Inspecting the quality management of an event through K-pop Dance Cover Competition

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Abstract

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This thesis inspects an event called K-pop Dance Cover Competition, a South Korean music and dance cultural event for young people interested in k-pop. The event was organised for the first time in 2011 by a non-profit organisation called XpressEvents.

In this thesis, the significance of K-pop Dance Cover Competition for the audience and the development of Finnish-Korean cultural cooperation is reflected. Also, the theme is inspected a little more in detail to create a better understanding about the subject for the reader.

The thesis consists of four main chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic and the structure of the thesis. The second chapter introduces the event concept in detail, and compares it to basic event theories.

The third chapter is the theoretical approach to this thesis, and it discusses quality management in relation to events. The fourth and final chapter is reflection of the overall process of writing this thesis. Also, some reflection on the findings is done.

The objective of this thesis is for the organisation to get a concrete tool to work with and develop events in the future. This is done with the help of breaking down a feedback questionnaire related to K-pop Dance Cover Competition 2016. The third chapter will inspect the results of this questionnaire in detail.

Keywords

K-pop, dance, quality management, event organising

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1   Introduction

This thesis introduces in detail the concept of K-pop Dance Cover Competition, or in short KDC, an event concept created by XpressEvents in 2011. In addition to breaking down the planning and implementation process of the event in question, a big part of this thesis consists of inspecting the quality of events, both K-pop Dance Cover Competition and other events in Finland.

I am the vice president of XpressEvents, and because mine and the organisations goal is to improve the concept, the quality management point of view was taken in as a major part of this thesis. K-pop Dance Cover Competition was organised for the sixth consecutive time this year, and 2016 was the first time that quality was measured and inspected in any concrete way.

From this point on, K-pop Dance Cover Competition will be abbreviated as KDC when mentioned in the text. Majority of this thesis is based on my personal knowledge from participating and observing the organisation's actions. Outside sources are indicated separately when used in the text.

1.1   Structure of thesis

The thesis starts with an abstract describing the main points of the whole content. First chapter tells a little about the background of the work and how the idea was initiated for the topic. Also, the objective and the approach to the research are introduced to the reader.

Second chapter is the event portfolio, and describes in detail the complete process of organising KDC. The themes of this chapter are the basic information of the event concept, organiser background, event history, and the different stages of planning KDC. Also, some comparison to organiser's other events is done, and stakeholders and sponsors of the event are introduced. In addition to inspecting the event in detail, this chapter lists the basic characteristics of a successful event.

The third chapter is the theoretical part of this thesis, and the main theme is quality management in events. In this chapter, the answers of KDC 2016 feedback questionnaire are inspected and reflected in terms of the 2017 event. This chapter also benefits from two interviews with representatives of two large scale Finnish events. After this the fourth chapter will breakdown the whole thesis, and discuss the findings made in it.

1.2   Background

The concept has been running consecutively for five years, each year having different points of success and challenges. To be able to improve and develop it, quality management and more exact inspecting of the concept needs to be done. Metrics from previous events are very poor, and stakeholders, meaning competitors, audience and sponsors, have not been followed up for feedback in any organised way. Therefore, changes in operations need to be made to produce materials to come back to, when planning the next event.

Because the concept is created by mostly students and young people, the development of the concept has been slow and lack of workforce has been imminent. With only a few people on the team studying the events industry and having the knowledge to develop a concept, there has not been enough time to make the effort for quality management. This however will be made easier along with this thesis and the background work done for it.

1.3   Objective of Thesis

The objective of this thesis is to better understand KDC and to produce something concrete to get back to, and help the concept to develop. This thesis also has a personal objective. Next year (2018) the current president of the organisation, Sirja Puustelli, will be leaving for an exchange in South Korea. This means that I, Jaana Miettinen will be taking her place as the president, and will be taking full command from the earliest stage in organising KDC. Because I only joined the organisation in 2014, this thesis will also be a tool for me to use when planning the event for the first time in charge.

The quality management and evaluation, done in terms of a feedback questionnaire, aims to answer the following questions: How does the audience evaluate KDC as an event? How do they rank it among other, equivalent events in Finland? What is the significance of KDC for the audience and for the development of South Korean culture in Finland? The aim of the quality management study, which both for KDC means the answers of a feedback questionnaire, is to develop a system for quality management that can be used repeatedly for this event concept, and possibly other concepts of XpressEvents as well. The quality of KDC 2016 will be measured with the responses of the said feedback questionnaire, or in other words how high the respondents score each category. KDC will also compared to other cultural and leisure events in terms of their quality management.

1.4 Approach to research

The approach to this research is the quality management of events in general, and the basic principles will be applied to KDC. However, since the quality management practices of KDC were initiated for the purposes of this thesis, the only aspect that can be inspected in detail in relation to KDC is the feedback questionnaire that was conducted in early 2017. Both of these topics will be inspected in more detail in chapter 3.

2   Event portfolio

This chapter will present the concept of KDC in detail. Also, more information about the organiser, XpressEvents will be provided in chapter 2.2. First the basic information and background of the event will be presented, and after that a detailed history of the development. The timeline of the planning process will be introduced from chapter 2.4 onwards.

2.1   A successful event

A successful event is something that both the guests and the organisers can feel in their soul. Both the feeling and the content are in place. More symbolically a successful event shines like a star filled with warmth and joy. This star then consists of two triangles, each with three crucial questions to answer before starting the planning process of an event (Vallo & Häyrinen 2016, 121.)

First, we will inspect the strategic triangle. The questions for this triangle are why, who, what, where and when. Finding an answer to why the event is organised helps defining the objective and the message of a certain event. The objective must be kept clear in mind through different phases of planning. Also, it's important to think what kind of a message certain actions send out. Events can be very effective marketing tools, but without a clear answer to why a certain event is organised, planning one is in vain. KDC is organised to produce a forum for South Korea enthusiasts to come together and perform their favourite songs in front of an audience.

Answering to who the event is organised for defines the target audience of the event. This question helps the organiser define the tools which they should use to best reach their target audience, and how to deliver the preferred message most effectively. KDC is organised for young people ages 15 to 25, who are interested in South Korea and k-pop.

What, where and when define the starting point of the whole process of event organising. The organiser needs to define what kind of an event is the right kind for the target audience, and decide whether to create it by themselves or use an existing concept, like Ice Hockey World Championships. After the type of event is defined, why will help to answer where and when also. The venue and time of the event are most meaningful to the audience, and if these points are thought over well, they can effectively support the objective of the event. KDC was organised completely by XpressEvents on October 14th at Cultural Arena Gloria. The timing of the event was very convenient, because it didn't

overlap with any other related events. The venue was not the most convenient one for the audience, but was chosen because of financial and organisational benefits.

The answers to these three questions will form the idea of the event. The idea, around which the whole event is formed, can in some cases transform into a concept, which can be repeated e. g. annually like KDC. Another driving force in event planning can be a theme, around which the whole concept is then built, like in KDC's case. Also, events like parties are easier to plan based on a specific theme (Vallo & Häyrinen 2016, 123.)

The second triangle is called the operative triangle. The operative questions revolve strongly around the implementation of an event. To successfully implement an event, the organiser must be able to answer how the event will be organised, what kind of content it has and who the host is. The first question, how, is linked to what kind of resources the organiser has at their use for the planning process and the overall event. Can the event be implemented with the organisations funds and staff, or is external help needed? In KDC's case, some volunteers were recruited in addition to the core team, but all of them had been working at XpressEvents' previous events so they are not count as outside help. Also, it is important to think how to support the theme of the event all the way from beginning to end.

The content of the event is always linked to the objective and the target segment (Vallo & Häyrinen 2016, 126.) It is important to match the content to the target segment to ensure a good customer experience. With KDC, a problem regarding the content for many years has been the host of the event. Previously, even though the host has been working in the organisation themselves, they have not been able to produce meaningful and inspiring content for the audience, generating negative feedback. For the previous event, the host was recruited from outside of the organisation, but this also was not a success since they didn't have enough knowledge about the theme. This year the hosting received extra attention and was done by a person from inside the organisation.

Finally, the organiser needs to figure out the who. In the planning phase the key person is the project manager. Before starting the planning, the project manager should identify a clear need for the event. An event should not be organised just because of a tradition, but there should always be a need for that event. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2016, 126.) Finding a need helps with finding the owner of the event, and is also an essential part of the whole planning process.

2.2 Basic information and description of the event concept

K-pop Dance Cover Competition, also seen written out as Korean Dance Cover Competition, is a South Korean music and dance cultural event for young people interested in k-pop. The event concept has its origins in 2011, and it has since been held annually at cultural arena Gloria's premises. KDC is a competition in which the participants (groups) show a cover version of South Korean bands' songs choreographies. In the last few years other South Korean cultural elements such as cooking Korean dishes or writing in Hangeul (Korean alphabet), and the possibility to buy Asian merchandise have also been implemented in the event.

KDC is originally a domestic k-pop event, but in 2016 it was opened for international teams. Also in recent years, the focus has been more and more towards all of Europe rather than just Finland. Special events vary greatly in size and complexity, from small and simple birthday parties to huge, complex international events like the Olympic Games (Shone & Parry 2013, 8.) KDC is not a very big event when comparing to other dance events in Finland, but considering the size of the Finnish k-pop fandom it has quite many visitors making it a large-scale event when comparing to other k-pop events in Finland.

Most of the content in this chapter comes from my own knowledge that I have acquired by working closely with the organisation. External sources used are mentioned in the text separately.

The event was created to meet the demand for such events. It is the first of its kind in Finland, and the oldest annually running k-pop related concept in Finland. The original organisers were themselves a part of a dance group, and were hoping to participate a competition to make their hobby more interesting. In 2011, the group presented the initial idea of KDC to Juha Oinonen, the producer at cultural arena Gloria, who from the beginning was excited about the concept and has been a big influencer in the success of it. In figure 1 is shown a brief introduction of Gloria as a company. Cultural arena Gloria is a popular venue for youth events, and has been chosen also for several other underground cultural events in the past, such as K-pop World Festival Finland Semi-finals, Finnish Cosplay Championships and many big and small scale Asian music events (concerts etc.).

Besides fulfilling a need, KDC has a key role in forwarding hallyu or Korean wave in Finland, and it is the biggest k-pop and Korean themed event organised in Finland. Other events forwarding hallyu are K-con Finland and K-pop World Festival Semi-finals.

Because the event concept K-pop World Festival Semi-finals will be mentioned multiple times during this report in relation to the organisation and its activities, it will from this point onwards be abbreviated as KWF.
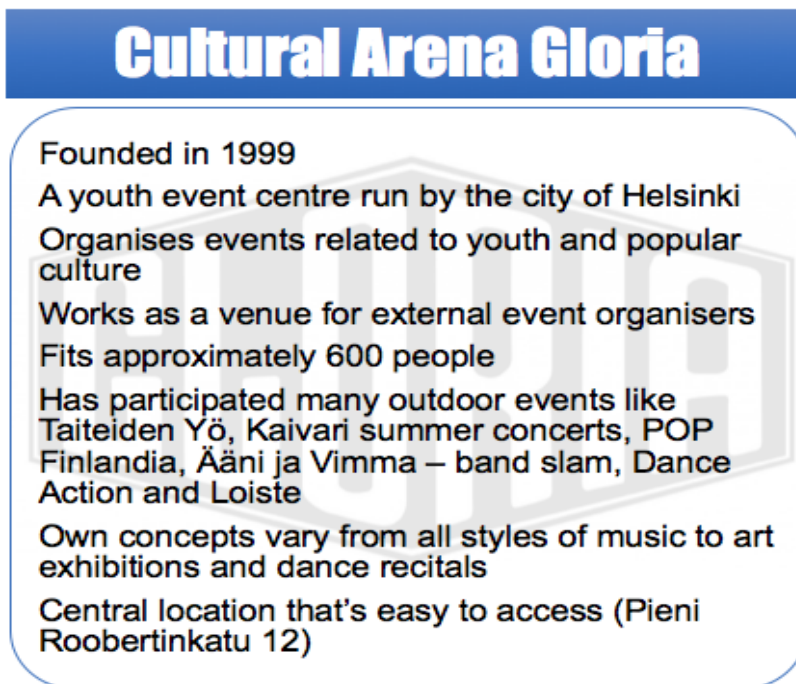

Figure 1 Gloria company description (Gloria 2017)

The Korean Wave

The Korean Wave (Hangeul: 한류; RR: Hallyu), literally "flow of Korea", is the increase in global popularity of South Korean culture since the 1990s. The wave was first driven by the spread of South Korean drama series or K-dramas and K-pop across Asia, first being China and Japan. During its initial stages, the Korean Wave evolved from a regional development into a global phenomenon. With the help of the internet and social media and the increase in the variety and volume K-pop music videos on YouTube, the Korean entertainment industry has been able to reach overseas audience also. The culture became more accessible and easier to follow, which also has been a major factor in the development of the Korean Wave. In the 21st century, South Korea has emerged as a major exporter of popular culture and tourism, and has helped Korean pop culture related start-ups to emerge throughout the world. (1999-2017 KOCIS; Wikipedia 2017.)

2.3 Organiser background

XpressEvents is a youth organisation registered in 2015. The organization was built around KDC over years of operation, and additional smaller events as well as larger events have been since introduced to the organisations portfolio. The organization

operates mainly in Helsinki, but future projects have already been planned to be hosted outside of the municipal area. Before being registered the organisation was run on more of a hobby-basis from 2011 to 2014 by the founding party and occasional helpers.

The founding party consists of six people: Artem (Arttu) Kuosti, Emma Rask, Laura Kuokkanen, Laura Yli-Perttula, Monica Schwöble and Sirja Puustelli, of which Emma Rask and Sirja Puustelli are still involved in the organisation's action. Nowadays the organisation consists of two parts: the core team which includes seven people, and the volunteer team which varies in size from 10 to 20 people depending on an event's needs. The core team works all year round starting the event planning from the earliest possible stage, and the volunteer team only participates in helping at the event with tasks like coat check, ticket sales and other assisting tasks.

XpressEvents is a growing organisation. This growth however is not only growth in size, but in a professional sense. Through each year of operation, the brand image has developed in terms of the logo and social media presence to create a professional, clear layout for the organisation. Each year the concept has experienced some renewal, but for the past few years the logo has remained the same since it has been found fitting for the organisation. The current XpressEvents logo used in social media and all printed materials is presented in figure 2. In addition to developing the layout to be more distinctive, also the way of doing things has been developed massively in the past year. More about this will be told in chapter 2.4.1.

Figure 2. XpressEvents logo

2.4 Event history

As mentioned in chapter 2.1, the idea of the concept has its roots in 2011. After developing the concept and creating a plan for the implementation, the first event was organised on October 14, 2012 in cooperation with cultural arena Gloria. Because the event concept was just launched and on a test-phase, it was held on Sunday evening and free of charge for the audience. 15 dance groups participated the competition, and the best team was awarded with 200 euros. After a successful event, another organiser of Asian cultural and music events, Jrock Finland, offered to take KDC under their name and

use their expertise in marketing and implementing the event. This offer however was declined, since it could be foreseen that the original organisers could run the concept themselves with assistance from Gloria.

The concept's strength from the beginning has been that young people build it together for other young people, and it still is that today. Also, during the years the team members have learned from their mistakes, and build up knowledge in terms of event related education to improve the concept further and make it more professional. Challenges of the first year were both overall scheduling of the planning phase (when to start planning, what to do at which state etc.), as well as scheduling the competition day. Also, lack of professional skills within the organising team brought its challenges with the planning and implementing of the first KDC.

After a successful first launch in 2012, the second KDC was organised in October 2013. It was the first year the event was hosted as a branded event. Tickets were sold at a moderate price and the event was moved to prime time, Saturday evening. The idea of the event was for the first time to produce little profit and to make name in the k-pop scene in Finland. 1st prize was raised to 500 euros, and teams coming in 2nd and 3rd received k-pop merchandise.

In 2014, the concept was renewed a little bit in terms of additional program. A South Korean artist was brought to Finland as a trial, since demand for live Korean music was already then very high. As this was an idea that could have worked, it proved unsuccessful because of budgeting issues. With little close to no money, the artist that was booked was not well known enough to attract viewers. A duo of hip-hop artists, Keebom and Joerhee performed after the competition, but only a small part of the audience stayed behind to watch. Also, since the ticket prize had to be raised a little bit to make up the costs of the artist, the actual event didn't attract as many visitors as before. Numbers of visitors each year can be seen from table 1.

With the small downfall in 2014, some changes for the next event needed to be done. New team members were recruited via Finland's biggest k-pop fan page, Kpop Finland on Facebook. The idea of recruiting new people was mainly to bring in new ideas for the event concept. This is also how I came into the action. Because the event had already run for three consecutive years, the organization built around KDC was registered as an association, XpressEvents in 2015. In addition to KDC a solely cultural side event, Xpress Korea was introduced. The event was organized before the competition from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and it featured various kinds of cultural activities related to k-pop and South

Korea. Ticket price was 5 euros including both events and coat check. The aim of the event was to promote Korean culture, and to improve and actively develop cultural activities for young people in the Helsinki metropolitan area (XpressEvents Google Drive 2017.) The different activities offered in the event were the following:

- Karaoke
- Cooking Korean Kimbap
- Writing greetings for the groups in the competition in Hangeul
- Korean café
- Flea market
- Asian goods booths
- Artwork gallery with the work of k-pop enthusiasts

Xpress Korea proved to be successful, since it was the first event that focused on the South Korean popular culture. The venue was full of people until the evening, and at some point, people had to wait for their turn to get inside. For the competition in the evening there were 22 groups participating. Main prize was yet again raised, and in 2015 it was 600 euros.

The biggest challenge for 2015 was scheduling due to Xpress Korea. Because the morning event started at 11, preparations for that and rehearsals for the dance groups had to be held before opening the doors for public. The day was extremely long, starting at 8 and ending somewhere around 21, and this generated some feedback from the dancers.

Other notable challenges were the volume of competitors as well as group sizes. Because the competition was open for all dance groups that signed up, there were a total of 128 competitors, making the venue extremely packed. Also, many groups consisted of only two people, which was not viewer friendly or flattering to the dance style in question.

2016 marked the fifth anniversary of KDC. Through five years a lot was already accomplished, changed and developed, but changes were implemented for the sake of the anniversary. The biggest changes for the anniversary year were that the competition was opened for international dance crews as well for the first time in all of Europe, and the main prize was raised to 1000 euros. Also, a preliminary video audition was carried out because of the big volume of groups and dancers the previous year. 15 groups were accepted for the finals held once again at Cultural Arena Gloria, and the minimum group size was raised to three persons to improve viewer satisfaction. Xpress Korea was also organised despite the scheduling issues in 2015 based on its popularity in the previous year. The event was once again held before the start of the actual competition featuring many cultural activities and performances. In 2016, the activities offered for visitors were:

- Karaoke
- Panel discussions
- K-drama and Korean variety show stream corner
- Flea market
- Treasure hunt (prize: concert tickets)
- Bubble Tea
- Korean language and writing
- Performances:
  - Anniina Timonen, winner of K-pop World Festival Semi-finals 2016 singing category
  - Taekwondo and Hapkido (Korean martial arts) demonstrations

The number of visitors for Xpress Korea was however a lot less than in 2015, and the decision was made afterwards to discontinue Xpress Korea as a separate product.

For KDC it was a big year also. As mentioned earlier, the competition was opened for all of Europe. This however proved to be a challenge in terms of marketing, since many of other European countries don't have an active fan base, or a significant organisation to actively forward k-pop and South Korean culture. The competition was marketed among others to Sweden, Poland, Germany, France and Estonia, these being the most significant k-pop countries in Europe. Especially Poland and Germany were major target segments due to being popular countries for hosting k-pop concerts. Despite all the international marketing effort only one international group, NEXT from Poland, participated the preliminary round, and made it all the way to the finals in Helsinki.

For 2016, the biggest successes were to sell out on tickets for the evening show, which allowed XpressEvents to grow their position as an event organiser in Finland, and that the competition could reach international markets also. Thanks to hosting a successful event, cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea was initiated and XpressEvents was trusted with organising another major k-pop event, KWF. More about co-operation with the embassy is explained in chapter 2.6.1.

Biggest challenges for 2016 were team communication, scheduling and maintaining a professional overview for the show. More about these challenges and points of improvement will be discussed in the feedback breakdown in chapter 3.2.

Year 2017 marks the 6th consecutive year of KDC. This year's event will be inspected more in detail throughout this thesis in terms of quality improvement and different stages of event management. Below in table 1 is presented the numbers of visitors from each year to support the facts of the chapter. If only looking at KDC numbers, the launching

year of 2012 continues to be the most successful one, and as explained earlier in the chapter, 2014 is the least successful in attracting visitors. The aim for 2017 was set to exceed the numbers of the launching year, and that is why the concept for KDC 2017 was renewed to some extent.

Table 1. Development of visitor numbers in KDC (2012-2016)

KDC	Number of visitors	Additional info
14.10.2012	490	
13.10.2013	450	
25.10.2014	312*	Reasons for decline explained in the chapter
31.10.2015	460	+ 180 (Xpress Korea)
22.10.2016	480	Xpress Korea included

2.5 Stages of planning and implementing KDC

Planning an event is usually started by defining your objects, and the initial stage of getting an event started is highly dependable on them (Shone & Parry 2013, 99.) The blog "Change Conversations" uses the term strategic checklist, and it also defines the 10 most important things to remember when starting to plan an event, some of which are defining the purpose of the event and the target audience, marketing and logistics planning, client engagement, gifts or prizes, workforce and documentation and reviewing of the event (Heffernan 17 August 2015).

These are also key factors in the planning process of KDC. In comparison to what is mentioned about the subject by Shone and Parry (2013, 99), "Getting started partly depends on what we know about the event and who will be doing it". What this means in practice is that sometimes parts of the concept are already clear to the main organizer or the planner. In KDC's case there were ambiguities in both the content of the event and where to get enough volunteers to effectively implement the event.

All in all, event organising can be broken down into three phases: planning phase, implementation phase and post-event phase. In figure 3 is described based on the division by Vallo and Häyrinen (2016, 189) how much time from the overall process each phase takes. From sub-chapter 2.5.1 onwards, the phases are broken down in relation to KDC.
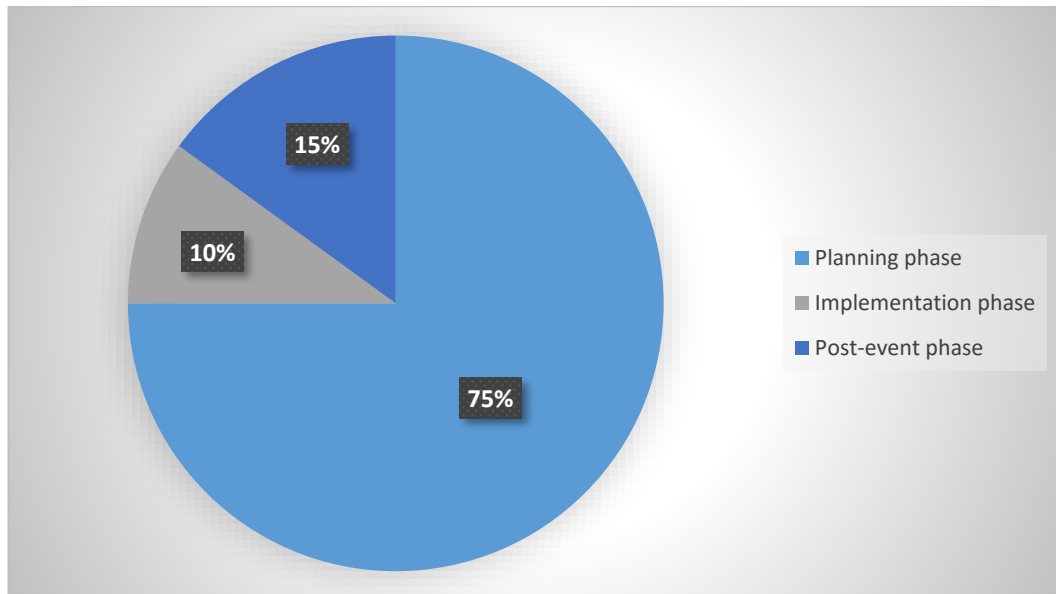
Figure 3. Vallo and Häyrinen's description of different event organising phases

2.5.1 Planning phase

Planning phase is the longest and most time-consuming phase of event planning. Depending on the size of the event, it can take up to years (Vallo & Häyrinen 2016, 191). The planning of KDC 2017 started almost a year prior to the actual event on the 9th of November 2016 with a team meeting to discuss the previous event. The topics of this meeting were the following:

- How did the event go, what was good, what do we want to do better?
- How did the team do, what was good, what could be done better?
- What does the future look like?
- In what direction does XpressEvents want to go? Organizational changes
- Goals and values for the team
- What does this all mean concretely?

In this meeting, it was decided that feedback would be collected from the 2016 event from both the audience and dancers to better determine the successes and the downfalls of the year's events. This is also when I decided that KDC would be my thesis topic. The structure of the organisation experienced major changes at the turn of the year. Until this point all meetings were open for the whole team, and no core team was separated from the volunteers. This idea was initiated already in the beginning of the year, but because of the possible integration of a new concept it was not implemented yet before KWF.

Next meeting was held the 8th of January 2017, and it had a more concrete approach as to what actions will be taken to improve from the previous year. As successes of 2016 the team mentioned team spirit, quick reaction and satisfied customers and visitors. However, since these were only opinions from the team a more detailed insight to what the visitors

thought about the event was needed to determine the real successes. As challenges of both the past year of operations and the previous KDC, the team mentioned lack of spontaneous actions, not finishing what you start and overall communication between the team members. To make everyone's work easier, each member of the core team was assigned with an area of responsibility for the entire year, covering both KDC 2017 and KWF. These new areas of responsibility made it possible to delegate tasks between the core team members, which has made a significant difference in how the planning process ran.

As mentioned earlier in chapter 2.3 the organization was offered a possibility of organising another event, KWF in co-operation with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea. Because this concept was new to the organisation, scheduling of the year as well as the differences of the two events had to be clearly defined. It was decided that KDC will be organized in October, and a proposal of organizing KWF in May would be sent to the Embassy of the Republic of Korea. Prior to securing the details of the cooperation as well as the implementation of the event itself, the focus was put on KDC. Also in the first meeting in January initial brainstorming for the upcoming event was done in terms of suggestions for the contents of the event.

The first suggestions, of which many have developed all the way to implementation stage, were to drop the day event as a separate part, and instead invest in having vendors and a flea market running the whole event, more sponsors and new kinds of prizes for the winners, more guests of honour and something different for the opening show. Organising an after party as well as booking an artist was also brought to discussion, but the idea was dropped later during the planning process due to lack of budget. When this meeting took place, the results of the feedback questionnaire were not available for the teams use yet, since the questionnaire was only published in February, and closed off a month later in March.

After the KWF project was confirmed by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, the preparations for KDC were held off until June. The concept however was not completely forgotten, and a lot of planning for KWF was done keeping KDC, the organisations main product, in mind. Many points of discussion from the last big team meeting for KWF on April 14th lived on as content for KDC.

The first meeting after KWF in June 2017 consisted of both KWF breakdown and the team's insights on what was good and what maybe could be improved. Since this was the first time KWF was organised by XpressEvents, many learning points surfaced during the

day and a lot of useful things were learned about the team's operations in contrast to KDC. More importantly the tentative schedule for the pre-event phase of KDC was established. The full schedule of the pre-event phase can be seen from appendix 1. The pre-event phase started a lot earlier this year compared to previous years, because of multiple feedbacks stating that information about the competition was received too late.

The event site was published on Facebook on the 19th of June to start promotions for the event as well as the preliminary round on time. For this launch the concept image of 2017 was defined by modifying the logos and graphics form the previous year. The base of all social media and printed graphics can be seen from figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Basic concept graphics of KDC 2017

Signing up for the competition began on the 26th of June, and the preliminary auditions were open for a little less than a month, until the 23rd of July. Finalists for the October event were published on the 1st of August on a Facebook live broadcast, which proved to be a very successful marketing tool. The live broadcast was viewed by 66 people, and the number of views continued to rise even afterwards. By September 23 the video had received over 400 views.

Simultaneously with the first promotions and the preliminary round of the event, the search for judges and sponsors was begun. Due to feedback from 2016, a whole new judge panel was recruited from dance studios in Helsinki and dance related institutions like UniArts. With this the organisation wanted to ensure objectivity towards the dance groups (no personal relationships with the dancers), and that the judges would have a lot of knowledge and skills in dancing.

Since the two main themes of the competition are k-pop and dance, two out of four judges were recruited from dance schools as dance professionals, and the other two from other channels as k-pop experts, with some level of knowledge in dancing. Since the judge recruitment was not complete in time for the finalists reveal on the 1st of August, outside help was recruited alongside one of the confirmed judges only to determine the 15 groups to advance to the finals. After this the outside help no longer participated in the organisations operations. The judge panel was confirmed on the 26th of August. Communication with the judges was done by me via e-mail, and a Google Drive folder was set for sharing materials for their preparation for the competition.

First applications for sponsorships and co-operation were sent out mid-August to various kinds of companies. More about the process will be told from chapter 2.6.2 onwards.

In August and early September, a lot of the preparation was done in the background in terms of collecting marketing and competition materials from the groups, preparing materials for judges to get ready and planning social media promotions. The active phase began in mid-September with announcing the sponsors one by one on XpressEvents' social media accounts. For 2017, the promotions of the dance groups as well as the concept of the event took a lot of example from Korean music chart and entertainment shows. To make this happen the groups were asked to deliver a video introduction of the group along with a group photo and individual photos of the dancers. The greeting videos were used for social media marketing, and pictures for creating on-site audio-visual elements to correspond the style of Korean music chart and entertainment shows.

As the first live broadcast was so successful, the performance order of the finalist groups for KDC was also published on a Facebook live broadcast on 24th of September. This time it was done what the help of the opening act group Crush, who also is the winner of the dancing category of KWF 2017. After this, group promotions on Facebook and Instagram began, one group per day. The promotions were done with the help of introduction videos received from the dance groups. The marketing concept was titled "Meet our KDC 2017 finalists", and it proved to be the most successful concept yet. In a span of three days the first group video received over 400 views.

For 2017 changes were also made in terms of attracting different target groups. As an initiative to attract also the parents and relatives of the dancers, each group was informed about a possibility to reserve two seats per dancer from the audience. This information was requested until three weeks before the competition date at the same time with one of the most crucial parts regarding the competition, reference videos. Since the evaluation of

KDC performances is strictly based on a group's ability to make a cover of an original choreography and mimic original clothing of a Korean group, all groups were asked to deliver reference videos and photos of their chosen originals. These were then shared for the judges so that they would get a picture beforehand of what will be performed.

Last two weeks were the busiest from the organiser point of view. During this time a team meeting, a judge meeting and one volunteer meeting was held in preparation of the competition. In the judges meeting the judges met each other for the first time, got to know each other a little bit and had the chance to already think of a common strategy for evaluating the performances. The schedule of the event day was run through briefly, so that they would know when to be present. The meeting also covered the evaluation criteria so that the judges would certainly understand what the performances should be evaluated in addition to the cover aspect. The judge panel was completely new this year, so a thorough preparation was essential to ensure good quality on the event day.

During the last week, the focus was on physical marketing and the preparation of infotainment materials at the venue. The week of the event was also the campaign week with Korea House. More on this is written on chapter 2.6.6. Since the venue and the event were new for many, it was important to prepare clear signs and a decent, informative program pamphlet. Older visitors gave feedback on the previous year on lack of a manual program, so this year it was automatically added to the worklist. The signs were attached to the venue on the morning of the event date as part of on-site actions. In addition to preparing the venue, posters and leaflets were distributed around Helsinki to libraries, Asian shops and youth centres.

The last meeting was held on the night before the main day. In this meeting, a final check list was used as a tool to see that everything is ready, and some time was used to give everyone a good feeling about the event day. This meeting was open for the whole team, which means the core team and additional volunteer help.

2.5.2   Onsite actions

Implementing phase is the moment when all plans come true. This phase can be separated into three sections: building phase, the event itself and the clean-up phase (Vallo & Häyrinen 2016, 198). In addition to clear division of tasks, one of the most crucial parts of onsite actions is the schedule of the day. It is good to have a clear start and ending, and everything in-between clearly scheduled. An initial schedule for the competition day was made already in August to better communicate with sponsors and

the dance groups. However, the initial schedule experienced many changes until finalization, mainly due to the stage rehearsals of the dance groups.

The final schedule with exact times for the competition day was confirmed on week 39 after the final competition music was received from all dance groups. For this year, the exact schedule with every element broken down to the minute was crucial due to added audiovisual elements throughout the show. Main points of the final schedule of the day are presented in table 2.

As music and sounds are a part of the décor of the event, KDC this year used music as a backbone to support different elements of the event (Vallo & Häyrinen 2016, 207). A signature song was used to welcome the host, the judges and the contestants to the stage in the beginning of the show, and the same tune was played at the awards ceremony when the event was over. Each group came on and off the stage with music, and the performances used a lot of audiovisual elements like lights, special effects and video projections on the background. Some complains were received about the length of the day, but because the AV elements had to be also run through during the morning practice, some length had to be added to the whole day.

The schedule was not fully kept in the end. The morning practice took longer than what was expected because of the AV elements, and the award ceremony was started later than planned because of the judges taking extra time evaluating the performances.

Sponsor activities also continued onsite. EF, Luca and NOBE were present themselves to introduce their company and watch the show. Regarding the setup, EF had a booth set up to present their different language programs, Luca had a sales booth with different Asian and k-pop goods for sale and NOBE offered a photo wall for visitors to use. In addition to the sponsor booths and representatives, another company, Bearel was present as a vendor. The sales booths were very popular, and especially during the breaks had people gather at the lobby in masses. Also, the sales booths allowed some characteristics of Xpress Korea to be kept without a separate event.

Table 2. Schedule of the competition day

Time	Action
9:00	Staff arrives, morning briefing
10:00	Dancers arrive
10:30	Dancers rehearsals begin All videos and music tested in relation to the performances
13:30	Dancers rehearsals end
14:00	Opening show practice starts
15:00	Opening show practice ends
16:00	Doors open
17:00	Showtime
19:45	Award ceremony
20:00	Event ends

Since many of the features at the competition were tried for the first time at this year's event, the planning had to be done extra carefully to ensure as little problems as possible. Because of receiving several complains about the team communications the previous year even from the visitors, communicating between the team members was made easier this year with walkie-talkies. Also, tasks were divided between the team members to ensure that all areas of organizing the event were covered. The core team oversaw all supervising activities, and additional volunteers took care of smaller tasks, like decorating and preparing the venue.

Added technical elements were also prepared and delivered to Gloria staff early on time to ensure they were tested with the venue equipment before the actual show. The only technical malfunction was at the very beginning when the host's microphone didn't work at first, but this was fixed quickly. All other technical elements, like videos and music worked without problems.

2.5.3 Post-event phase

Vallo & Häyrinen (2016, 220) have named this phase as the post-event marketing phase. This phase is important to show the stakeholders that they are appreciated, and to have

them come again to the next event. How well the post-event tasks are implemented has a major influence on the success of the following events.

For KDC, the post-event phase included sending thank you-notes to all contestants and sponsors via e-mail, and collecting and analysing feedback. Before the event the Embassy of the Republic of Korea requested that feedback from the visitors would be collected onsite. This was done with a form designed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea. Because this feedback was collected from the visitors during the event, it was decided that XpressEvents only collects feedback from the dance groups.

In addition to contacting the dance groups about feedback, each group was also sent their individual scores and rankings in the competition. It was also considered that all groups would receive a full list of rankings, but for this year it was decided that only individual scores are published. Some of the feedback from the previous year's contest suggested that rankings would be given out more openly and transparently, but since it was not the majority to wish this kind of practices it was postponed to future years of operation.

Feedback from the organisation was collected verbally in a feedback meeting. In this meeting, the successes and learning points, as well as the challenges of KDC 2017 were brought to discussion. A feedback meeting is an important part of the overall process, because it's a way to professionally give an ending to the event planning process. It's a chance for the organising team to go through things that were left unsolved from the event. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2016, 229.)

Other post-event actions will continue, and much like previous year they will merge together with the planning process of next year's event.

2.6 XpressEvents on social media

In recent years, social media has barged into marketing and communications on an organisational level. It has made consumers more active, open and influential. It has also opened consumers and companies of all sizes a direct channel for communication. In events, social media can be utilised for marketing in all phases of event planning. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2016, 102.)

XpressEvents uses Facebook as a platform for planning the event and to discuss ideas as well as agree on schedules for meetings and deadlines. Facebook is also the main social media channel of XpressEvents because of its versatile possibilities. XpressEvents uses Facebook to share information and market their upcoming events, send live-video

broadcasts and communicate with their audience. In chapter 2.5.1 is explained in detail how Facebook was used as a tool during the planning phase. XpressEvents' Facebook page serves as a website for the organisation, and has been chosen as the main social media channel because of it having the biggest number of followers. Also, for each event a separate Facebook event page is created to better market that specific event. In table 3 are presented the numbers of followers of each XpressEvents social media channel.

Other social media channels used are Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat. For sharing files and information during the planning process, Trello and Google Drive are used. For next year Trello will be eliminated, and Google Drive will be the only platform for sharing documents. This is because Google Drive is more familiar to the core team as a team working platform, and it can be used effectively for scheduling (Google Calendar) and collecting feedback (Google Forms). Instagram and Snapchat are very popular among young people, and considering the target group are important social media channels for XpressEvents. Even though XpressEvents' Twitter account doesn't have that many followers, it is an important channel to keep up. Twitter is a very popular social media service among anime enthusiasts, and for example Desucon uses is as their main channel for communications (Suominen 4 August 2017.)

Table 3. XpressEvents social media channels' followers

Channel	Number of followers
Facebook	290
Instagram	231
Snapchat	Cannot be defined, since an open account can be viewed without subscription
Twitter	24

2.7   Comparison to organiser's other events

XpressEvents has two annual concepts: K-pop Dance Cover Competition (fall) and K-pop World Festival Semi-finals (spring). The two concepts have both similarities and vast differences, and this chapter will inspect the qualities of both concepts. This comparison is done with only the Semi-final phase of KWF, and not the whole concept, since XpressEvents is not in any way connected to other phases of the event. K-pop World Festival is an international concept that consists of regional preliminaries or Semi-finals, and a large scale final event in Changwon, South Korea. In 2017, these Semi-finals were hosted in 71 countries. The final event in September gathers thousands of people yearly

to celebrate k-pop and Korean culture. To support the text, the qualities of the two events are mapped out in table 4 at the end of the chapter.

Even though XpressEvents is the organiser of both concepts, only KDC is their own concept. KWF is owned South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) (Korean: 한국방송공사, Hanguk Bangsong Gongsa), the national public broadcaster of South Korea and one of the biggest South Korean television networks. The importance of who the concept owner is comes in question when planning the content of the event, and in both these events' cases, the rules of the competition. For KDC, XpressEvents is free to modify the graphic elements for marketing and physical materials, but for KWF all guidelines and material is received from the concept owner, and they do not allow modification.

Both concepts revolve around the same themes, promotion of Hallyu, k-pop and youth culture, but the competition rules for KDC are much stricter than what they are for KWF, because the differences in the objective of the competition. For KDC the objective is to produce as much an exact cover of an original performance as possible, whereas KWF allows artistic modifications as well as mixing in different cultural and music styles.

The biggest difference between the two concepts is that KDC charges for entrance tickets, while KWF is strictly free of charge. This is because KWF's focus is to promote Korean culture, and by making the event free of charge it attracts people easier. However, looking at the visitor numbers, KDC has attracted more people last year than KWF did. This is most probably since KDC offers also additional program, and more performances than what KWF does. Another difference regarding finances is that for KDC the grand prize along with 2nd and 3rd prizes are money. In KWF, no grand prize was given as the singer and performance category winners have the chance to advance to the finals in Korea.

Budget for both events comes from the Embassy of the Republic of Korea. For KDC, additional budget is received from ticket sales, and a big part of goods offered for the competitors as prizes come from sponsors. For KWF the budget of 4000 € should suffice since the only costs are the venue, judge commissions, prizes for the groups and food and drinks for the competitors and staff. KDC however has more possible revenue streams due to entrance fee, larger number of competitors and extra program during the day.

Other similarities with the two concepts is the target segment, which for both events are youth between ages 15 and 25, and they are already a part of the Finnish K-pop community. The audience consists of both K-pop fans, as well as friends and relatives of the competitors outside the fan base. Both events are hosted at Cultural Arena Gloria due to convenient location and long history in co-operation, which allows reductions in venue fee.

Table 4. Comparison of the two event concepts

Section	KDC	KWF
Budget	3900€ + surplus ticket sales from 2016	4000€
Competition categories	Dance	Performance and Vocal
Concept owner	XpressEvents	Korean Broadcasting System, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of South Korea
Entry fee	7€	Free of charge
Extras	Sales booths, flea market, art gallery, karaoke (varies each year depending on sponsors)	None (very strict concept guidelines)
Number of competitors	84	53
Number of visitors	400-500 (480 in 2016)	378
Organiser	XpressEvents	XpressEvents, Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Finland
Shareholders	Cultural Arena Gloria, sponsors, audience, competitors, Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Finland	Cultural Arena Gloria, Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Finland, audience, competitors, concept owner
Venue	Cultural Arena Gloria	Cultural Arena Gloria

2.8   Stakeholders

In this chapter I will introduce the most important stakeholders to XpressEvents. The significance of each stakeholder will be evaluated in relation to the success of KDC.

2.8.1 Gloria

XpressEvents and cultural arena Gloria have been working together since 2011 when the first KDC was organised. In addition to being a great venue for each event, they have also been a big help with organizing the event. Gloria and their staff immediately realized the potential of the idea, and have helped the organizers both financially and operationally since the early years. Before the organisers had acquired a certain level of professional understanding in event organising, Gloria staff helped to administrate the event and acted as mentors in the planning phase. Financial support was also bigger in the early years, since XpressEvents did not have any revenue streams to build capital.

Nowadays the event is implemented mostly by XpressEvents, but the help of Gloria is still needed in terms of technical support at the venue, marketing and administrating finances. Also, since the two parties have co-operated since the beginning, an agreement on the rent of the venue has been concluded that until this day is the most favourable option for the organisation.

2.8.2 Competitors and audience

Competitors and audience are maybe the most crucial stakeholders for KDC. Both factors are equally important for the success of the event. Without groups applying to the preliminary round there will be no event at all to come and watch. Each year one of the biggest variables is the number of incoming applications for the competition, and one of the most stressful things of the pre-event stage.

Of course, without an audience the event, much like any event with visual elements like performances, loses its purpose. The audience is an important stakeholder also regarding financial aspects. Ticket sales generated by the visitors are the single biggest revenue stream XpressEvents has, since signing up for the competition is free, vendors and sponsors are not charged for their booths, and no sponsorship deals include incoming funds to the organisation. Budget received from the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Finland is excluded from this observation, since it is not a sponsorship deal. The audience is also the most important source for receiving feedback from the event. Without feedback, the event cannot develop.

2.8.3 Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Finland

Co-operation with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Finland started back in 2015 when they discovered XpressEvents as an event organiser for Korean cultural events. The Ambassador Kim Soo Gwon's and the Embassy's mission in Finland is to improve the

country relations and create mutual understanding of the culture. Also, according to the Embassy mission statement on their website: "In addition, there is also a notable increase of interest in Korean culture, such as food, movies, Korean language as well as K-pop in Finland. More and more fans are coming to K-pop competition event and Korean Movie Festival held in Finland annually." The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Finland hosts annually multiple cultural events, including KWF. In 2016, the first official sponsorship was received from the Embassy in the form of mini-quiche pies for lunch. Also, the Ambassador as well as the Embassy staff were invited to the event as guests of honour.

In late 2016, the organisation was informed about the possibility to organise KWF in co-operation with the Embassy. This initiated a more in-depth co-operation between the two parties, making the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Finland one of the most important stakeholders for XpressEvents. A budget of 4000€ was granted to organise KWF 2017, which was used entirely to cover the expenses of the event, like rent of the venue, grand prize for the winner and judge and host commissions. The budget also allowed for the organiser to offer some extras, like food and small mirrors for the competitors for putting makeup on. For KDC 2017 a budget of 3900€ has been granted, as the event was chosen to be a part of K-Lover Project. The Embassy chose to forward KDC as a part of the program because it is a crucial part in promoting Korean culture for young people in Finland.

The financial support from the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Finland is crucial to XpressEvents' operations, because in the end it is a non-profit organisation. The Embassy will continue as one of the most important stakeholders for XpressEvents in the future too.

2.8.4 Sponsors

In 2017, a lot of effort was put on finding sponsors for the event. KDC is a growing event, and with the help of sponsors it can offer more to its customers. As mentioned earlier in chapter 2.4.1, first sponsor applications were sent in mid-August, and searching for sponsors continued all the way to mid-September. A clear definition was made in relation to the event concept on what kind of sponsors are searched, but all kinds of companies were approached in hope of a sponsorship. Because XpressEvents is a non-profit organisation, and neither the organization nor the event are too well-known, not much could be offered in exchange to sponsored goods.

The potential sponsors were promised marketing space on the organisation's social media accounts (Facebook and Instagram) and the venue. Focus was on companies that sell Asian products, but all kinds of companies, big and small were approached in hope of

sponsorships. Biggest companies approached were Hartwall, Fazer and Orkla (Panda, Taffel etc.), none of which had enough resources to support a small-scale event like KDC. This did not come as a surprise, since XpressEvents' resources or the size of KDC as an event does not match what bigger companies are looking for in a partner company or organisation. The companies that did answer were exact matches to what were searched for in the first place.

As a growing organisation, it is important for XpressEvents to try hard to spread their name and market their events even in the form of sponsorship applications. Also, k-pop as well as Korean culture is a growing trend in Finland, which means that in the next five years it is possible for even Finland to have large scale k-pop events that even attract bigger companies as sponsors. Out of dozens of inquiries and applications six sponsorships and one partnership were formed. Next, I will present all sponsors as separate sub-chapters. All sponsor related marketing graphics used on XpressEvents' social media accounts can be seen from appendix 2.

Bearel

Bearel did not participate KDC as a sponsor, but is important to mention here because of the content they added to the event. Bearel is a Finnish company run by two sisters, that sells high quality Korean cosmetics brands online. They only sell products they have tested themselves (2017 Bearel Oy.) Korean beauty products are very popular among Finnish k-pop fans also, so that is why they were a crucial addition to the event. At first Bearel was contacted in hope of a sponsorship, but it wasn't offered from them in the end. Their sales booth however was very popular among the visitors, since they sell a lot of brands meant for young people.

EF Education First

EF Education First is an international education company that offers various kinds of language courses and cultural and educational exchange programs all around the world in 116 countries. on language, academics, educational travel, and cultural experience. EF was founded in 1965, and their mission is to open the world through education (EF Education First 2017.) The sponsorship with EF initiated when they first contacted XpressEvents. Their motive for the sponsorship was EF's newly established operations in South Korea, so KDC for them was the perfect medium to market the new addition to their product line since it gathers the target segment together. Also, since they opened a new school in Seoul, they wanted to be more active in participating events related to Korean culture in Finland.

The sponsorship with EF included marketing space on their social media accounts, and a Korean language course for each member of the three best scored groups. In exchange XpressEvents again marketed EF on their Facebook and Instagram accounts, and reserved space for them to set up a booth at the venue.

It'S SKIN

It'S SKIN is a leading manufacturer of cosmetics and skin care products from South Korea, whose products are of the highest quality and have rapidly increased popularity around the world. Their products are actively developed in cooperation with the University of Seoul. It's SKIN's products have been sold at Finnish pharmacies since spring 2017, and more pharmacies are adding it'S SKIN to their product line all the time. In addition, some of their products are sold at K-citymarkets. (It'S SKIN 2017.)

The contact with it'S SKIN Finland was engaged via one of the volunteers from XpressEvents' previous events. It'S SKIN was the last sponsorship to be confirmed only a few weeks before the competition. This sponsorship however was very good for XpressEvents, because of the popularity of Korean cosmetics in Finland and especially among the fan base. With the help of it'S SKIN, XpressEvents could offer the competitors something that everyone would like for sure with little effort. It'S SKIN sponsored a small package of different kinds of Korean beauty products for 2nd and 3rd place winners.

Korea Box

A sponsor from the previous years, Korea Box, continued the co-operation this year. Korea Box is a South Korean company that offers packages of the hottest Korean items with a monthly subscription shipped worldwide. In exchange to social media marketing and distributing their flyers at the event, they sponsored two of their products, a Premium K-Snack Box and a Regular K-Snack Box for XpressEvents to raffle.

In addition to K-Snack Boxes their product line includes K-pop and K-drama Box with k-pop and k-drama fan merchandise, and K-Beauty box with various kinds of Korean beauty and makeup products (2017, Korea Box). The premium box was raffled to all dance groups that signed up for the preliminary round, and the regular box was raffled for the audience along with two tickets to KDC. Korea Box is an important sponsor to XpressEvents, because Korean products are not widely distributed in Finland. It's very hard to find any food or fan products in physical stores, and they are a little bit more expensive than what they cost straight from Korea Box.

Korea House

Korea House is the first Korean restaurant in Finland. They serve authentic Korean dishes in the centre of Helsinki (KOREA HOUSE 2017). The restaurant is very popular among k-pop fans in Finland, and has also been visited by the Ambassador of South Korea and several k-pop groups that have visited Finland, latest being Block B[1]. Co-operation with Korea House has been a goal for XpressEvents for several years, but the initiative was not taken before this year. The restaurant was also very open for co-operation and had been looking for means to contact the heads of organisation.

From XpressEvents' part two suggestions were presented. The first one, that did not go further from the initial idea, was to host an event for k-pop fans to hang out together, and watch the live streaming of K-pop World Festival 2017 Finals from Changwon at the restaurant. During the evening, some fixed dishes would have been offered at a discount price. This idea however did not catch wind because of the uncertainty of the live stream, and the inconvenience for the restaurant's business since it would've had to be closed off from other customers.

The second idea and the final sponsorship deal was a discount coupon that allows a 10 percent discount from all dishes and beverages at the restaurant. The coupon was valid for the whole week preceding KDC, from 9th to 14th of October, and they were distributed both physically and digitally. All dance groups received a coupon that was valid for the whole group via email, and visitors of the event could come and pick up their own from the event venue, Cultural Arena Gloria during the weekend before the campaign week began. In addition to the discount campaign, Korea House sponsored two 50-euro gift cards to their restaurant as a prize for groups coming in 4th and 5th. Like other sponsors, Korea House was also marketed on XpressEvents' social media accounts.

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[1] **Block B**, short for Blockbuster, is a seven-member boy group from South Korea. They debuted in the famous countdown chart show Music Bank in 2011, and during their active years they have released seven albums. Their style has a hip-hop tune to it, but some songs also categorise fully as k-pop. Block B has visited Finland twice, first time in March 2015 and second time in February 2017

Luca

Next sponsor confirmed was Luca, a vendor of Asian and k-pop merchandise in Helsinki. They have a small shop located in Mannerheimintie, Helsinki. Their product line ranges from popular Asian snacks like Pocky cookie sticks to stationery and kawaii[2] clothing like slippers and socks. (Luca 2017.) The sponsorship from Luca included a small gift for each participant of the finals, which is a great deal for XpressEvents. It takes a great amount of time and resources to think of a gift suited for all participants. For KWF earlier this year the same thing was done for 53 participants, and it was already a difficult task. Not many stores offer a product in such vast amounts on demand.

In addition to the participant gifts, it was agreed that XpressEvents would market Luca on their social media accounts, and deliver physical marketing materials such as flyers and a poster to the shop. Luca was also present at the event with a sales booth.

NOBE Aloe Vera

The first new sponsorship for 2017 was engaged with NOBE aloe vera drinks. The contact information for this company was acquired through another attempt of getting a sponsor for the event. The organisation first approached Vitamin Well, a company that sells wellness drinks, but as per their suggestion NOBE was contacted, as they would be a better fit for the concept. NOBE of South Korean brand of aloe vera drinks. Not only is the brand fit to KDC's concept because of its South Korean origins, but also the beverage is very good for drinking in between workouts. (NOBE Aloe Vera 2017.)

For KDC 2017 NOBE sponsored a total of 300 bottles of their branded aloe vera drink in exchange to social media marketing. The sponsorship however did not allow any other cold drinks to be displayed or distributed during the event, which meant for example that one of the most popular attractions of the previous event, Bubble Tea Cafe could not be featured in the 2017 event.

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[2] **Kawaii** is Japanese for cute and is often used in relation to Asian products, and to describe the distinctive category of a shop that focuses on Asian products.

3   Quality management in events

Quality management ensures that an organization, product or service is consistent. In this case, the "product" is an event. It consists of four main phases: quality planning, quality assurance, quality control and quality improvement. It is focused not only on product and service quality, but also on the means to achieve it. Quality management, therefore, uses quality assurance and control of processes and products to achieve more consistent quality. (Investopedia, LLC 2017.) More than that, quality management is the process of continuous development for a company or an organisation, that aims at customer satisfaction, profitability and maintaining and increasing competitive advantage. In practice, this means the effective management of all of an organisation's processes and resources. The quality management processes of an organisation are influenced by the needs and interests of the service provider, as well as by the needs and expectations of stakeholders. (Yritys-Suomi 2017.) In KDC's case the service provider would be XpressEvents, and stakeholders like mentioned in chapter 2.8 would be e.g. the audience and sponsors.

Quality of an event can be evaluated with both qualitative and quantitative data. The numbers of visitors as well as open feedback of the event both tell important things about how successful an event has been. To improve the quality of a concept, all the numbers and open feedback is needed. In addition to written feedback collected online or physically, feedback can be collected on site (word of mouth) or by targeting visitors on the phone. Spoken feedback is important, because it usually gives the organiser a more truthful sense of how visitors have liked the event. Before the actual event, it is important to set objectives to concretize what needs to be achieved. When feedback is inspected more in detail, it should be compared to the initial objectives. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2016, 224.)

For KDC 2016, these objectives were:
- To raise the bar for Finnish k-pop and South Korea related events and improve the offering for such events in Finland
- Promote XpressEvents as an event organizer
- Get good feedback from the audience and the competitors
- To have a full house or in other words more visitors than the previous year

Also, since co-operation with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea had just begun, one of the objectives was to earn their trust in organizing South Korean cultural events. In addition to setting goals for the event, team goals were set to improve the event on an

operational level. The team goals were defined by the president, Sirja Puustelli, and they are listed below:

- act self-confidently and professionally before and during the event
- work efficiently while maintaining set schedules
- work as a team
- build up team spirit.

In this thesis when speaking of quality management in relation to KDC only the feedback questionnaire is taken into account as a method of researching quality, since neither KDC nor XpressEvents has any other quality management practices at use. The aim for the future, however, is to implement other practices to improve the organisation's quality management processes.

3.1   Research method

A questionnaire usually consists of a series of questions and other commands for gathering information from respondents. Although they are often designed as a quantitative method for statistical analysis, this is not always the case. Questionnaires can be classified as both a qualitative and quantitative method, depending on what kind of questions are used (2017 Necessary knowledge to conduct a business research.) With the help of e.g. open questions, the answers can give very qualitative data. This means that well-structured open questions can both give the research essential data of e.g. the respondents' views on the topic, or when thinking about events, the visitors' opinions on the success of an event.

When designing a questionnaire, it should be taken into account that the questionnaire should be of moderate length and have a clear, easily comprehended outlook. A well-designed and clear questionnaire is easy to follow, and the respondent can clearly see the optimal order of questions. (KvantiMOTV 2010.) Since the questionnaire for KDC 2016 was designed with a Google based software, it automatically had reasonable breaks between each question and a proper, clear layout.

In addition to the outlook of the questionnaire, the person designing it should think about the order of questions and make it logical for the respondents. The success of questions, meaning how they are structured and how well they cover content are also very important for designing the questionnaire. (KvantiMOTV 2010.) Depending on what needs to be accomplished with the research, question types should be chosen accordingly to what kind of responds are expected. This is a matter that will be developed for future feedback questionnaires for XpressEvents, since the one made for KDC 2016 has room for

improvements. This year the questionnaire was not based on any existing theories on quantitative research methods, but was rather created based on the organisers wishes and what they wanted to find out from the respondents. In practice, this would mean to first carefully plan the questionnaire based on the objectives of the research, test it on a smaller sampling, make improvements based on the initial feedback and only then, implement the questionnaire to the final sampling group.

In the feedback questionnaire for KDC 2016 both closed-ended questions with multiple choice answer options and scales, and open-ended questions were used. The two different kinds of questions were mixed, because since feedback was collected for the first time ever from any of XpressEvents' events, both kinds of data were needed to create a starting point. Close-ended questions are analysed using quantitative methods, and they can be easily transformed into presentation data like pie-charts, whereas answers obtained with open-ended questions are analysed using qualitative methods, and they generate discussion and critical analyses. (2017 Necessary knowledge to conduct a business research.)

The advantages of online questionnaires include fast data collection, which was one of the reasons why a questionnaire was chosen as the research method for KDC's quality, low or non-existent costs, and anonymousness, which in some cases increase the respondents' willingness to give answers. The disadvantages of questionnaires are possible random answers if the respondents don't read the questions properly, and that there is no service provider to help if there are obscurities or additional thoughts. (2017 Necessary knowledge to conduct a business research.)

3.1.1 Validity and reliability

The main purpose of quantitative studies is to provide as reliable and truthful information as possible. Therefore, each study should be evaluated for the reliability and validity of the study. In quantitative research, the reliability and validity of research are used as terms of reliability (Hirsijärvi, S., Remes, P. & Sajavaara, P. 2007, 133-135). Validity and reliability are however not co-dependent. Because the questionnaire conducted in relation to KDC 2016 included quantitative information also, these concepts are relevant to take into account.

Validity measures the ability of a research to measure what was meant to be measured. A valid research does not include systematic errors and provides on average correct results. Validity of the research must be ensured in advance with careful planning and

with carefully considered data collection. This means that the research measures the right things unambiguously and it covers the entire research problem, the target segment is clearly defined and the research is made on a representative sample group. Also, a high response rate increases the validity (Tarja Heikkilä ja Edita Publishing Oy 2014.)

A reliable research provides accurate, non-random results that can be obtained repeatedly. In order to obtain reliable results, it must be ensured that the sample group is large enough and the respondents represent the target segment. Reliability is also increased with careful and precise data collection, input and processing of results (Tarja Heikkilä ja Edita Publishing Oy 2014.)

The feedback questionnaire for KDC 2016 received 48 responses. This compared to the distribution and the target segment is very little, but the answers can be considered reliable based on the target segment demographics created with the help of the answers. More about this on chapter 3.4. To increase the response rate, there should be an incentive to answer the questionnaire, or create alternate ways of giving feedback that would be considered easier by the target segment. These could for example be social media messaging applications or some other fast means of communication. Also, the visitors should be further encouraged to give feedback on-site.

The validity of the questionnaire is rather good, because it provided the organisers with the answers that were desired and gave a good starting point for overall quality management processes. Next year's improvements would include raising the response rate to increase the reliability. A higher response rate also offers the organiser more tools to improve their events.

3.2 Measuring the quality of KDC

Year 2016 was the first ever year that feedback was collected in any organised way, and therefore this thesis is initiating quality management processes for the event and for the organization. To start the process, a medium of collecting feedback effectively needed to be determined, and also, the most effective distribution channels mapped out to ensure the broadest possible feedback. An online questionnaire was chosen as the medium to collect feedback, because of its possibilities for reuse and modification for future events, and because of fast and easy distribution.

The questionnaire consisted of two separate parts: one general part for all visitors and the other for contestants exclusively. This chapter will inspect the questions targeted for the audience, since they tell the organisation more about how the visitors find the competition.

In appendix 3 however are presented the results of the questions from the dancers' part as well.

In total there were 17 questions, including simple 'yes' and 'no' questions as well as open ended feedback. For the upcoming KDC 2017 a lot of crucial feedback was received in terms of determining what additional program will be offered during the event. The visitors were asked what they would like to see at the upcoming event, as well as what they thought was the best part of 2016 event. Also, a little bit of visitor demographics was mapped out by asking whether visitors were first timers or so to say regulars to the event. Visitors were also asked to evaluate the accessibility of the event and the suitability of the venue.

The target segment for the questionnaire was the visitors of KDC, which means roughly young people ages 15 to 25. Of course, since KDC is a competitive event, exceptions apply which in this case are usually family of the competitors. In Finland, there are several big forums to approach the target segment, mostly in social media like Facebook and Instagram. The questionnaire was distributed to the biggest Finnish k-pop themed Facebook group, Kpop Finland (2,444 members) where majority of the audience is reached. In addition to this the questionnaire was marketed via XpressEvents social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) and the organizing team's personal networks, and sent directly to all participants via email.

The general feedback for all visitors included the following questions:
1. How many times have you visited KDC?
2. Have you ever participated KDC as a dancer?
3. Have you thought of participating the competition this year (2017)?
4. Can you name other k-pop related events in Finland?
5. Have you ever visited k-pop related events in Europe/ other parts of the world? If so, please name them.
6. Which of the following would you like to see in next year's event?
7. How likely would you recommend KDC to your friends?
8. Is KDC an event that is easily accessible?
9. Is KDC an event that attracts people of all ages?
10. How important do you think that KDC is for the development of the k-pop community in Finland?
11. What do you think was the best part of KDC the previous year (2016)?
12. What would you recommend for us to develop for the upcoming event (2017)?

The dancers part included the following questions:
1. Was signing up to the competition effortless?
2. Was the stage suitable for dancing?
3. Were the backstage/dressing room areas appropriate?
4. Did you receive required assistance from our staff?

5. Is there something you would like for us to improve for the upcoming event (2017)?

Out of these questions, the most crucial to develop KDC as an event were "*What do you think was the best part of KDC the previous year (2016)?*" and "*What would you recommend for us to develop for the upcoming event (2017)?*". These two questions directly tell the organiser, XpressEvents, what are the points of improvement and what can perhaps be kept from the previous year. In addition to telling the organiser crucial points of development, the questionnaire also helps to map out the importance of KDC for the audience and for the development of hallyu in Finland.

48 responses were received in three weeks. Despite the sampling being relatively small in comparison to the distribution, the answers can be considered reliable since based on the answers they are all from members of the desired target segment. Hence, the target segment was reached, even if only in small amounts. The challenge is that even though the distribution channels were carefully mapped out and the questionnaire was distributed very broadly, majority of the visitors are very young. They are not interested in writing feedback without an incentive. For next year, if a feedback questionnaire is conducted, there have been thoughts of offering a raffled prize of some sort for all respondents.

3.3   2016 Feedback breakdown

This chapter will more in detail inspect the results and their meaning in terms of quality management and the success of the event. Detailed results of multiple choice questions can be seen from appendix 3. Based on the responses, this chapter will aim to answer the following questions: How does the audience evaluate KDC as an event? How do they rank it among other, equivalent events in Finland? What is the significance of KDC for the audience and for the development of South Korean culture in Finland? As already mentioned in chapter 3.1, these findings and reflections are made based on the questions targeted for the audience.

3.3.1   Audiences opinions on KDC

The audience's opinions on KDC can be inspected from questions 8, 9, 11 and 12. Out of these questions, as mentioned in the introduction of the main chapter, 11 and 12 are the most crucial ones to develop the event. From questions 8 and 9 the attractiveness and accessibility of the event can be determined. Most of the respondents (95,8 %) found the event easily accessible, but the attractiveness of the event divided opinions a little more. The question asked whether KDC attracts people of all ages or not, and 72,9 % found it does. This means that a little over a quarter of all responses claimed it doesn't. Of course,

this questionnaire shows only a small sampling of the whole audience, but still is something to consider. Improvements towards attracting perhaps older visitors have been made, as already stated in chapter 2.4.1.

In addition to being able to determine the points of development with questions 11 and 12, they also tell what was successful in 2016. The visitors mentioned as best things of 2016 the dance performances. Other things that were highlighted was that the amount of dance groups was appropriate compared to the previous year, the spirit of the venue, bubble tea sales and the improved level of the competition. The skill level of dance groups has risen annually, and this year the level of performances was even higher than in previous years. Also, even without quality management XpressEvents had managed to make the right call by reducing the number of teams in the finals. Bubble tea was not included in the 2017 event because of the sponsorship from NOBE Aloe Vera.

Like in any event, there was also room for improvement with KDC 2016. The biggest points of improvement listed were the host, which has been a problem for several past events, scheduling of the day, stage lighting, backstage areas and extra program. The host for 2017 was chosen from within the team to assure commitment, professionality and knowledge of the k-pop scene in Finland. Also, the scheduling of the day improved massively since Xpress Korea, the cultural pre-event was cancelled as per multiple suggestions in the feedback. The day didn't start too early for the dancers, there was plenty of time reserved for the rehearsals and the gaps between the rehearsals and the competition starting was shorter, and this time food was served for the competitors at the venue.

Visitor feedback also mentioned gaps between performances as a minus, since the gaps weren't filled with anything and the host did not do a good job improving this. This year the gaps between the performances were timed precisely, and filled with good quality hosting and audio-visual elements, such as group introduction videos made from their pictures. This way it was also assured that the judges have enough time to evaluate each performance thoroughly.

Extra program for 2017 was reduced, mainly because XpressKorea was cancelled. This year so much effort was put on the competition itself, that was also mentioned as one of the best things of 2016, that not much extra program could be offered. XpressEvents has instead organised several smaller off-season events that mainly focus on some things that the visitors mentioned they liked: Korean food and karaoke. It was found that KDC works better as its own concept, so events related to culture were completely separated. Thus,

the length of the competition day became more reasonable, and the atmosphere of related events more relaxed. In addition to XpressEvents' related events, the supply of Korean culture events has undergone major improvements over the past year, so an event such as Xpress Korea is no more as much needed as KDC.

Some of the comments were concerning matters that unfortunately could not be improved by the organisation. The backstage areas were notably small, but since Gloria is such an important stakeholder and partner for XpressEvents, the time to switch venues was not this year. However, other areas of the venue were improved for the competitors use with small mirrors, like already done at KWF, and added lighting on the hallways. This way also the corridors were available for doing hair and makeup before the venue opened for visitors. Another issue out of XpressEvents' hands was the stage lighting. Since the technicians taking care of the stage lights and music come from the venue, the organisation had no play in how the lights turned out on the stage. Much like in previous years, the groups were requested to submit wishes for the stage lighting, but in the end, it was the technician to make the call on what can be done.

3.3.2   Comparison to other k-pop events in Finland

First, I will look at question 4 from the general part. Because there are so few events in Finland that focus on k-pop or Korea, most answers named the same events. The events identified in the responses and their shares in the total number of responses are shown below as a column chart in figure 5.
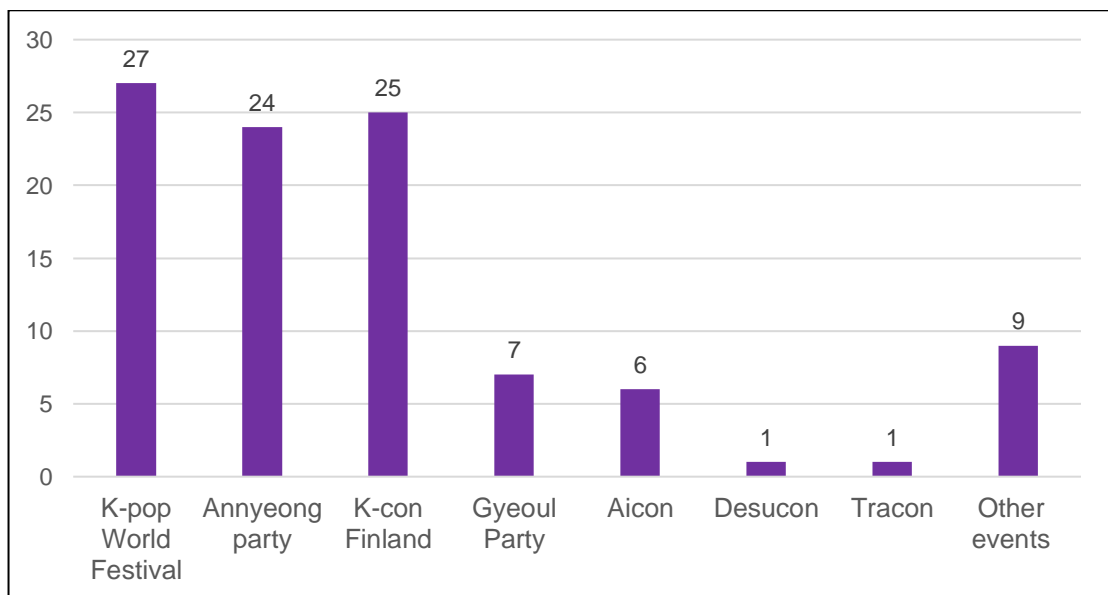

Figure 5. Other k-pop events the respondents identified and how many mentions per event

Although only 48 responses were received, no common denominator was found among the answers. This shows just how small the niche market of k-pop still is in Finland, and how little effort is made on developing it. Of course, if KDC would have been listed as an option also, it would have been the common denominator since all respondents were visitors. The three events to receive most mentions, as can be seen from figure 4, were K-pop World Festival Semi-finals, also organized by XpressEvents, K-con Finland and an event that no longer is organised, at least on a regular basis, Annyeong Party.

Annyeong Party was a k-pop event organized by Jrock Suomi ry, and the of the event idea was to offer parties to k-pop listeners with only k-pop music. Night clubs in Finland don't have any k-pop available on their playlists, so an event like this would be needed even nowadays, just with a different kind of concept. The event was open for visitors of all age due to most of the audience being underage, which on the other hand did not attract older listeners to participate. The event was popular for several years at the turn of the 2010s and experienced a peak in popularity in 2012, but after this was not able to offer enough content for its visitors to keep the event profitable and attractive. It could be seen from discussions at Kpop Finland Facebook group that there was rarely a chance for the audience to influence the content (JrockSuomi ry 2015.)

K-con Finland was first hosted in 2015 by Kpop Suomi ry. The same organisation also hosts Gyeoul Party that was mentioned in the responses. The event focuses mainly on providing South Korean cultural content to young people outside the Helsinki metropolitan area. The event has been organized twice in Turku, and most recently in Tampere. Although K-con Finland is a competing event, it is also very important for the development of South Korean culture in Finland. Also, in August 2017 XpressEvents ry and Kpop Suomi ry officially started working together towards improving the South Korean cultural offering in Finland.

3.3.3   The importance of KDC in developing k-pop culture in Finland

Next question I will inspect in more detail is question number 10 of the general part. In this question, the respondents evaluated the importance of KDC in relation to the development of the k-pop community in Finland from 1 to 5, 1 being not significant at all, and 5 very significant. All the respondents evaluated KDC's influence to be 3 or higher, with 45,8 % of the responses being 5, as seen in figure 6. Therefore, it can be stated based on the answers, that the audience regards KDC as a major influencer on Finnish k-pop culture. Related to this question, it was asked whether the respondents would recommend the

event to their friends or not. Answers were given with the same number scale, all answers being 3 or higher, and 41,7 % of the answers being 5 (very likely).
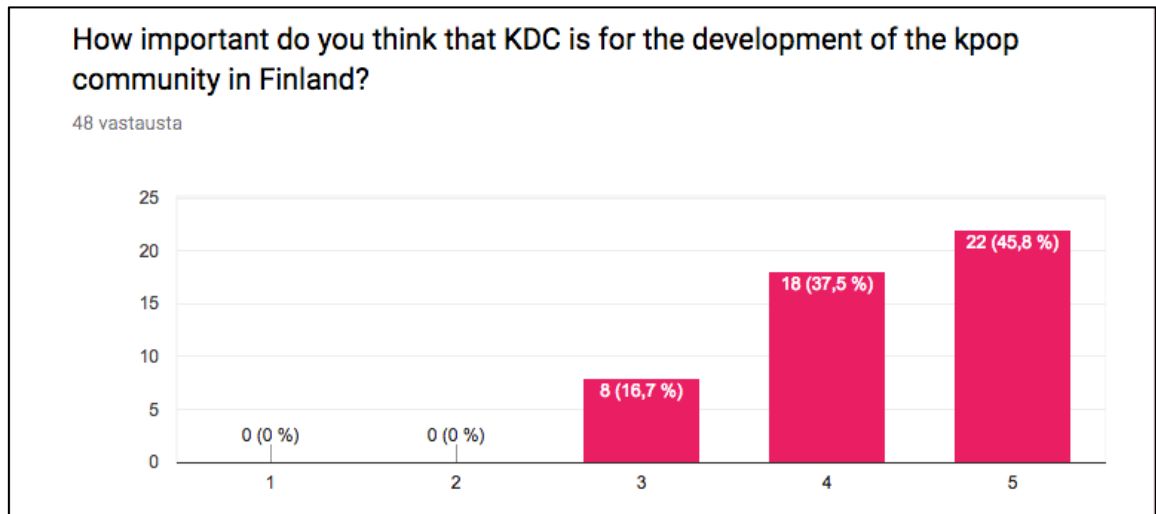

Figure 6. Results of question 10 from KDC 2016 feedback questionnaire.

KDC as an event is a big influencer in the development of k-pop and South Korean culture, because it offers authentic content for the target audience, and strives to become more authentic each year. Moreover, XpressEvents has a big role in developing the cultural offering in Finland, since not only do they organise several k-pop and South Korean events in Finland, but also participate actively in events hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Finland, k-pop concerts and other events related to the theme.

In addition to this, XpressEvents does co-operation with several other organisations in Finland, Kpop Suomi ry as mentioned above, as well as Aicon ry and Tracon ry to improve the South Korea related content in conventions that in the past have focused more on Japan and anime. By showing that they're active, they earn the audiences trust that events and content provided by XpressEvents have been invested in, and that they work hard to improve and learn more about the culture.

3.4   Target segment demographics

As XpressEvents specializes in hosting South Korea and k-pop related events, the target audience consists of young, Finnish k-pop fans between ages 15 and 25. Because the community in Finland is not too big, the target audience is easy to reach thanks to existing active forums in social media. In addition to targeting K-pop fans, XpressEvents also aims to make their events and especially KDC attractive to friends and relatives of the competitors, and other people outside the fan base.

Based on the answers, the target segment was reached, even if only in small amounts. The challenge is that even though the distribution channels were all the right ones and the questionnaire was distributed very broadly, the target segment is very young. They are not interested in writing feedback without an incentive. For next year, if a feedback questionnaire is conducted, there have been thoughts of offering a raffled prize of some sort for all respondents.

Of course, the questionnaire might not reach the older members of the audience like parents and relatives, who then might be more open to writing feedback about the event. Ways to improve the distribution will be considered for next year to ensure that all age groups have an equal chance to give feedback. Also, according to Vallo and Häyrinen (2016, 226) the response rate can be easily improved with ensuring that the questionnaire is easy to answer immediately, the questions are clear, it's possible to answer anonymously and it is clearly stated how long it takes to answer the questionnaire. The more people answer the questionnaire, the better an organisation can map out their strengths and weaknesses. Also, the reliability of a survey increases with the volume of responses.

Most of the 48 respondents (75 %) had visited the event twice or more, which means KDC has an existing client base. This result also adds to the reliability of the answers, since the respondents are familiar with the concept already. However, since 75 % of the respondents were regular visitors, that leaves only a quarter of all respondents to be first timers. For 2017, plans for more effective marketing also to new customers were made. All sponsors were requested to promote XpressEvents and KDC in their social media, and leaflets were distributed all over Helsinki to libraries and other public facilities which might reach the right audience as explained in chapter 2.4.1. In the future, marketing towards new customers will be done with an even bigger emphasis, keeping in mind of course the existing client base.

3.5 Quality management in other large-scale events in Finland

For the sake of this thesis I also chose to do research two other events in Finland and how quality management is done at them. Both concepts are Finnish, and the events are much older and larger than KDC. The events I chose for this chapter are Assembly, a local area network computer gaming party, and Desucon, hobby event for Japanese animation and comic strips, anime and manga enthusiasts. More about these two events will be explained in their separate subchapters. Majority of the information used in the following subchapters was obtained by interviews with team managers of each events,

and the interviews can be seen in full in appendix 4. Outside sources are indicated separately.

3.5.1 Assembly

Assembly Organizing is non-profit volunteer organisation consisting of 200+ volunteers. The organisation hosts two events annually, Assembly Summer and Assembly Winter. The first event was hosted already back in 1992 by demo groups and individuals from the demo scene, group of computer enthusiasts creating various kinds of software and graphic demos as a hobby. Since its origins, Assembly has been a catalyst to the Finnish game industry, and the organisers have influenced in the birth of Rovio, Supercell and many more gaming companies in Finland (1999-2016 Assembly Organising.)

For this chapter I interviewed Tatu "dracheic" Patronen, an Assembly pioneer. Nowadays Patronen's role in the organisation is to run the operations of the info team and ticket sales, which both are very visitor oriented sections: Patronen's role in the organisation offers him a thorough understanding of the quality management processes of Assembly, and now based on the interview I will inspect them more in detail.

From the first Assembly that was held at a school centre in Kauniainen, the event has grown to a forum for thousands of gamers to gather together to celebrate the gaming industry and of course computers. Last August marked the 25th anniversary for Assembly Summer. The total number of visitors ranked up to over 10,000 with 3400 computer places and 8000 daytime visitors. The number of visitors is monitored during each event through ticket sales. For Assembly monitoring ticket sales is rather simple, since tickets are sold through an online service, but with KDC it is done manually which makes tracking a little harder.

Being such a large-scale event, quality management is a big issue. Consistent and good quality in an event keeps the customers coming back. Of course, in addition to the quality of the event, the program has its own impact on this. According to Patronen (16 August 2017), the number of visitors is somewhat stabilized, and the same people come again each time, since assembly is also a social event and a forum to meet friends that have been made on the Internet.

Feedback is the primary source when developing the event and its quality. It is obtained from visitors, sponsors and organizers. Feedback from all parties is collected digitally. For example, visitors are sent a visitor survey after each event and they also can give feedback openly via email. In addition to collecting feedback, Assembly Organizing also

follows industry trends: what other events are doing and what can be learned from them. This is also something that XpressEvents does, and they try to participate as many events as possible even outside of k-pop and Asia. Assembly, much like KDC, aims to develop the event a little further every year.

Also, important for the development of quality are innovative ideas, people making them happen and, to some extent, budget. During the event, each team is responsible for their own duties and making sure they are implemented well. This unfortunately means that some teams are constantly monitored, some are tracked a bit worse. The event has been organized for 25 years, which means there is an established concept and way of doing things, so new problems are easy to spot.

3.5.2 Desucon

Desucon is a Finnish event dedicated to Japanese animation and comic strips, anime and manga enthusiasts. The organization behind Desucon, Kehittyvien conien Suomi ry, has been organizing its main event since 2009, and over the years also three related events have been added to the portfolio: DesuTalks, DesuCruise and Desucon Frostbite. Desucon Frostbite is the most significant out of these, and in 2018 it is held for the sixth time. The events are aimed at slightly older fans, and in February 2018, Frostbite is allowed for adults only for the fourth time. The event was originally built on a friend-to-friend basis, from an anime enthusiast to another, much like KDC (KcS <3 sinua 2017.)

For this chapter I interviewed Teppo "isperia" Suominen, the main organizer of Desucon for the last three years. For the upcoming year, he will be leaving the main responsibility for another person. His thorough knowledge and insight for this event offered me a good overview of the quality management processes of Desucon. From this point on the process will be inspected more in detail based on the interview.

Visitor numbers for each event are large, with the main event attracting 2900 visitors and Frostbite around 2700. The most accurate measuring tool for visitor numbers is the ticket sales system (number of tickets sold). The number of cashed in tickets are actively monitored and checked in comparison to sold or pre-ordered tickets. According to Suominen (4 August 2017) there are usually about 100-200 no shows. Biggest influencer in the ticket sales is the guest of honour, but regardless of this the event is usually sold out. In addition to the guest, special program reflects to the visitor amounts. Desucon has strongly profiled as an event with an emphasis on the program during its years of operation.

Feedback from Desucon is collected digitally; the questionnaire is distributed through Desucon website and collected anonymously. Also feedback from KDC 2016 was collected anonymously. The questionnaire data is available for the core team consisting of 30 people. Information about the results is given out when requested. A lot of open ended questions are featured in the feedback questionnaire. In addition to collecting feedback with a questionnaire, Desucon has always had a strong social media presence. First social media integrated for the organisation's use was an IRC chat room, and after advertisements on various social media platforms have been posted actively. Finnish anime-enthusiasts prefer Twitter over other channels, and therefore it is the official social media channel of Desucon.

Visitor feedback is an essential part of Desucon's quality management. Feedback is also collected from volunteers. Based on feedback received from both visitors and volunteers the core team determines what needs to be improved. If no feedback is received, the event can't develop. Feedback is also important for XpressEvents, and like in Desucon's case it is collected from both visitors and volunteers, but only visitor feedback is documented. Volunteer and team member feedback is collected in breakdown sessions as more of a discussion, rather than in a written form.

Desucon aims to create an environment of sharing and a connection with the audience, and emphasize that they can always send feedback. Also, because the target audience knows best what they want, suggestions of the visitors are highly valued. They try to take a lot of contact to the audience, and emphasize interaction with them. Visitors are encouraged to engage contact with the organiser, and the aim is to always answer all questions and concerns. An open and direct style of communication is implemented as much as possible.

The key to keep the quality of the volunteer work consistent from event to event is to try to commit people to the organisation. When working in multiple events they might also notice themselves, what should be improved and what could be done better and more effectively. Volunteers working at this year's KDC were all volunteers from previous events, and it is very likely that the same volunteers will come to work for the next events also. Desucon tries to engage their crew members and create an open environment for ideas. In addition to this, every team head is responsible of their own section and keeps an eye on their team of volunteers. They aim to make sure that things are done the way that has been agreed. Since the whole organisation and all events are run on a volunteer basis, the wellbeing of volunteers is being monitored through the whole event. According

to Suominen (4 August 2017), it is made sure that everyone is having fun even though they are working.

For on-site quality management, it is emphasised that the info desk is always open and visitors can always contact them. At KDC there is no separate info desk, since both the event and the venue are rather small. The staff can be easily found in case of a problem on-site. Low escalation model is implemented at Desucon, which means that if something goes wrong and there are problems with customers or volunteers, the first thing to do is not panic but contact the team head or directly the main organiser.

4   Discussion

This thesis has offered the reader a detailed introduction to XpressEvents' event concept, K-pop Dance Cover Competition. In addition to being a crucial tool to develop the planning process of the event, it has also a significant meaning in initiating the quality management practices of the said event, meaning the feedback questionnaire that was conducted. The quality management practices of KDC and XpressEvents are at a very early stage, so collecting feedback with an online questionnaire is the first and only step so far done for quality management in the organisation.

Starting with basics of event management, this thesis has in detail inspected the organising process of KDC and recorded it for future usage. The process was not documented anywhere before this thesis, and the feedback questionnaire for KDC 2016 was the first of its kind.

Most important thing to remember about collecting feedback is to respond to it, and act accordingly. Feedback becomes useless if it doesn't cause any action. In the case of XpressEvents, feedback was confirmed as received both at the end of the survey and separately in social media after closing the questionnaire. The respondents were also thanked for valuable tips for future events. The feedback from 2016 caused a lot of action already for the earlier event, KWF in May, and from that event also some of the things that were tested based on the feedback were improved further for KDC.

Compared to the two larger events, Assembly and Desucon, KDC is still in an early stage when it comes to quality management. Both larger events have established a mean of digital distribution for feedback forms, and they have a strong social media presence to back up the process. XpressEvents is still working on improving and strengthening their social media accounts, and this will surely improve when k-pop grows as a trend in Finland.

The digital distribution of feedback questionnaires is implemented also with KDC, but cannot be done to the same extent as by Assembly or Desucon because there is no tool for collecting the visitors' contact information. Tickets are sold manually with cash only at the doors. Ticket sales electronically have also been considered, but so far it has been found to be too expensive for the organization. This would allow collecting feedback more effectively directly from the visitors like Assembly and Desucon are doing.

In this year's KDC some spoken feedback was also collected, but it was it recorded in any organised way. As mentioned in chapter 3, spoken feedback can be considered more reliable and comprehensive than written since expressions and the tone of voice can give out actual reactions. Also, since the target segment is rather hard to reach online, as can be seen in chapter 3.2, it could be more beneficial for XpressEvents to collect spoken feedback on-site like suggested in chapter 3.1.1. For the future, it could be considered that feedback would be collected with small interviews, and recorded for further use. Questionnaires could then be a secondary mean of collecting feedback.

However, from the feedback questionnaire that was conducted for KDC 2016, some important conclusions can be made to answer the initial questions presented in chapter 1.3. The audience evaluates KDC as an event that is easy to access, and the majority finds that it attracts people of all ages. KDC is an event that creates unity among k-pop fans in Finland, and it is easy to enjoy with friends. KDC is one of the most popular k-pop events in Finland along with K-con Finland and K-pop World Festival Semi-finals. It has a great significance in improving the k-pop community in Finland, as majority of respondents stated. In the future, KDC will continue to improve as an event for not only k-pop fans, but for all people to improve the knowledge about k-pop outside Asia.

The biggest learning points of this thesis have been to recognise the different phases of event organising, and to break the process of organising KDC into smaller pieces. Also, writing this thesis has helped to recognise the most effective practices in marketing and collecting feedback in relation to XpressEvents' target segment. In the future, this thesis will be an effective tool to use for the planning process of next events, and can easily be used to look back into what was done the previous year. This thesis can also be helpful to future members of the organisation, and help them get a basic understanding of the concept.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Pre-event schedule for KDC

Xpress Events

ma 5. kesä 2017

Koko päivä   Kokous
ma 5. kesä 2017 - ti 6. kesä 2017

ma 19. kesä 2017

Koko päivä   FB-tapahtuman julkistus
ma 19. kesä 2017 - ti 20. kesä 2017

ma 26. kesä 2017

Koko päivä   Ilmoittautuminen alkaa
ma 26. kesä 2017 - ti 27. kesä 2017

to 13. heinä 2017

Koko päivä   Kokous
to 13. heinä 2017 - pe 14. heinä 2017

su 23. heinä 2017

Koko päivä   Ilmoittautuminen loppuu
su 23. heinä 2017 - ma 24. heinä 2017

ti 1. elo 2017

Koko päivä   Finalistien julkistus
ti 1. elo 2017 - ke 2. elo 2017

to 17. elo 2017

Koko päivä   Kokous
to 17. elo 2017 - pe 18. elo 2017

su 27. elo 2017

Koko päivä   Markkinointimateriaalien DL ryhmät
su 27. elo 2017 - ma 28. elo 2017

ke 13. syys 2017

Koko päivä   Korea House tapaaminen
ke 13. syys 2017 - to 14. syys 2017

to 14. syys 2017

Koko päivä   Kokous
to 14. syys 2017 - pe 15. syys 2017

su 17. syys 2017

Koko päivä   Mp3 ja valot DL ryhmät
su 17. syys 2017 - ma 18. syys 2017

ma 18. syys 2017

       Koko päivä   Sponsoriesittely: EF
       | ma 18. syys 2017 - ti 19. syys 2017

ke 20. syys 2017

       Koko päivä   LIVEmainos
       | ke 20. syys 2017 - to 21. syys 2017

to 21. syys 2017

       Koko päivä   Sponsoriesittely: Luca
       | to 21. syys 2017 - pe 22. syys 2017

la 23. syys 2017

       Koko päivä   Sponsoriesittely: Korea House
       | la 23. syys 2017 - su 24. syys 2017

su 24. syys 2017

       Koko päivä   Kisajärkkä/Bändijulkistus iive CRUSH
       | su 24. syys 2017 - ma 25. syys 2017

       Koko päivä   Ryhmä1 esittely
       | su 24. syys 2017 - ma 25. syys 2017

       Koko päivä   Tanssiryhmien esittelyt alkavat!
       | su 24. syys 2017 - ma 25. syys 2017

ma 25. syys 2017

       Koko päivä   Ryhmä2 esittely
       | ma 25. syys 2017 - ti 26. syys 2017

       Koko päivä   Yleisökisa 1
       | ma 25. syys 2017 - ti 26. syys 2017

ti 26. syys 2017

       Koko päivä   Ryhmä3 esittely
       | ti 26. syys 2017 - ke 27. syys 2017

       Koko päivä   Sponsoriesittely: KoreaBox
       | ti 26. syys 2017 - ke 27. syys 2017

ke 27. syys 2017

       Koko päivä   Ryhmä4 esittely
       | ke 27. syys 2017 - to 28. syys 2017

to 28. syys 2017

       Koko päivä   Ryhmä5 esittely
       | to 28. syys 2017 - pe 29. syys 2017

■ Koko päivä   Yleiskatsaus sponsoreista
| to 28. syys 2017 - pe 29. syys 2017

pe 29. syys 2017

■ Koko päivä   Ryhmä6 esittely
| pe 29. syys 2017 - la 30. syys 2017

la 30. syys 2017

■ Koko päivä   Ryhmä7 esittely
| la 30. syys 2017 - su 1. loka 2017

su 1. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Ryhmä8 esittely
| su 1. loka 2017 - ma 2. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Yleisökisan 1 voittajan julkaisu
| su 1. loka 2017 - ma 2. loka 2017

ma 2. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Kirpparimyyjäilmo auki
| ma 2. loka 2017 - ti 3. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Ryhmä9 esittely
| ma 2. loka 2017 - ti 3. loka 2017

ti 3. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Ryhmä10 esittely
| ti 3. loka 2017 - ke 4. loka 2017

ke 4. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Rymä11 esittely
| ke 4. loka 2017 - to 5. loka 2017

to 5. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Kokous
| to 5. loka 2017 - pe 6. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Ryhmä12 esittely
| to 5. loka 2017 - pe 6. loka 2017

pe 6. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   KoreaHouse promo muistutus
| pe 6. loka 2017 - la 7. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Ryhmä13 esittely
| pe 6. loka 2017 - la 7. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Tuomarikokous
pe 6. loka 2017 - la 7. loka 2017

la 7. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Ryhmä14 esittely
la 7. loka 2017 - su 8. loka 2017

su 8. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Ryhmä15 esittely
su 8. loka 2017 - ma 9. loka 2017

ma 9. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Tuomariesittely
ma 9. loka 2017 - ti 10. loka 2017

ti 10. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Kokous
ti 10. loka 2017 - ke 11. loka 2017

pe 13. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   Kirpparimyyjäilmo kiinni
pe 13. loka 2017 - la 14. loka 2017

la 14. loka 2017

■ Koko päivä   KDC!!
la 14. loka 2017 - su 15. loka 2017

Figure 4. KoreaBox K-Snack Box marketing graphics

Figure 3. NOBE Aloe Vera official marketing materials

Figure 5. Luca x KDC logo

Figure 6. Korea House x KDC logo

Figure 7. EF Education First x KD logo

Appendix 3. KDC 2016 feedback questionnaire results for multiple choice questions
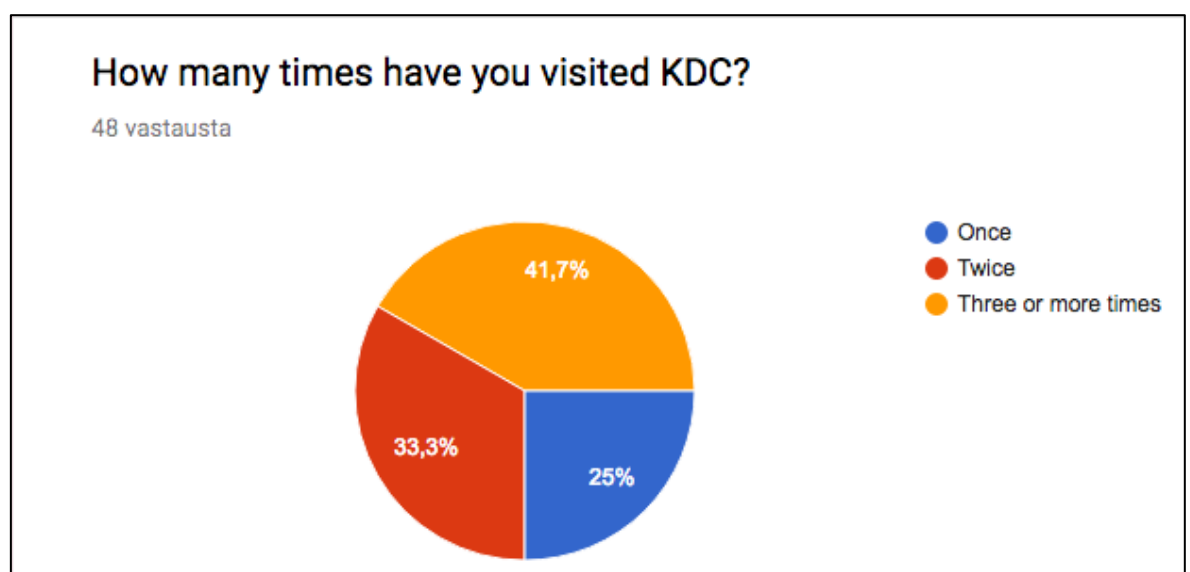
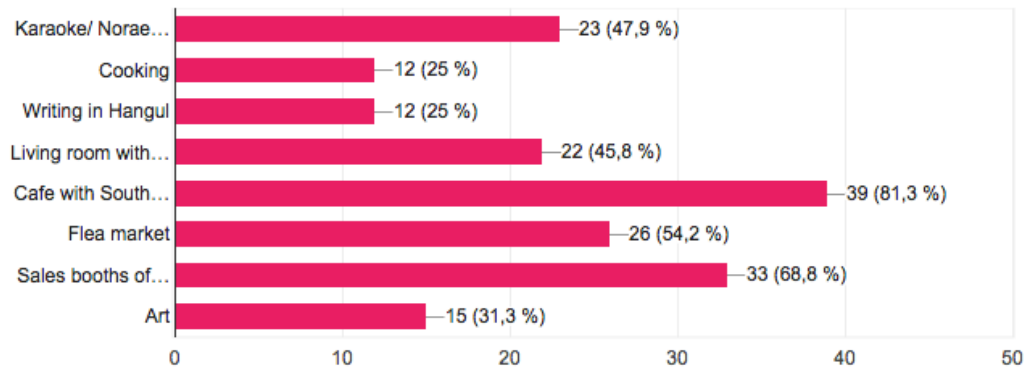# Have you ever participated KDC as a dancer?

48 vastausta

- Yes
- No

39,6%

60,4%
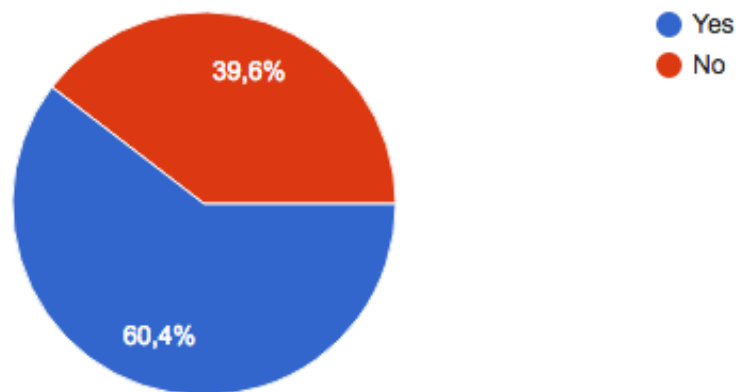
Have you thought of participating the competition this year (2017)?

48 vastausta

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

22,9%

10,4%

66,7%
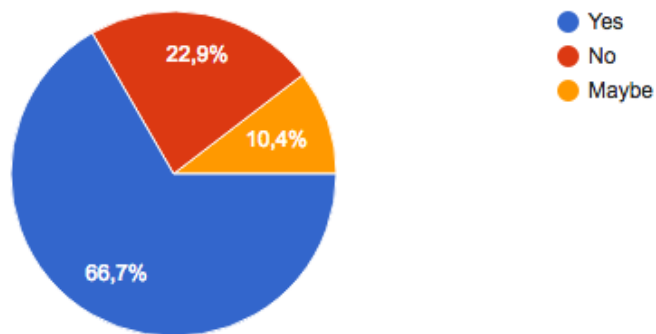
Which of the following would you like to see in next year's event?

48 vastausta

Option	Count (%)
Karaoke/ Norae...	23 (47,9 %)
Cooking	12 (25 %)
Writing in Hangul	12 (25 %)
Living room with...	22 (45,8 %)
Cafe with South...	39 (81,3 %)
Flea market	26 (54,2 %)
Sales booths of...	33 (68,8 %)
Art	15 (31,3 %)

How likely would you recommend KDC to your friends?

48 vastausta
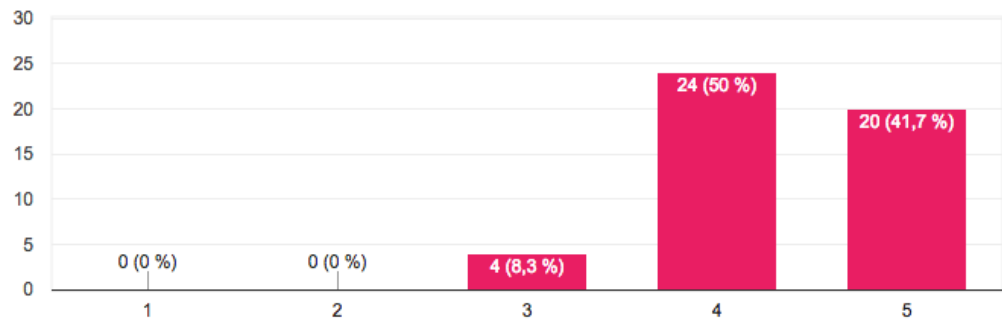
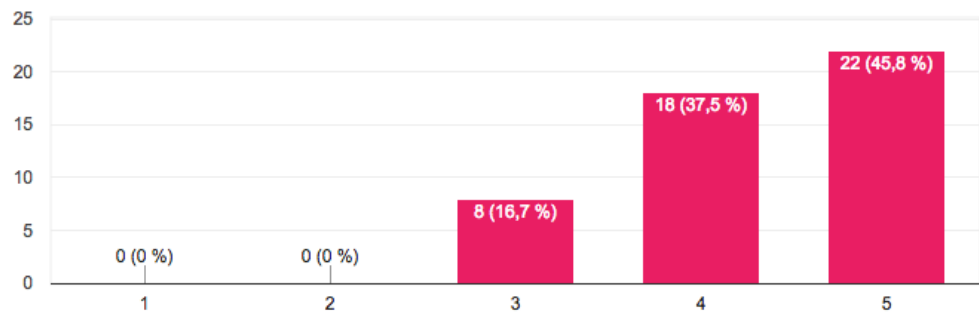## Is KDC an event that is easily accessible?

48 vastausta
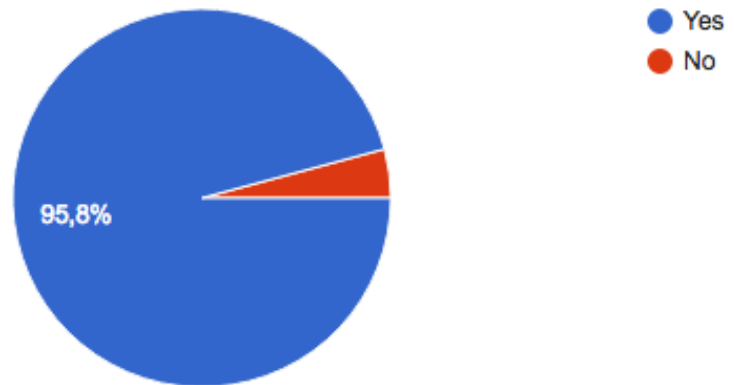
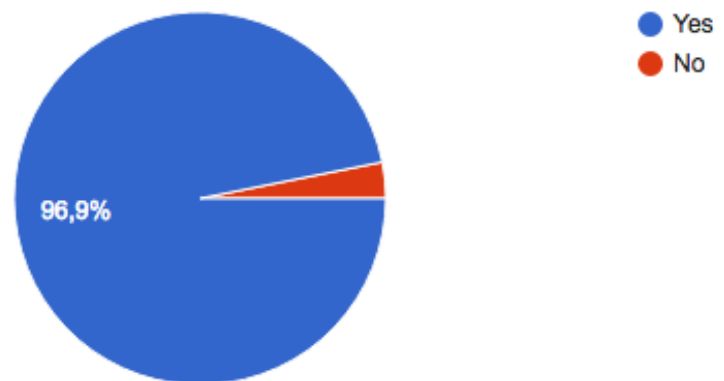## Is KDC an event that attracts people of all ages?

48 vastausta
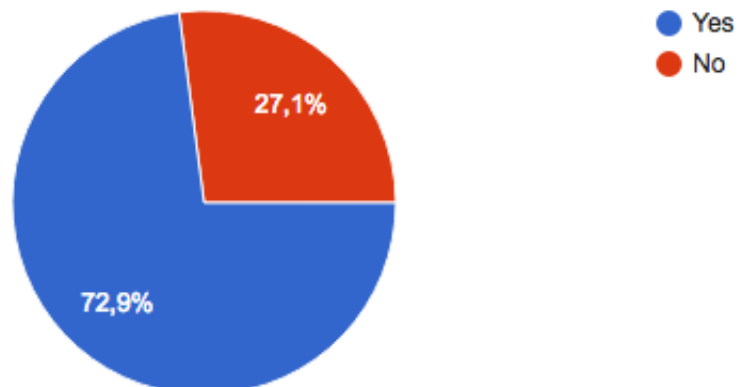
How important do you think that KDC is for the development of the kpop community in Finland?
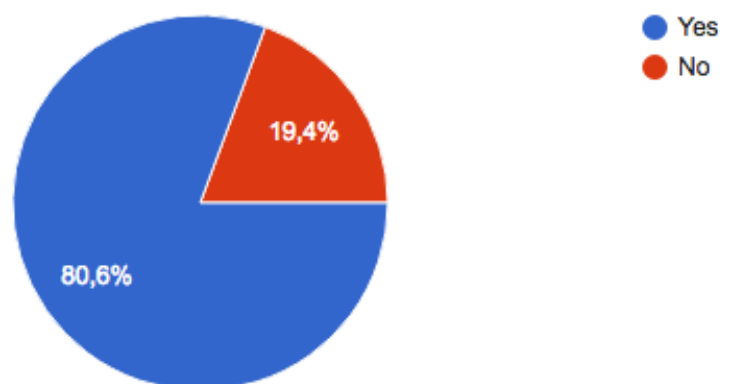
48 vastausta

Was signing up to the competition effortless?
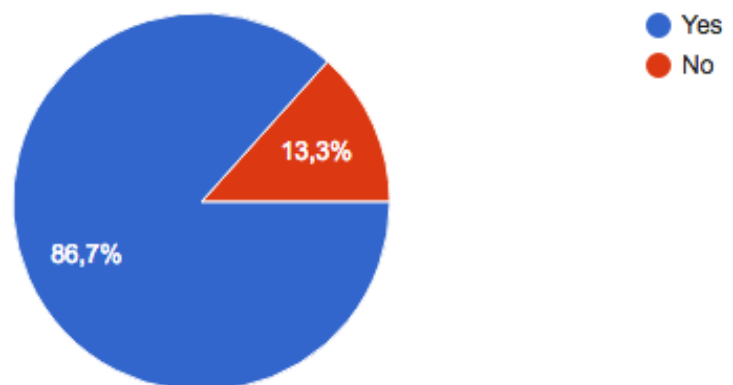
32 vastausta

- Yes
- No

96,9%

Were the arrangements at the venue appropriate?

31 vastausta

- Yes
- No

19,4%

80,6%

Was the stage suitable for dancing?

30 vastausta
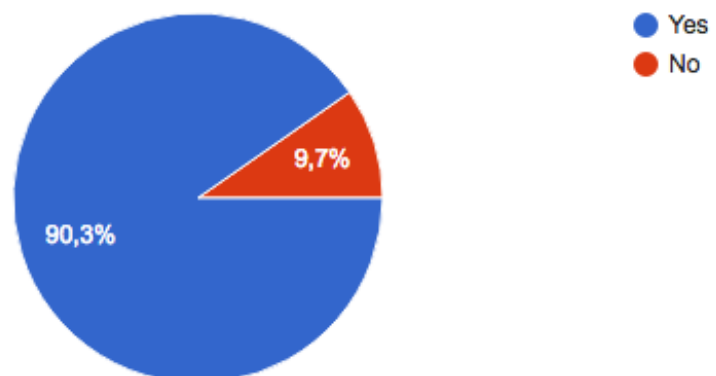
Yes
No

13,3%
86,7%

Were the backstage/dressing room areas appropriate?

29 vastausta

Yes
No

37,9%
62,1%
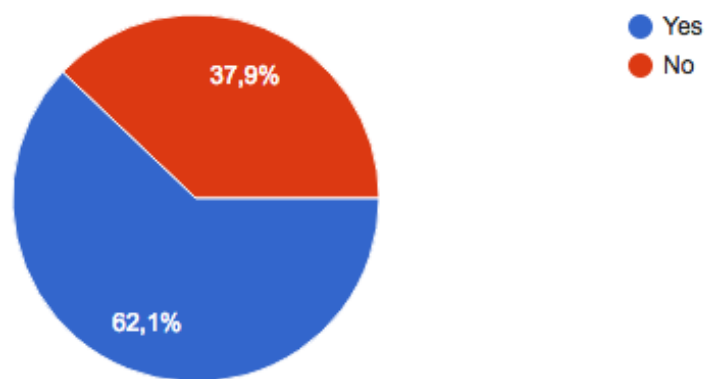
Did you receive required assistance from our staff?

31 vastausta

Yes
No

9,7%
90,3%

Appendix 4. Interview on quality management with Desucon and Assembly Org. representatives

1. Which year was the first Assembly/ Desucon arranged?
2. How many visitors do you have per event (approx.)?
3. How do you monitor the number of visitors?
4. What are essential factors with the number of visitors/ what affects them negatively or positively?
5. Do you collect visitor feedback from your events? If yes, is it digital or manual? Where do you get distribution info for the digital form?
6. If you do not collect feedback, do you use other means to collect visitors' opinions and experiences?
7. How have the technical requirements of your event developed during the last 3 years?
8. How do you improve and develop the quality of your event?
9. What matters are important considering the quality development of Assembly/Desucon?
10. How is the quality monitored and managed during the event? What do you do when problems occur? Who has the responsibility if e.g. technical problems occur?
11. How is the quality of the employees of the event managed? How big of a meaning does volunteer work have in your event?
12. Your event has a lot of sponsors. How do you create sponsor deals with different companies? In what ways do you improve co-operation with different companies and stakeholders?
13. What things do you want to develop for the next event?

Teppo "isperia" Suominen - Desucon

1. First Desucon was organised in 2009
2. Summer Desucon 2017 (main event) attracts 2900 visitors at most, Frostbite (winter event) 2700. Usually it's a full house. Some irregularities do occur, after adding an age restriction to the event (k-18) (frost 2014, desu 2015, frost 2017) the event was not entirely sold out, but visitor amounts have been big each year. 2009 ja 2010 visitor numbers have been maxed out due to major demand.
3. The most accurate measuring tool is the ticket sales system (number of tickets sold), the number of cashed in tickets are actively monitored and checked in comparison to sold tickets. Usually there are about 100-200 drop outs/no shows.
4. If someone gets sick, they of course won't show up. Biggest influencer/ single variable is the guest of honour. Regardless event is usually sold out. With an attractive/interesting guest it is only easier to sell out. In addition, special program reflects to the visitor amounts. Desucon has strongly profiled as an event with an emphasis on the program.
5. We collect visitor feedback digitally; the questionnaire is distributed through Desucon website and is collected anonymously. Nowadays the questionnaire data is available for the team heads/ core team (30 people). Information is dealt out when requested. Distribution and breakdown of answers is mostly automatised based on visitor characteristics. A lot of open ended questions are featured in the feedback questionnaire.
6. In addition to collecting feedback Desucon has always had a strong social media presence. The event was originally built on a friend-to-friend basis, from an anime enthusiast to another (much like KDC!). First social media integrated was IRC chat room, and after that flash mobs have been arranged, and advertisements on Ylilauta have been posted, as well as on other social media platforms. Desucon has always been present in social media, Finnish anime-enthusiasts prefer Twitter over other channels (also, Twitter analytics recognise the visitor basis, and is therefore the official social media of Desucon). We try to take a lot of contact to our audience, and we try to emphasize interaction with them a lot. We encourage our visitors to contact us, and we aim to always answer their questions and concerns. An open and direct communication is implemented as much as possible.

7. There's no imminent need to add anything, but we are always eager to have and do more. Our team of volunteers includes many talents and professionals of different areas of business. We always try to make cool ideas come true, which we also have regarding technical requirements. We try to develop for example our live streams of the event continuously to better serve our crowd, while experimenting with modern technology. We have also made improvements in the av-section. If someone comes up with a cool thing to try or to further develop, we always try to make it happen. When it comes to actual technical requirements/ necessities, they haven't increased in the past few years, but improvements can always be made to ticket sales and flea market systems. Also, webpages will be renewed the upcoming year.

8. Visitor feedback is an essential part of quality management, and in addition feedback from volunteers is collected. Based on these a pool of matters is made in order to differentiate what needs to be improved. The core team has very little fluctuation, and we try to meet at least twice during off-season to think about solutions for problems/ways to improve from last event. The key is to try to commit people to the organisation, and to do certain tasks so that they could notice also themselves, what should be improved and what could be done better/ in a unique way/ more effectively. Key words commitment, engagement and minimising fluctuation. We try to engage our crew and create an open environment for ideas, all ideas are taken in and considered if they could be implemented. No one has the right to turn down new ideas. We try to do as may cool ideas from anime friend to another as possible, and of course keep it fun for everyone.

9. Feedback. If no feedback is received, we can't develop our event. We can't just go on a hunch. It's important to create an environment of sharing and a connection with the audience, and emphasize that they can always send us feedback all the time. We also take suggestions from our visitors a lot, because the target audience knows best what they want.

10. A few people are constantly monitoring social media channels (isperia and marketing head). On-site it is emphasised that info is always open and you can always contact them. Low escalation model: if something goes awry, the first thing to do is not panic but contact your own team head or directly to the main organiser. Contact engaged directly, and the matter is forwarded straight away. Problems are taken care and situations interfered if necessary, for example regarding age restrictions (someone too young tries to get in). We try to meet the customer halfway and control customer satisfaction also in problematic situations.

11. Every team head is responsible of their own section and keeps an eye on their team of volunteers. They aim to make sure that things are done the way that has been agreed. In conflict situations (no-shows etc.) First point of contact is the team head, if they cannot be reached then the president. Through the whole event we try to stay on track of the volunteers' wellbeing, are they satisfied and so on. We want to make sure that everyone is having fun even though their working. The whole organisation is run on volunteer work!

12. Companies are scouted and contacted on a need basis, if something is needed we will find a company who offers what we need (extra tech etc.). For example, regarding afterparty we have contacted bars, nowadays it is easy and things are done on routine. Contracts are made according Finnish organisation laws, when contract breaches and disputes are easier to solve.

13. The visual elements, external communications and graphical look of the event should be developed and updated. Now it has been the same for many years. 10th anniversary in 2019 would require some extra too.

Tatu "dracheic" Patronen, Head of Info desk, Assembly org
1. The first Assembly was held in 1992 at Kasavuori School Center in Kauniainen.
2. The last event had 3400 computer places and a total of 8000 visitors
3. The number of visitors is monitored through ticket sales

4. The program has its own impact, but very largely the number of visitors is stabilized, the same people will come again and again. Assembly is a social event, that is, the event will be mainly to meet friends that have been met on the Internet.
5. We collect feedback electronically. Visitors are sent a visitor survey after each event and they also have the opportunity to give feedback via email openly.
6. Not applicable
7. Technology has not developed much, but the requirements for technology has grown to double in three years.
8. Feedback is the primary source when developing the event and its quality. It is obtained from visitors, sponsors and organizers. Second, we are also following what other events are doing and trying to learn from them. Every year we aim to develop the event bit by bit.
9. Important for the development of quality are innovative ideas, people making them happen and, to some extent, budget.
10. Each team is responsible for its own quality management, some teams are constantly monitored, some are tracked a bit worse. The event has been organized for 25 years, which is why new problems will not be missed. Teams (crews) are responsible for their own duties and making sure they are implemented well.
11. The quality of the volunteers in the event is not particularly monitored. We have a lot of new ones who do not necessarily know what they are doing, but if you are excited about what you're doing and learning new things, you'll learn quickly. Help is always available and you can ask anyone in the ASM org for help.
12. Sponsors and partners are provided through networks. With subcontractors, we have quite specific contracts. With Sponsors, we have a variety of sponsor packages to choose from. Co-operation is being developed actively through a sponsorship team.
13. The event is to be further expanded. This year, board games were added to the program, earlier years there has been e.g. a cosplay contest, probably will be implemented into the program again. Esports is growing and even more of it will be seen in the event.