

“TULEVAISUUDEN TYÖ” Event

Planning and implementation report

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Degree programme Degree programme for multilingual assistants	
Report/thesis title “TULEVAISUUDEN TYÖ” Event, planning and implementation report	Number of pages and appendix pages 17 + 2
<p>The idea behind this thesis was to plan and implement the event “TULEVAISUUDEN TYÖ – Tradenomin osaaminen kunnossa”, in collaboration with Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and The Union of Professional Business Graduates in Finland. The purpose of the event was to present Haaga-Helia’s selection of studies to business graduates, to help further expand their skills.</p> <p>This report consists of the basis of event management, with a purpose to help future planning of this particular event in the following years and holds the basic keypoints of an event management process that can be used as a guideline for any following events similar to this event, in size or content.</p> <p>The planning of this event started in March 2017 and the event itself was carried out in May 2017. The event was in its entirety a successful event, that reached the goal that was hoped for. The event received mainly positive feedback from the participants, and valuable opinions that can be used to make following events even better.</p>	
Keywords Event planning, event management, practice based thesis, multilingual management assistant	

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1 Introduction

I am a student in the degree program for multilingual management assistants and the idea for this thesis was provided by my thesis advisor Eija Kärnä, whose class I had taken in the spring of 2017. Eija explained the purpose of the event to me and said they wanted someone to work as an assistant at the event and write a report of it. At the point, I did not yet know what my thesis subject would be but after analyzing different methods I had already decided that my thesis should be a practice-based thesis.

The time of the event and the time of my thesis course came together quite perfectly and event planning had been something of interest to me since my studies in vocational college. This subject felt like a great opportunity.

1.1 Basis of the thesis and main objectives

The event gives an opportunity for the bachelor of business administration alumni to further advance their knowledge, by introducing the selection of studies that Haaga-Helia University of Applied sciences offers.

This thesis is a practice-based thesis, meaning its research is based on an implementation of an idea such as instructions, guidance, organizing or rationalizing. (Vilkka & Airaksinen, 2003.)

This thesis consists of the following parts: introduction to the event and its purposes, the ideation of the event, implementation and the evaluation of the event. The purpose of this thesis is to plan and carry out the first launch of the event "Tulevaisuuden työ – trade-nomin osaaminen kunnossa" in collaboration with Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and The Union of Professional Business Graduates in Finland. The event gives an opportunity for the bachelor of business administration alumni, to further advance their knowledge in the field by introducing the selection of studies that Haaga-Helia University of Applied sciences offers.

TRAL The Union of Professional Business Graduates in Finland, established in 1996 is a trade union representing its members, that consist of bachelors and masters of business administration. The trade union has approximately 30,000 members and is a part of Akava trade union confederation.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences is a university of applied sciences that educates students in business administration, journalism, sports and leisure management and hospitality management. Haaga-Helia teaches both bachelors and masters programs, as well as vocational teacher education and open university programs. Haaga-Helia's student count is approximately 10,500 and campuses are located in Helsinki: Pasila, Haaga and Malmi, and in Porvoo and Vierumäki.

This event is meant to be an annual event, because of its great marketing potential directly to the target group. The purpose of this process is to help tell the organizer in theory, the process of organizing a successful marketing event, so that the following events have an even greater success and popularity.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The first chapter of this thesis is the introduction that introduces the reader to the thesis and its purposes.

The second chapter explains the theory behind event management, event planning and explanation of an event manager's main duties. It also includes a traditional event management process.

The third chapter explains the ideation process and the tools used as a part of the process, where we go through the preparation for the event, on to how the event should be organized and the after measures that should be taken thereafter. The event will be successful, when all the matters have been carefully considered and planned.

With a SWOT analysis we go through the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats of the event, to evaluate the starting point and possible outcome of the event.

The third chapter explains the duties of an assistant during the event, such as becoming familiar with the subjects presented at the event and composition of the feedback surveys.

2 Event planning

Event planning has developed far in the past decade. Since the amount of professionals in the field has increased, nowadays there are various companies specialized in planning all kinds of events from company events to children's birthday parties. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2014.)

The quality of events has increased together with professionalism in the field of event management. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2014.)

Today, events are not only being organized for the fun of event planning, since organizations have realized the benefits of input when carefully planning and implementing an event. Customers are also more careful these days of which event they take part in. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2014.)

An event is a very delicate and unique media and when organizing something, it should be carried out carefully. An event should be thought of as a unique chance to meet another person, whether it is a customer, business partner or member of an association. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2014.)

A common goal for all events is that the guests are left with a positive image of the the company or people organizing the event. (Conway 2011.)

2.1 Event management

Event management is a goal-directed operation, that helps build company image and the brand of their products and services. Each event should have a specific target audience and a well thought out goal. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2014.)

Types of events can vary from conferences to charity events, but all events have certain amount of common requirements. What these events have in common is that there is an event manager, a goal and an audience. This is not limited to the size of the event. In all types of events there is always someone that plans and implements. (Conway 2011.)

An event manager is the person who has superior authority, who confirms decisions made for the success of an event. The event manager's duty is also to delegate tasks to the rest of the staff working at the event. (Conway 2011.)

2.2 Event management process

All events are products of an idea that has been implemented. An idea is the basis for the whole event and comes from thought of how will this event serve you, why is this event being held and what are the events main objectives. (Campbell, Robinson, Brown & Rice 2003.)

Once the idea has been thought out further with regards to its objectives, then starts the planning process. Since the event is a project just like any other, it needs well thought project plan that will be carried out by a carefully chosen staff who run the project. The planning process includes for example planning when and where the event should be held, planning marketing and promoting of the event and budgeting. (Campbell, Robinson, Brown & Rice 2003.)

The implementation part is where event management put the whole plan into action. This includes sending out the invites and organizing the event, setting the venue for the day and the actual work that happens during the event.

Feedback is what can be gathered during the implementation of the event. This can be done either by gathering written feedback before the event is over or after the event via an electronic medium. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2014.)

Evaluation of the event is based on the feedback gathered from the participants of the event, observing the flow of the event and monitoring the whole implementation process. It gives a way to analyze the event and gives a tool to measure the improvement possibilities. Evaluation should be done honestly and critically, and it requires certain data, such as the compaction of the feedback surveys. (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnel 2004.)

A final report of the event should be done once all the data of the evaluation process has been gathered. The report should be distributed to all parties of the management team. The report can also be used a guideline for any future events held of the same size and content. (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnel 2004.)

This thesis works as a final report of the event "TULEVAISUUDEN TYÖ - Tradenomin osaaminen kunnossa".



Figure 1. Event management process of the “TULEVAISUUDEN TYÖ – TRADENOMIN OSAAMINEN KUNNOSSA!” event.

3 Ideation and implementation

On 31.03.2017 we had a meeting with my thesis instructor and senior lecturer Eija Kärnä and the head of adult education division Juha Marjakangas, to determine the plan of action for the event. The subjects covered at the meeting were the most crucial parts of the event, including deciding the speakers for the event and who would present Haaga-Helia's options for postgraduate studies.

The plan was to have the participants attend the event as professionals, rather than people who would come to the event only to listen to what Haaga-Helia has to offer. We discussed building workshops in a learning café style, where the attendees could take part in discussions about the different programs Haaga-Helia has to offer.

3.1 SWOT

At the planning point of the event, it is important to take into consideration the strengths and the weaknesses of the event, as well as the opportunities and threats, so a SWOT analysis was made to determine the starting point and the possible outcomes for the event. SWOT analysis at this point is a valuable tool to analyze the position of the event now and in the future.

SWOT analysis can also be called a situational analysis. Using a SWOT analysis one will be able to obtain a detailed understanding of the events environment. Using a SWOT analysis may sometimes need the aid of previous studies of the subject and existing data. (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnell, 2001)

A SWOT analysis can be used to analyze various things, it is not only limited to event planning.

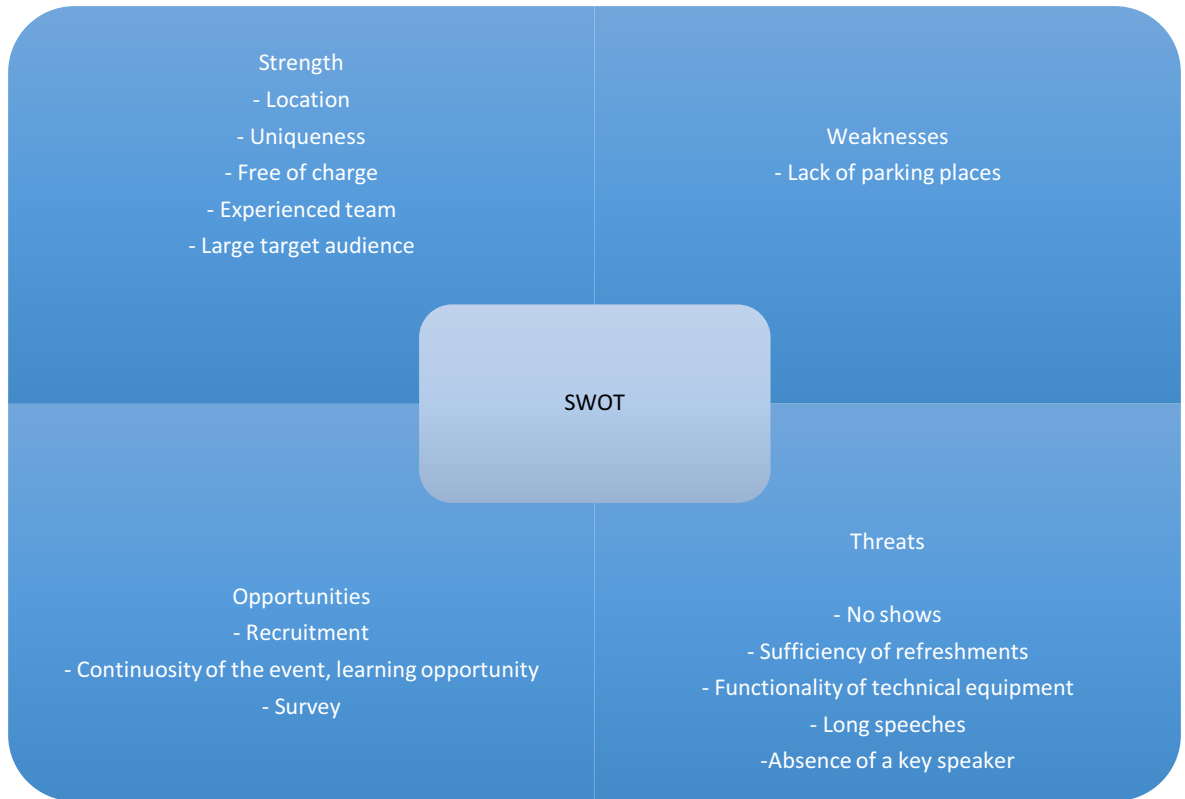


Figure 2. SWOT analysis of the “TULEVAISUUDEN TYÖ – TRADENOMIN OSAAMINEN KUNNOSSA!” event.

In figure two (figure 2), there is a full SWOT analysis made by the author of this thesis. The event was a free of charge, unique and an opportunity for BBA alumni to upgrade their knowledge in the field, along with the location of the event – Haaga-Helia, Pasila campus- being the strength of the event. Other strengths that the event has, is that the target audience for who the event is organized for, is relatively large in the capital area. The events purpose itself serves as an opportunity for Haaga-Helia to recruit new students to its various study programs, as well as the previously mentioned opportunity for the attendees to learn what Haaga-Helia has to offer for the upgrade of their studies.

The future plan for this event, is to organize it annually as it is such a great learning opportunity for the organizer. Despite the strengths and opportunities for this event being strong, in any event there are a number of threats, that could be fateful in the final evaluation of the event’s success. In an event like this, the threats could be the number of no shows (3.5.), which could happen – for a number of reasons including timing of the event being during the local rush hour, sufficiency of the refreshments offered at the event, functionality of the technical equipment, the speeches running too long, or possibly an absence of a keynote speaker.

3.2 Speakers

The program started with three keynote speakers who were given 10 minutes each to present their subjects, one of them being a video presentation. A keynote speaker is a person who gives the keynote address that explains the underlying theme of the event. (Cambridge dictionary)

Keynote speakers at an event are a crucial part of it, - without whom the events success might be questionable. Keynote speakers set the tone of the event and draw the attention of the participants and they can possibly lift the atmosphere of the whole event. (Campbell, Robinson, Brown & Rice 2003.)

Keynote presentations were given by three people. Eeva Loippo-Sännälä, who introduced the theme of "Alumni gives back" is a relations manager at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. The second keynote speaker was a social media and digital marketing author, Lasse Rouhiainen, who is also a lecturer at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and explained about digitalization, artificial intelligence and virtual reality and their effect in working life and the need of upgrading knowledge in the field of business administration. The third keynote speaker talked about working life skills in career planning. This was presented by a project manager in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Niina Jallinoja.

The other speakers were given 5,5 minutes each to present their subjects. These speakers were lecturers, head of adult education division, education supervisors and program managers at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, and presented Haaga-Helia's selections of studies for advancing knowledge in the field of business administration.

The plan was to keep these presentations as brief as possible, and leave the more detailed explanations of the subjects to the Learning Café section of the program.

3.3 Beverages

The plan for serving at the event was for the beverages to fit most diets, therefore options such as lactose and gluten free and vegan were available. As the assistant of the event I consulted the chief manager of Ravintola Marine, Päivi Georgopoulos-Xipolias with regards to what the proper servings for an afternoon event would be.

We came to the conclusion that the suitable servings would be pie instead of sandwiches - which was the original idea - because sandwiches are more suitable for morning events.

We agreed that there should also be something sweet to go with coffee and tea, so the conclusion was to serve cardamom buns and a fruit platter. The beverages were available to the attendees for the whole duration of the event.

The servings were arranged by Fazer Amica, who also arranged the display in the classroom, in which the event was held. Amica is one of the service brands of Fazer Food Services. Fazer Food Services is a part of the Fazer company and offers private and public sector personnel restaurants, as well as student restaurants, such as Helia bistro and Pääraide restaurant, that are located in the Haaga-Helia Pasila campus. (Fazer Group)

3.4 Time and place

The event took place in one of the lecture rooms at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Pasila campus, Ratapihantie 14, Helsinki. The time of the event was planned to be after regular working hours, starting at 16.30, so everyone would have an opportunity to attend the event.

The location of the event is convenient for people commuting by public transportation, for Haaga-Helia Pasila campus is located next to the Pasila train station and next to tram and bus connections.

3.5 Invitations and marketing

The marketing and attendance of the event was by invite only. Invitation to the event was sent via e-mail to all the members of The Union of Professional Business Graduates in Finland. There are guidelines that need to be taken into consideration when writing an invitation. Below are the guidelines, and the manner in which they were implemented on the invitation. (Vallo & Häyrynen)

The invitation should address the the nature of the event, when and where the event will take place. The nature of the event was written as the title of the event, and can be understood from the program attached to the invitation. The invitation stated the time and the address of the event but for clarity, the invitation could have also mentioned the classroom where the event was held.

According to the guidelines, the invitation should clearly address the host and whether or not the event is free of charge. The host in this case was The Union of Professional Busi-

ness Graduates in Finland and in the invitation it is stated that the event is made in collaboration with Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. However, the invitation did not include information about the event being free of charge.

The guidelines mentioned above include the invitation stating whether attending the event requires a RSVP, how the RSVP should be sent and to whom and by when. Attending the event required an e-mail RSVP from the attendees. RSVP is a term used for an invitation that requires an answer, to determine whether the receiver of the invitation is able to attend the event. The term RSVP, is an abbreviation from the French phrase "Répondez s'il vous plait", meaning "please respond". (Vallo & Häyrinen 2014.)

The invitation included the e-mail where the RSVP should be sent, but it did not state the dead line of the registration.

Servings at the event were prepared well to fit most diets with lactose free, vegan and gluten free options. However, additional costs for the special dietary requirements, could have been avoided by asking attendees to announce their special dietary requirements in the RSVP e-mail.

The invitation was sent twice, and 40 people had RSVP'd to attend the event. On the day of the event 28 people arrived to the event making the no-show percentage 30%. No-show is a term used for the number of people that have RSVP'd to an event, but do not attend it for one reason or another. Every no-show person in an organizer's perspective is money wasted. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2014.)

While the no-show rate in this situation was 30%, one could consider the reason for this high rate to be for a mutual reason for all the no-show cases of the event. Considerable reasons for the high rate in this case could be traffic jams or the lack of parking spaces in the area.

3.6 Learning café and workshops

Before the event, I attended a strategy course by my thesis instructor Eija Kärnä, in which we used Learning Café workshops as a learning method. During our meeting on the 31.03.2017, I expressed the idea of using this method at our event as well. With this method the attendees would have the chance to get more familiar with the subject that interest them specifically, instead of simply getting a detailed explanation of all the subjects.

A workshop is a situation that has participants instead of an audience and even if it might have some lecture material, it is not in the form of a lecture. This is an event where each participant contributes and learn from each other.

Questions were not taken during the presentations but equipment for notes were placed on the desks for the attendees to take notes during the event, if they pleased. Every speaker had their own spot in the lecture room, where they stayed to explain more about their subjects and answer any questions that the attendees might have. The speakers of the event were used as 'expert witnesses' so that participants could have the chance to question them about their expertise.

The Learning Café section was planned so that the attendees could go around the room and get more information on their subject of interest. Some of the speakers had pamphlets and other brochures which they were able to give to the parties interested in their subjects.

The length of the Learning Café section was 45 minutes, during which we also handed out and gathered feedback surveys to and from the attendees.

4 Assistant duties

I, Ifijenia Georgopoulos-Xipolias, was assigned as an assistant to this event. The main duty of the assistant was to be fully aware of the happenings at the event, observing and taking notes. I took charge of taking notes of everything we discussed about the event during meetings, informal planning situations and taking notes from e-mails, in which information about the event were exchanged.

Haaga-Helia does not have a public Wi-Fi-network so the assistant's duty was to attain usernames and passwords to Haaga-Helia's network for the attendees who required it. Instructions to the domain were provided by the HelpDesk who explained the process of ordering the username and the password via text message. Instructions were then passed to the attendees in the beginning of the event.

Because of my rich experience from working in the restaurant industry, with my connections I was able to do benchmarking of different catering options and their functionality in different events. I consulted the chief manager of Ravintola Marine, for what the proper servings for an afternoon event would be.

On the day of the event I contacted with the security at Haaga-Helia Pasila campus, and informed them about both the event and the time schedule and directed them on how they should inform the attendees of the location if asked. In addition, we placed flyers around the campus which contained information of the location of the lecture room and arrows showing the direction. We printed out the event program and distributed them to the attendees, so they could better follow the flow of the event.

The speakers of the events were asked to forward their PowerPoint presentations to the assistant to be checked well in time before the time of the event. It was my duty to make sure that all the PowerPoint presentations, video, sound and the other technical matters were fully functional.

I worked as a technical assistant to the speakers during the event, opening their PowerPoint presentations before their speeches and informed how to use the projector and its remote so they could control the flow of the presentations themselves. During the presentations I also did a headcount of the attendees.

Another one of the main duties of the assistant was the composing and compaction of the feedback survey of the event. The idea was to keep it as simple as possible so the number of participants would be close to the attendee count. I checked the survey with Eija Kärnä who gave suggestions for changes and additions to the survey. We reached a consensus with the composition of the feedback survey. The surveys were passed during the Learning Café section. The analysis of the feedback survey can be found in part 4 of this thesis.

As the assistant, I made sure that the participants of the event had a pleasant time and advised them to get more beverages and gave instructions on how to find the restrooms. I was in charge of taking care of the overall enjoyment of the event. After the event, together with the event staff, we cleaned the event area and put back all the equipment used.

5 Feedback

The purpose of gathering feedback is to gather opinions of the participants about the event, as well as understand, what could be made better for the next event, for the event to be more enjoyable for the participants.

It is important to know how the participants felt about the implementation of the event. By comparing the feedback to the starting point of the planning process, what was the goal of the event, what could have been done better and what was in the opinion of the participants. Through the feedback the organizers of an event can learn how to make their next event even better. (Vallo & Häyriinen, 2014.)

A feedback survey was passed to the attendees of the event. The survey consisted of two multiple choice questions in order of scale, asking the attendee of the level of success and interest of the event, including two questions where the participant could explain in their own words their opinion of the event.

20 attendees out of 28 filled out the survey making the response rate 71.42%.

Question 1: On a scale from 1 to 5, how successful was the event? (1 = Not at all successful, 5 = extremely successful)

1	2	3	4	5
0% (0)	0% (0)	15% (3)	40% (8)	45% (9)

40% percent of the responders felt that the event was successful, and the majority, 45% of the responders, felt that the event was extremely successful. A small group of 15% of the responders had a neutral feeling about the successfulness of the event. In this case, since the number of the attendees was low to begin with, one might analyze the 15% of the neutral answers to be the result of the event not being a current topic considering their careers.

The mean value for the first of scale question was 4,325.

Question 2: On a scale from 1 to 5, how interesting was the event? (1 = Not at all interesting, 5 = extremely interesting)

1	2	3	4	5
0% (0)	5% (1)	10% (2)	40% (8)	45% (9)

The answers in both of the scale order questions were nearly the same, when it was from the same participant. The majority of 45% of the participants thought the event was extremely interesting, and a close second were the answers from 40% of the participants, where they thought the event was interesting. The neutral number 3 received 10% of the votes and a small percentage of 5% thought the event was not that interesting.

The mean value for the second of scale question was 4,275.

In the survey we asked the attendees to describe what they thought was successful in the event and what they thought we could have done better in organizing the event. The feedback we received stated that 55% percent of the participants stated that the subjects of the event were versatile. 35% of the participants stated that the event was prompt and to the point and 15% percent of the participants stated that they received plenty of new information, where as another 15% thought they would have wanted more information on the subjects. The enjoyment and over-all comfort was mentioned in 30% of the surveys.

Based on the –feedback results, the over all analysis of the survey states that the event was all in all successful and interesting for the participants.

6 Self assessment

I chose this topic because of my interest in event planning. During my vocational college studies at Omnia Vocational College, I got a touch of what it's like organizing an event, but while writing my thesis I got a deeper idea of the meaning "event management".

Knowing from the beginning that my thesis would be used as a learning platform for future events, it gave me a push to work hard on it.

Since my native language is Finnish, it was ideal for me to find the research material in Finnish; unfortunately, there are only a limited amount of publications made related to event management in Finnish. However, I did find plenty of research material on the subject in English, that helped me get into the topic.

I am personally very pleased with the amount of new information I got while researching for this thesis, as well as for the feedback we got from the participants of the events. These feedbacks worked really well in figuring out what we could have done better, and I hope these will be taken into consideration when planning the next events.

Whether I would like to pursue a career in event management, I do not yet know. However, I'm sure I'd like to research the subject more, and I hope my future work tasks will include some aspects of event management, or event planning.

I hope my thesis can work as a guideline for anyone planning the next events, or an even of the same size.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Feedback survey

Palautelomake

Asteikolla 1-5, kuinka onnistunut tilaisuus oli?	1	2	3	4	5
Asteikolla 1-5, kuinka kiinnostavia aiheet olivat?	1	2	3	4	5

Missä onnistuimme?

Mitä olisimme voineet tehdä paremmin?

Haluaisin saada lisätietoa seuraavista Haaga-Helian palveluista:

- Avoin ammattikorkeakoulu
- Ylemmät korkeakouluopinnot: Masteriksi Haaga-Heliasta
- Pro-paketti
- eMBA
- Räättälöidyt koulutukset
- Service design -mahdollisuudet
- Oman osaamisen ja työyhteisön toiminnan kehittäminen

Haluan että minuun otetaan yhteyttä:

Sähköpostiosoite:

Appendix 2. Invitation letter



OHJELMA

- 16.30 Tervetuloa**
Kahvia ja virvokkeita, suolaista ja makeaa pientä syömistä
- KEY NOTE PUHEENVUOROT
- 17.00–17.10 Alumni gives back – Tervetuloa takaisin!**
Eeva Loippo-Sännälä
- 17.10–17.20 Digi, AI, VR – Vaikutuksia työelämään ja osaamisen kehittämisen tarpeisiin**
Lasse Rouhiainen
- 17.20–17.35 Taidot työhön -valmennus herättää urasuunnitteluun**
Niina Jallinoja
- 17.35–18.15 Haaga-Helian palvelutarjontaa tradenomeille**
Kehitä joustavasti osaamistasi Avoimessa Ammattikorkeakoulussa
Päivi Vepsä, Varpu Jaskara
Ylemmät korkeakouluopinnot: Masteriksi Haaga-Heliasta
Hanna Rajalahti
Koulutuspaketit osaamisen päivittämiseen, Pro-paketti
Tuula Tuomainen
Haaga-Helian eMBA:lla osaaminen ja työmarkkina-arvo huipputasolle!
Riku Korosuo
Räätälöidyt koulutukset
Juha Marjakangas
Service design -mahdollisuudet
Sirpa Lassila
Oman osaamisen ja työyhteisön toiminnan kehittäminen hankkeena
Eija Kärnä
- 18.15–19.00 Tilaisuus keskustella toiveistasi ja ajatuksistasi kehittää omaa osaamistasi edellisten aiheiden mukaisissa learning café -teemapöydissä**

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