background evoked positive feelings and the segments were said to stand out. The pictures on the background got positive feedback but also it was said that they could be something else. One participant said that the colors look similar to those of other tour organizers and therefore Tour Organizer X web-page does not differentiate from others. For one of the participants the themes caused feelings of uncertainty because of too many options available in other words "−I could easily choose five of them that I want have part have part of my trip so I'm not sure what would I choose from those when I go to the page."

The overall opinion of the structure and the easiness of navigation were positive. However the participants said that the web-page needs more language options. This could be affected by the fact that the group had both Finnish and English speaking participants. The opinion of one participant was that as there are only 5 million people living in Finland and also a lot of foreigners there should be possibility for the foreigners in Finland to book a holiday. It was also suggested that the services in the destination could be in two languages.

The group was asked about what could postpone their reserving decision on the web-page in other words how quick is the buying process and the response of one participant was that "Honestly there is nothing that would make me do it based on a website but purely personal and thinking". On the other hand other participants' point of view was that there are too many segments to choose from and that it creates a confused feeling. Others agreed with the comment. It was then suggested that the customer would have an option to click on the segment windows for example gastronomy, culture and beach and this way make a combination according to own preferences.

There were considered to be enough payment options. The participants preferred paying the holiday directly on the page after making the reservation without moving to their internet bank. They said it is easier and more secure as you know you got everything correct at once.

In the moment paying directly after the reservation on the page is available only for credit card. It was also pointed out that is good to have the option to pay in the office as elderly people might prefer it instead of doing the payment in the internet. Having the terms and conditions at the bottom of the page was thought to be the standard of the tour organizers. However the participants criticized the structure in which the links were put. First there is a link to general terms and conditions, then link to flights and after that link to extra terms and conditions of Tour Organizer X. It was also said that it would be convenient to have all the terms and conditions under the same link.

7.7   Summary of group discussion results

The discussion was transcribed and the frequency of positive and negative feedback was collected as seen in tables 2 and 3. The method that was used was designation analysis "which determines the frequency in with which certain objects (or persons, institutions or concepts are mentioned) (Sagepub.com 2006, 119)". The frequency of feedback describes the number of times that a certain subject was mentioned or referred to during the whole discussion. The aim was to analyze the results objectively but they can be affected by the researchers' perceptions. There is no absolute certainty that the comments are meant to be either positive or negative. In addition to the verbal outcome the tone of voice was an indicator for positive or negative opinion of the participants.

For summarizing the discussion the participants were asked about their overall opinion about Tour Organizer X web-pages, what had their liked and what would need improvement. The participants put value to the colors, layout and easy navigation on the web-page.

Positive feedback in order of frequency

Subject of feedback	Frequency in discussion	Example of description
Layout, good look and feel	15	"It is clear and also modern."
Easy navigation	12	"—easy to find what kind of trip you want—"
Colors	10	"—the colors, that yellow and blue, they go well together."
Segments and theme box	9	"I like the segments."
Pictures	6	"I think for me the pictures kind of say what is there—"
Offers	3	"—low prices they are very

		good to look at."

Table 2. Positive feedback frequency in focus group discussion

Negative or need for improvement in order of frequency

Subject of feedback	Frequency in discussion	Example of description
Segments and theme box	16	"—the segments, that there is too many—"
Layout, good look and feel	9	"—a bit too busy for my liking—"
Colors	5	"It's pretty mainstream"
Navigation	4	"They definitely need more languages."
Pictures	3	"—pictures could be a little different or something else."
Offers	0	No comments

Table 3. Negative feedback frequency in group discussion

As can be seen in Table 2. the layout, good look and feel got most positive responses with frequency rate of 15. Second came the easy navigation with the frequency rate of 12 and third the use of colors on the web-page with the rate of 10. The theme box was called by the participants also as "segments" this is the reason why the theme box and segments were count in the same frequency rate. The theme box and segments got 9 positive comments. Next came the picture with rate 6 and the last the offers with 3 comments.

In the Table 3. can be seen the frequency of negative feedback or the comments about the areas that need improvement on the web-page. The most feedback got the segments and theme box with the frequency rate of 16. Next was the layout with 9 comments. The third came the colors with the rate of 5. Navigation was mentioned 4 times and pictures 3 times.

7.8   Development ideas based on focus group discussion

According to the results from the focus group discussion the main aspect to be developed on the web-page is the theme box. Even though it received also positive feedback the participants pointed out that some of pictures were difficult to understand and confusing. For example the nightlife picture was thought to be as from "kindergarten" party and could be more aimed to the customer segment in age group young. One of the participants suggested

that one of the characters could have leg up and this way the picture would give a more active picture of the nightlife that the tour organizer offers. Other pictures that caused confusion or negative feedback were the pictures of nature, culture and food. The nature picture could be changed in something that all can understand for example to a hill and trees. Culture picture could represent for example a stage and audience. For the food culture the picture could represent some typical Spanish meal like paella. However the space that is reserved for each picture sets some limitations for designing and improving the pictures.

In addition to the confusion with some of the pictures the participants said that there are too many of the segments. Some of the themes could be put together like the paradise and beach holiday theme. Other improvement idea was that the customer could choose the holiday by clicking the segments that seem interesting and the web-page would present the best match and suggestions for extra excursions or activities. Then it would automatically calculate the final price for the tailored holiday. The customer would get the feeling that the holiday is unique and the company could get more revenue from the extras added to the tailored holiday.

The next aspect that would need improvement according to the participants was the layout and good look and feel of the page. The top part of the page was considered to be clearer than the bottom of the page. The text below the destination pictures could be diminished to one or two sentences. The participants thought that a lot of text gave the bottom of the page a heavy look. They thought that if they would be interested in some of the destinations they would click the link and expect to find more information there. Therefore the amount of text could be put to minimum and instead give space to more destination pictures.

The colors of the page got both positive and negative comments. In some of the participants' point of view the colors looked the same as on the web-pages of other tour organizers. The colors could be the same but the background could be changed into something calmer as now the images according to the participants could be something else. As the background consisted of images of different objects it could be changed in neutral color. This way the perceptions of customers like "the tour organizer only does golf trips" could be avoided. Neutral color would also be a good choice as the tour organizer has many different customer segments. The customer would be encouraged to stay on the web-page and after that they could find what interest them. The themes would allow the customer to make their choice and choose the holiday of their taste.

The navigation of the web-page needed in the participants' opinion improvement in adding languages. The tour organizer could get more customers if the content of the pages would be at least in English and Swedish. One of the participants noted that there are a lot of people in

Finland who do not speak Finnish. Other aspects that could be improved in navigation are the links in terms and conditions. The participants thought that it would be better if the terms and conditions could all be under the same link.

In terms of using AIDA-method on the web-page Tour Organizer X has succeeded in keeping the interest and grabbing attention by using appealing colors, pictures and layout. These could also be components for keeping the interest of customers and creating desire to go on a holiday. On the other hand the amount of text could affect in the level of interest that the participants had in staying on the web-page.

When it comes to using Molenaars' criteria for gaining trust through web-pages Tour Organizer X has best succeeded in creating good look and feel on the web-page. The theme box can be considered to be part of navigation as the customers can find the holiday packages through this component on the web-page. Therefore Tour Organizer X succeeds to fill the criteria of easy navigation. Colors are part of good look and here Tour Organizer X got also positive response from the participants. Pictures got also positive response and are part of good look of the web-page. The pictures can mean either the photos of destinations or the theme box illustrations. Displaying the offers on the first page is part of easy navigation and therefore Tour Organizer has managed to fill the criteria of easy navigation in addition to using the theme box.

However there were crossing opinions when analyzing the results of Molenaars' criteria for gaining trust through web-pages. Even though easy navigation got positive responses it was also considered to be most in need for changes or improvements. As theme box is part of easy navigation Tour Organizer X could also make some improvements in this field. According to participants adding languages to web-page would make the navigation easier. Colors being part of good look were thought to be quite similar to other tour organizer web-pages.

It could be supposed that the participants thought that the web-page is user-friendly as in the beginning of the conversation the mentioned aspects for user-friendly web-page were up-to-date information, clear structure, easy to navigate to necessary information and clearly displayed prices. Expect of up-to-date information all of these themes were mentioned during discussion about the web-page.

8   Conclusions

In this thesis the e-marketing was researched in case company Tour Organizer X having a focus on the web-page of the company. The purpose of the research was to find out ways to improve the web-pages of the company and analyze e-marketing by applying marketing theo-

ries to practice. The research was made by using combination of qualitative methods which included benchmarking, interviewing, focus-group discussion and observation.

Using the benchmarking method it was discovered what the case company could learn from other tour organizers' web-pages on the market. With focus-group discussion the customer perspective to the web-pages was presented. According to the results of the focus-group discussion the web-pages succeed in many aspects that were considered important for a user-friendly tour organizer's web-pages. Using AIDA-method and Molenaars' criteria for gaining trust through web-pages were considered to be well applied for the web-page. The research revealed the attitudes and opinions of participants considering the web-page. Based on the results some practical improvement suggestions were made and therefore the aims for the study met.

The research was considered to be significant because the case company has only recently started operating and therefore the company can benefit of discovering improvement ideas and customers' perspective to them. The case company was interested in finding out how the customers perceive their web-pages. As it came out in the interview with the sales manager the company is in a stage were it makes changes and improvements on the web-page and other e-marketing channels.

The research was limited in the use of qualitative methods. The use of quantitative data could result in more accuracy in results because of a larger response rate. However, the qualitative method was used because the researcher aimed at finding out practical improvement ideas from focus-group discussion and benchmarking. In addition, the use of qualitative methods aimed in finding out opinions and attitudes of potential customers which were graduating tourism students. The qualitative method could be used in future when the tour organizer web-pages have collected more visits and therefore could result in more volume in responses.

For future research the other e-marketing methods used in Tour Organizer X could be analyzed in more detail and the aim could be in finding out improvement ideas for them. The research could also be linked to studies in IT where it could be find out how the improvement are in reality designed on web-pages.

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Interview with Tour Organizer Xs' Sales Manager and Marketing Manager

Illustrations

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