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# CREATING CUSTOMER FEEDBACK PROCESS AND IMPROVING SERVICES FOR LUOMUSPAJA WITH THE HELP OF SERVICE DESIGN



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# CREATING CUSTOMER FEEDBACK PROCESS AND IMPROVING SERVICES FOR LUOMUSPAJA WITH THE HELP OF SERVICE DESIGN

The objectives of this study were to investigate how to improve existing services of a small handicraft company, Luomuspaja, and to create and implement a functioning customer feedback process for them which provides continuous customer insight. Luomuspaja locates in Turku and provides handicraft courses, workshops and activities to adults and children.

One of the goals was also to understand which marketing channels would best fit the purposes of Luomuspaja and their customers. The research questions were (1) With the help of a new feedback process, can Luomuspaja improve existing and create new services and engage the customers to return after the first visit? (2) How do the customers find the services of Luomuspaja and what are the main channels that people hear from them? The study was commissioned by Eeva Kirstilä and Kerttu Eriksson, the owners of Luomuspaja. The objectives of the thesis were derived from the actual needs of the commissioners.

The study collected information by using qualitative and quantitative research methods of online and paper questionnaire, service safari, persona and mystery shopping. Benchmarking was also used for gathering insights of similar companies and their service offering. The results of these methods suggested that Luomuspaja can receive valuable feedback from their customers and improve their business based on the feedback. The results showed that in general the customers are satisfied and want to go back after the first visit. Luomuspaja should also improve their web page, enrolment system and payment methods as well as as the signs and lights both inside and outside of the premises.

Based on the collected data during the research process, the author developed prototypes for feedback process and updated web page. In order to increase the business opportunities, Luomuspaja should continue collecting customer insight and modernise their web page, develop their services and expand the methods they use for marketing the services.

## KEYWORDS:

service design, customer experience, feedback process, social media marketing, handicraft

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# PALVELUMUOTOILUN HYÖDYNTÄMINEN LUOMUSPAJAN ASIAKASPALAUTEPROSESSIN LUOMISESSA JA PALVELUIDEN KEHITTÄMISESSÄ

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää, miten pienen käsityöryityksen, Luomuspajan, olemassa olevia palveluja voisi parantaa sekä luoda ja toteuttaa heille toimiva asiakaspalauteprosessi, joka tarjoaa arvokasta asiakastietoa. Luomuspaja sijaitsee Turussa ja tarjoaa käsityökursseja, työpajoja ja toimintaa aikuisille ja lapsille.

Yksi tavoitteista oli myös ymmärtää, mitkä markkinointikanavat sopisi parhaiten Luomuspajan ja niiden asiakkaiden tarkoituksiin. Tutkimuksen tutkimuskysymykset olivat: (1) Voiko Luomuspaja uuden palauteprosessin avulla parantaa olemassa olevia ja luoda uusia palveluja ja saada asiakkaat palaamaan ensimmäisen vierailun jälkeen? (2) Miten asiakkaat löytävät Luomuspajan palvelut ja mitkä ovat tärkeimmät kanavat, joiden kautta ihmiset kuulevat heistä? Tutkimuksen tilasi Luomuspajan omistajat Eeva Kirstilä ja Kerttu Eriksson. Opinnäytetyön tavoitteet perustuivat omistajien todellisiin tarpeisiin.

Tutkimuksessa kerättiin tietoa käyttämällä laadullisia ja kvantitatiivisia tutkimusmenetelmiä online- ja paperikyselyillä, palvelusafarilla, persoonan avulla sekä mysteeriostoksilla. Vertailuanalyysjä käytettiin myös kokemusten keräämiseen samankaltaisista yrityksistä ja niiden tarjonnasta. Näiden menetelmien tulokset viittaavat siihen, että Luomuspaja voi saada arvokasta palautetta asiakkailtaan ja parantaa liiketoimintaansa palautetietojen perusteella. Tulokset osoittivat, että asiakkaat ovat yleensä tyytyväisiä ja haluavat palata ensimmäisen vierailun jälkeen. Luomuspajan tulisi myös parantaa verkkosivuaan, ilmoittautumisjärjestelmäänsä ja maksutapoja sekä ohjausta ja valoja Luomuspajan tilojen sisällä ja ulkopuolella.

Tutkimusprosessin aikana kerättyjen tietojen perusteella tekijä kehitti prototyypit palauteprosessille ja päivitetylle verkkosivulle. Liiketoimintamahdollisuuksien lisäämiseksi Luomuspajan tulisi jatkaa asiakkaiden näkemysten keräämistä ja verkkosivujen uudistamista sekä laajentaa palveluidensa markkinointimenetelmiä.

## ASIASANAT:

palvelumuotoilu, asiakaskokemus, palauteprosessi, some-markkinointi, käsityö

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS**

SEO	Search Engine Optimization (Kananen 2013, 70)
CRM	Customer Related Marketing (Kananen 2013, 110-111)

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of this master's thesis is a service design research for Luomuspaja which is a small company located in Turku. Luomuspaja was founded in 2014 to provide arts and crafts courses to adults and children. Luomuspaja also offers theme birthday parties for children, recreation days for companies, activities for bachelor parties and hen nights, different events at the farm as well as different activities for children during school holidays. It is also possible to rent a space from Luomuspaja for private events. However, the majority of Luomuspaja's services are targeted to their biggest customer segment, private customers. Therefore, this research is concentrated only on this customer segment. The main goal of this research is to establish a customer feedback process for the company and with the received data to improve the company's services and hopefully to find a new service idea to add to the commissioner's service offering based on the collected research data.

There are several focuses on this research. One of the focuses is to establish the customer feedback process to gather valuable customer insight from private customers which Luomuspaja could use to further improve their business. Another focus is to find out if Luomuspaja is able to engage their private customers to return after their first visit in Luomuspaja. Luomuspaja provides services also for companies but these business customers the author decided to leave out from this thesis, as otherwise this research would have been too extensive. Different service design methods and tools are used to investigate the mentioned objectives of this research. With the results the author will try to increase the customer understanding and to find out how the customers find Luomuspaja's existing services and how can they improve their services from the current stage. The new feedback process system aims to provide answers to how Luomuspaja can engage their private customers to use their services again and what are the main marketing channels the commissioners should use to market the services of Luomuspaja.

To increase the customer understanding is one of the most critical phases of service design. It is vital to understand end-users' motives and needs as services are designed to correspond to end-users' expectations and needs. Only then can the service be successful in the markets. The information gained from qualitative customer surveys enables a development of that kind of a service which the customers are ready to pay



for and from which one can estimate the expected return of investment to the service provider as well as the potential value to their customers. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 142–143.) Functional and continuous feedback flow is essential part of open and fresh feedback process. It is a must for business owners to follow what happens in the world and to ensure to receive continuous feedback from the customers in order to stay in the business. A weak feedback flow indicates problems for organizations. The organizations are not isolated parts from their surroundings and therefore by influencing and reacting to their operating environment, the organizations can further boost their own survival and success. (Ranne 2014, 57.) “People are the heart of services” summarizes also Andy Polaine in his book *Service Design From Insight to implementation* (Polaine et al. 2013, 36). This is the reason why the author and the commissioners are trying to get customer insight by implementing a customer feedback process, to better understand the customer needs and expectations and to be able to improve the existing services and customer experience.

Services nowadays are not as productive nor satisfying for the client as they could be. Since the service sector covers nearly 80 percentage of the economy, services clearly have a design problem. Service design requires careful planning and considerations as services are not tangible and they involve customers, who are the ones experiencing the services. Service design connects organizations and customers and acts as an interface. (Stefan Moritz 2015.)

## 2 PROBLEM AREAS, AIM AND METHODS

Designing the service for Luomuspaja contains different objectives from which establishing the customer feedback process to Luomuspaja is one of the most important one. Prior to this research, the commissioners had never collected any customer feedback during their nearly three-year history. Luomuspaja did not have any concrete evidence of what did their customers think about the services they provide, nor did they know if there were any areas of their services which they should further improve in order to engage their customers to come back. Luomuspaja wants to prioritize private customers in this research since a large amount of their services are targeted to their private customers. As mentioned earlier, business customers are left out from this research in order to keep this research in the limits set for master's thesis.

Because the commissioner had never collected any customer feedback, the feedback process and its implementation needs to start from a scratch. The author needs to investigate the most efficient ways to collect accurate feedback. However, no matter what the feedback method is, the results need to be measurable as well as actionable.

The overall experience of Luomuspaja's customers is what defines whether they want to continue as their customers also in the future. The methods that are used in this thesis are discussed and agreed with the owners of Luomuspaja, Eeva Kirstilä and Kerttu Eriksson. Luomuspaja's vision and their history together with the survey results and the service design methods of this research are the base for this thesis.

There are several different research methods that are used in this research. As Luomuspaja had not collected any feedback prior to this research, the biggest and possibly the most important method is to use two different surveys that collect feedback online and in traditional paper form. By using two different surveys it is possible to reach a large number of customers the easiest and fastest. Google Forms is selected to be the platform for the online feedback process due to its simplicity and easy accessibility. In addition, it is a free tool that automatically creates graphic of the received data and makes it faster to analyse the results. The platform for the feedback process can be changed later in case the research data indicates to that direction when this study has been completed. The paper feedback form is to be created with Microsoft Word in order to Kirstilä and Eriksson to be able to easily print the forms according to the needs. The author would receive the paper feedback forms continuously from the commissioners

along the research process to record them to Microsoft Excel. The results of the paper feedback are to be analysed later in detail with Microsoft Excel.

When customers arrive to Luomuspaja to attend different courses or workshops they will be asked to provide feedback with a paper form. Since the premises are designed for handicraft work, this way is the easiest and safest as different course materials might harm computers (for example by spilling accidentally paint on computer). It also suits the surrounding as people at the workshop of Luomuspaja are using their hands for creating different things. The feedback process is designed to be anonymous to prevent participants not to give feedback because of a worry of being recognized. In addition, the research focuses on customer experience which the author investigates by using other service design methods, such as observation and service safari, mystery shopping, customer journey, benchmarking and service blueprint. The author also uses co-design as one service design method for this research.

The author creates the mystery shopper questionnaire and invites four people to act as mystery shoppers to closely evaluate Luomuspaja's services and premises. The author herself attends few workshops and Harvesting event and Christmas Market to investigate also herself how the existing services work.

The author also conducts a benchmarking study to compare other similar companies and their service offering. Benchmarking is a good method to find out what is the best performance being achieved by industry or particular company. Benchmarking information can then be used to identify whether there are any gaps in the processes that can be used to achieve a competitive advantage. (Stroud n.d.)

## 2.1 Aim

The aim is to discover valuable information to Luomuspaja about their customers' needs and expectations. With this information the commissioner is also able to gain a real customer insight of the customers' overall experience. As Luomuspaja is a small company, a good customer service is in their core values and they want to take every level with this research so that they would be able to provide even better services in the future and that the customers would want to return to them. Returning satisfied customers and good reputation are the key elements for the company to survive. Luomuspaja uses mainly their own Facebook page for informing about their services but

since they had not collected any customer feedback, they want to investigate more about the marketing aspect of their services to see which channels would be the most preferred by their existing and potential customers. A knowledge about this would help them to expand their customer base. With regards to this, another aim of this research is to discover how the customers originally find Luomuspaja.

## 2.2 Research questions and methods

The research questions for this research are:

1. With the help of a new feedback process, can Luomuspaja improve existing and create new services and engage the customers to return after the first visit?
2. How do the customers find the services of Luomuspaja and what are the main channels that people hear about them?

By collecting customer feedback with different ways, the possible improvement areas and already well functioning areas could be pinpointed.

## 2.3 Service design process and research schedule

This research follows The Double Diamond Design process presented in Figure 1. This process is chosen as this particular process is relatively easy to understand and it shows the development process systematically. The Double Diamond Design Process is developed by the Design Council (Design Council 2015A and Design Council 2015B). The Figure 1 was created as an inspiration from Design Council's Double Diamond process description together with the author's personal timetable that follows the design process.

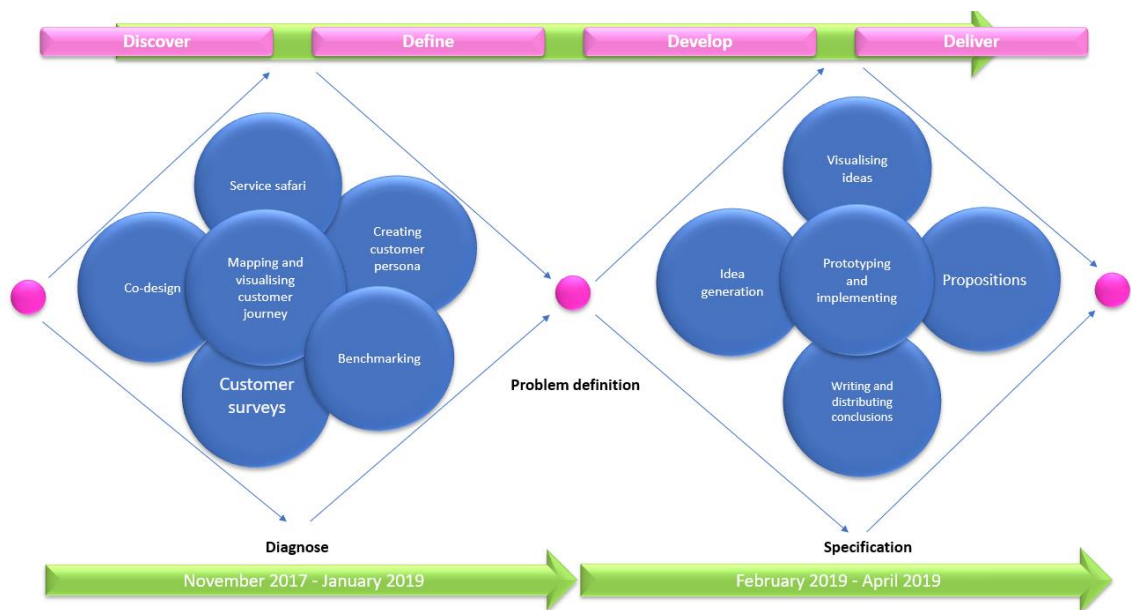


Figure 1. Double diamond design process and research schedule.

The purpose of design process is to find better and / or innovative solutions through iterative cycles of research and development. In service design world everyone usually thinks service design process through different types of service design tools and templates. However, these tools and templates without a well planned process and mindset can lose much of their impact and in the worse case scenario they may not even make any sense. When these tools and templates are used well to fit the purpose, they can create a common understanding, meaningful conversations and develop a common language. The most important purpose of the design process is to help companies to find their biggest challenges and offer them a solution how to overcome them. It helps companies to understand how their customers see and find the services they provide. (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 19–21.) In ideal situation, all parties are involved in the service design process and in this research this happens as Luomuspaja is so small company that the owners, who are also they key players and decision makers of the company, are naturally closely involved in the process. The most important thing is to evaluate one's needs and use the available resources and utilize the service design process as needed (Tuulaniemi 2011, 129).

As mentioned previously, the timetable of this research is described with the Double Diamond Design process in Figure 1. The author starts the research process in November 2017 with discovering phase. Service safaris, co-design, customer journeys,

customer persona creation and visualisation of customer journey are all done during 2018 and January 2019. After these, the author is able to move forward in February 2019 with idea generation and prototyping. Visualisation of ideas, writing and distribution of conclusions and giving propositions all take place in March and April 2014 after which the thesis is completed.

#### 2.4 Frame of reference

The main focus of this thesis is to improve the customer experience and services provided by Luomuspaja and to find out which channels suit the best for Luomuspaja's agenda to market their services and gain more customers. The main actors that affect this goal are Luomuspaja, private customers of Luomuspaja, chosen channels and the service design used in this research to achieve the goals. The Figure 2 below demonstrates how customer experience is in the heart of all these actors. This research concentrates on improving the services with selected service design methods and tools. This leads to concrete development suggestions that Luomuspaja can implement in order to improve the overall customer experience given to their customers.

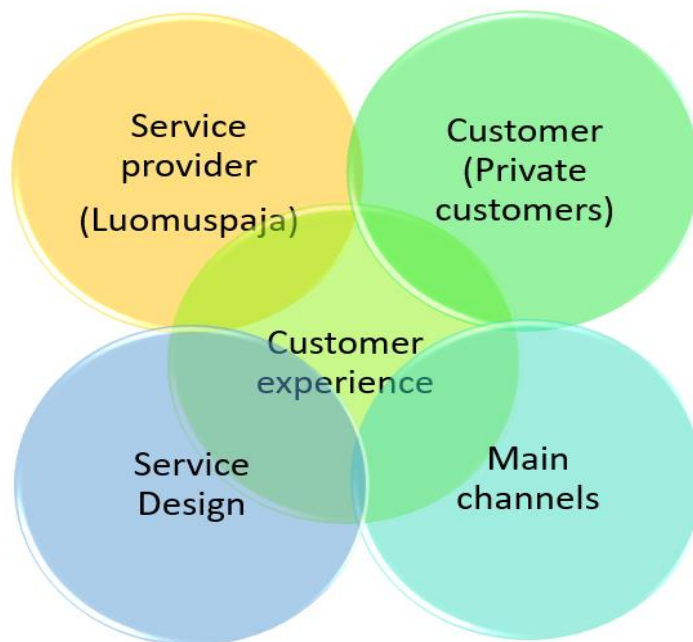


Figure 2. Frame of reference.

### 3 LUOMUSPAJA

Luomuspaja is a company that was founded by two friends, Eeva Kirstilä and Kerttu Eriksson (see Figure 4) in 2014. Back in that time both of the women were on maternity leave and they all of a sudden had an idea of starting their own handicraft business. They both wanted to do something with their hands and also have some free time in their lives as they both had been working in shifts for years before starting their own business. Both women were very familiar with handicrafts due to their own interest and they both also had suitable backgrounds and educations for handicraft business. Kirstilä has a degree in hospitality management and adventure tourism and Eriksson has been studying visual arts and has a degree in applied arts. (Kirstilä and Eriksson 2018.)



Figure 3. Eeva Kirstilä and Kerttu Eriksson.

Kirstilä and Eriksson decided to have their business in the farm where Kirstilä lives with her farmer husband and their three children as they had premises of an old cowshed free to use. Kirstilä first organised a Christmas market at the farm and after that she sort of accidentally discovered a suitable place for them. The place had been mostly used as a storage place so after emptying it and renovation, Luomuspaja was born. The farm,

where Luomuspaja is located, is only about 10 minutes drive from Turku centrum with good public transportation connections. The women considered the scenery of the place as one of their advantages when compared to similar businesses in the area. This has also made it possible for them to invite, for instance, day care groups to visit and see the farm life. (Kirstilä and Eriksson 2018.)

Kirstilä and Eriksson both support the idea of recycling and they are keen to use recycled material in their workshops. Lot of the materials used in the courses are often recycled or nature's material that they have either gathered themselves from the nature or been given as donations from other companies. The owners stated that in the beginning it was a little hard to think of a proper price tag for their different services but it has become easier over time due to increased amount of courses and more simplified pricing. The pricing is nowadays mostly based on the cost of the different material they need and use in the workshops. Although, the pricing has become easier it still creates challenges at times as it is important to meet customer expectations. Customer will continue to use their services if they feel that the price-quality ratio is good but will choose some other similar company if they feel that they do not get enough value for the money they pay. (Kirstilä and Eriksson 2018.)

Since the company is small, it is important that the owners both know exactly each other's roles and responsibilities in case either of them falls ill. It has also been on the agenda to develop their business further and arrange more day time activities in order to free up more time from the evenings so that Kirstilä and Eriksson could use more their evening times with their families. In 2018 Kirstilä and Eriksson were finally able to hire employees who make it easier for them to have a little more free time and not to be tight up most of the evenings of the week in their workshops. Nevertheless, their mission is that they would be able to develop and extend Luomuspaja's service offering so much that it would employ them both full-time and they would not need to work anymore elsewhere. Now, Luomuspaja employs six part-time employees who share together with the owners the responsibility of guiding and teaching the courses and workshops. (Kirstilä and Eriksson 2018.)

Kirstilä and Eriksson both feel that the customers are the soul of their business and have an extremely important role in it. Good and well executed customer experience is the most important value of Luomuspaja that Kirstilä and Eriksson wish to convey to all of their customers. One of the most important factors of Luomuspaja's services is the two owners' interaction skills with their customers since their business' core idea is to



encourage people to find the joy in handicraft and to learn how to use elements of nature, such as twigs, in the handicraft. (Kirstilä and Eriksson 2018) Despite many other similar handicraft companies where the target group is not clearly specified (Lith 2005, 37), Kirstilä and Eriksson's clientele is rather homogenous as they have specified their customer groups to be adults and different types of team building groups and children. In principle, the children have their own activity courses but to some adults' courses also children can attend. However, the courses and workshops for adult women are the majority of their business. (Kirstilä and Eriksson 2018.)

So far Luomuspaja has mainly advertised their services on Facebook. Other advertising methods have been newsletters for their customers who ever have attended to any of their courses and some Google advertising. Today, their email list of all customers is over 500 people. Sometimes Luomuspaja also invites kindergartens to the farm to visit Luomuspaja and get to know the farm life. Moreover, the most important place where they advertise their services is their own webpage [www.luomuspaja.fi](http://www.luomuspaja.fi) and they also have a blog where they occasionally tell about their activities and publish instructions on different little handicraft works. (Kirstilä and Eriksson 2018.)

One factor that differs Luomuspaja from other similar handicraft companies is that Luomuspaja is focused on teaching and offering services whereas many other handicraft companies are mostly focused on selling their own products rather than services. However, one common factor for all handicraft companies is that they all have usually started when the owner wanted to combine own hobby and work and when that has not been a big financial risk. (Kirstilä and Eriksson 2018.)

### **Luomuspaja's offering**

Luomuspaja's service offering is rather broad. Their core courses are handicraft courses where both owners and their one employee are teaching their customers how to make different types of small handicraft products that can be for example little jewellerys, lanterns made of concrete, candles, wall decorations et cetera. Luomuspaja's focus is on providing services and very little of selling their own products. (Kirstilä and Eriksson 2018.)

Besides the handicraft courses and workshops, Luomuspaja also offers team building days for companies, empowering photographing, birthdays for children, hen and stag parties and space rental. They also organise bigger events, mainly twice a year. These are harvesting event in autumns and Christmas market closer to the Christmas time.

These events have gained lots of popularity and visibility over the past year or two and roughly 2000 people visited Christmas event in 2018. Kirstilä mentioned that they did not want to advertise the event in the local newspapers in 2018, as that would have brought even more people to the farm and there are naturally limits of how many people can attend to the event. This time the advertising was implemented solely on Facebook on Luomuspaja's own page as well as with the traditional word-of-mouth method. (Kirstilä and Eriksson 2018.)

## 4 HANDICRAFT

Handicraft has traditionally been seen as the counterpart of technology. Handicraft and modern are different concepts and modernism is often associated with technology and intelligence, whereas handicraft is often seen as some tinkering and private activity done in home. (Svinhufvud 1997, 9, 21.) Traditionally adult education centers, craft centers and different hobbies have responded to people's need for handicraft activities. Handicraft sector refers to industries that produce individual or small series of products with handcrafted methods. People that are working in handicraft sector have often years of education in arts and crafts and many of them work in various teaching and guidance tasks. It is believed that doing handicrafts satisfy the basic needs of people in terms of self-realization, experimenting with boundaries, feeling of success, seeking a work balance and reducing stress levels. (Kälviäinen 2005, 5, 64.)

According to Kälviäinen a well-being oriented handicraft entrepreneurship is connected, for example, to mental wellbeing, meditation and relaxing, positive experiences and social wellbeing. Handicraft products are accompanied by philosophical thinking that involves sustainable development and long product relationships that emphasize the endurance and continuity of life. People who are doing handicraft often feel that they belong to something. Another important part of well-being oriented handicraft are different services related to experience, relaxation and activity provided by handicraft entrepreneurs. Handicraftsmen themselves feel that crafting and supporting others provide them well-being. In addition, experience in achieving and succeeding leads to well-being. Typical model of handicraft entrepreneurship has for long been that handicraftman provides a living to him- or herself by making products and teaching and guiding others. A range of teaching and guiding extends from small experimental guidings to long in-depth handicraft courses. (Kälviäinen 2005, 16–18, 22.)

Handicraftsmen need to define the image they want to market their services and products. For example, one definition is the previously mentioned well-being and its background. Is it about promoting a good life and well-being as such, or correcting problems of well-being that have already occurred. To what extent is it important that one can see that the product is crafted and not manufactured and that the service of product is unique. Handicraft entrepreneurs should also consider their own basis, as particular technique or material has often been chosen as the craftwork model, and

handicraft entrepreneurs should also be able to extend or change their chosen methods if service or product development requires it. (Kälviäinen 2005, 29.)

Learning and competence are both essential part of handicraft. Hobbyist learns, and the competence is creation - making of valid products. Teacher's competence is to understand broad entities and transfer that knowledge and different techniques to students. Without learning there is no competence, and without a feeling of being competent hobbies are not born. (Kupiainen 2004, 151.) Handicraft is a profession but it is also an identity and a way of living. Often this is shown as a genuine and deep interest toward old work techniques and material which ensures that the old handicraft methods are kept alive, enhanced and developed further for teaching. Handicraft can be slow and require ability to concentrate. This slowness can also be seen as a statement against the information and technology society where everything happens fast and everything requires fast reaction. The question is how to price this slower time that the handicraft work requires. Handicraft work cannot compete with manufactured products so the only option is to put a price tag to the materials and to immaterial aspects, such as uniqueness and a thought that the buyer gets something that no one else has. Handicraft product that is connected to the traditional crafting, creates also an unique feeling that is not possible to gain with a manufactured product. (Kupiainen 2004, 37–38.)

In the modern culture handicrafting is seen differently than before. It is seen as voluntary and also a way of differentiation. It is closely associated with expertise and skill in different materials and techniques. Handicraft workers and entrepreneurs are usually deeply committed to crafting. Handicrafting is seen in the modern culture distant from domesticity, ordinariness and parsimony. Handicrafting can be done, for example, in cafes, parks and with friends. Materials and tools can be expensive and sometimes even luxury. Handicrafting gets new meanings but at the same time the old meanings are more clearly emphasized by the pressures of modern and busy environment. Handicrafting provides a time and place where people can concentrate on crafting, relax and heal. In addition, handicraft worker builds one's own identity slowly and sustainably. Crafting is investing in time that seems to be all the time running out in the modern society. Crafting creates satisfaction and makes people accept new challenges as they are able to excel themselves time and time again. (Kojonkoski-Rännäli 2014, 62–63.)

## 5 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO BUSINESS

Customer service and customer experience is a new brand in today's world. It is a challenge and it needs a prioritizing as it is not enough anymore that the customers are put in the center of the attention but instead, today, the customers must be put ahead of everything else, including the management and stakeholders. In customer's era, the most successful are those companies who can systematically exceed their customers' expectations. This requires a comprehensive understanding and management of customer experience. (Löytänä et al. 2014, 8-9.)

The most successful companies are aiming to deliver the best customer experience as possible, as us people are living nowadays an age of the customer, which means that if the customer is not happy with the received service, the customer will move on without any hesitation to another service provider. This is illustrated in Figure 4. Therefore, it is vital that the customer service and the customer experience are the most important values for the companies. (Forrester 2013.)

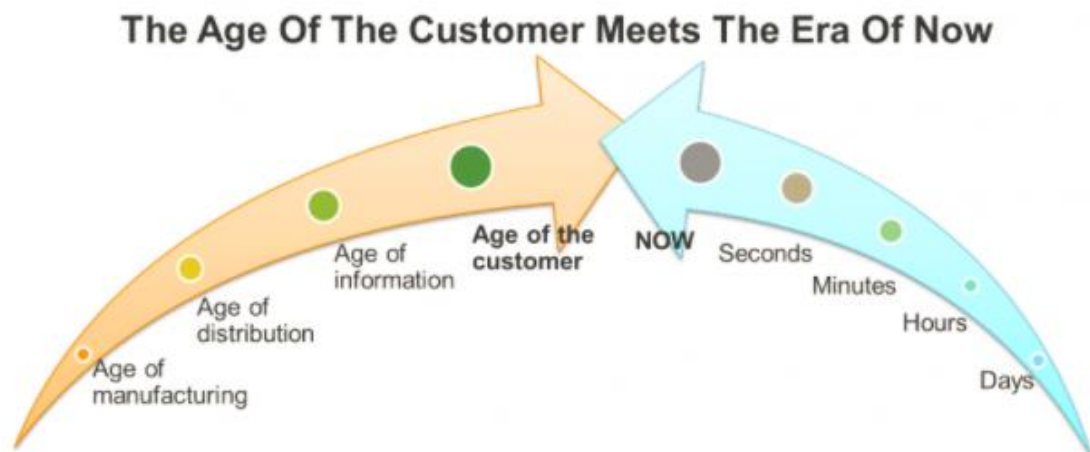


Figure 4. The Age of The Customer Meets the Ear of Now (Forrester 2013).

Customers themselves create the experiences and values to themselves and the companies can only create the conditions with their services which customers can use to create their own values and experiences. The value which companies can create for their customers can be categorized in to four types.

1. The first value is financial value which is usually the most straightforward and the focus is on small cost to the customer.
2. The second value is functional value which is the result of the functionality of a service or a product. The concrete value of this is how the customer can save time and effort.
3. The third value is symbolistic value which is linked to customers' perceptions and their views on different brands. It is also related to how the customers can express themselves and how do they benefit through that. Symbolic value is also connected to feeling of togetherness where the customers feel connected with the other users of the service or product.
4. The forth value is emotional value. This is related to customers' experiences and how they have the possibility to feel something when using the service. In the customer's era, the most important value is the fourth value – emotional value – because in this era the creation of the other values is getting more and more difficult and with the emotional value, the companies can differentiate themselves from their competitors. (Löytänä, et al. 2014, 18–20.)

During recent times, the concept called customer experience has become more and more known for especially consumers and end-users and slowly also to the companies in Finland. Many companies have started to establish their own teams who are responsible for the customer experience their own customers should receive when dealing with the company. Customer experience is the feeling that the customer receives based on company's services in all their channels. In addition, brands have also a big role in the image that people have about the company. People are more flexible and forgiving with the company if they have a strong bond with the brand, if they feel that the company's product is superior, or they have a strong connection with the values that the company follows. Everything that the company does, says and treats their customers and their employees have affect on how people feel about the service or the product the company offers. Customers are continuously evaluating three different things in different touch points in customer journeys.

1. Did one get to the goal of the first touch point
2. How easy it was
3. What kind of emotions did it create

Since customer journeys are not often straight lines from one point to another, it is extremely important that companies are involved already in the early stages of customer

journey process. If the company is not interested in being involved and does not put effort on the potential customer, the customers will more than likely be lost to rival companies who are interested in being involved and taking good care of the whole customer journey from start to finish. Customers choose that company that is able to offer them the best customer experience and where and when they need it. (Ahvenainen et al. 2017, 10–11.) Tuulaniemi also discusses about the service and customer experience in his book, and says, that as the service and customer experience is always subjective and created inside customer's head, the main goal of the service design is to optimise the customer and service experience the customer receives. The aim is to create as positive experience to the customer as possible by removing all distractions and focusing on the service and customer experience by optimising the service process, way of working, premises, communication and interaction. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 26.)

Management consulting and coaching company Talent Vectia's Mikael Blomqvist discusses on the company's blog about who is accountable for customer experience. Decision makers in the companies have more and more started to realise the importance of the customer experience and perceive it as nothing less than a strategic priority. Blomqvist states that the companies have realised that there is a correlation between how well or poor their customers are treated versus whether the customers stay as their customers or not. Good customer experience is no doubt a good business as it results directly to company's profit; customers tolerate possible high prices better if the customer experience is good. Happy customers tend to also recommend the companies easier to others or at least talk about their good experiences. Blomqvist also mentioned the same thing as the author has heard elsewhere too, that too often companies assign the ownership of customer experience to one corporate support functions, for marketing for instance, when it is not possible for one support function to know all other departments' roles and responsibilities that should bring value to the customers. In other words, the ownership should belong to the top management, on the executive manager's permanent highly important tasks list. This does not, of course, mean that the executive manager should be the only one executing this customer experience process but he or she can of course assign some people from the organisation to customer experience team or hire people for that team outside the company. It is important that the team initiates specific targets for the customer experience and that is company wide and specific for all departments of the company. The executive team's role is to make sure that everyone in the company follows the given instructions as everyone has a role in customers' experience. (Blomqvist 2016.)

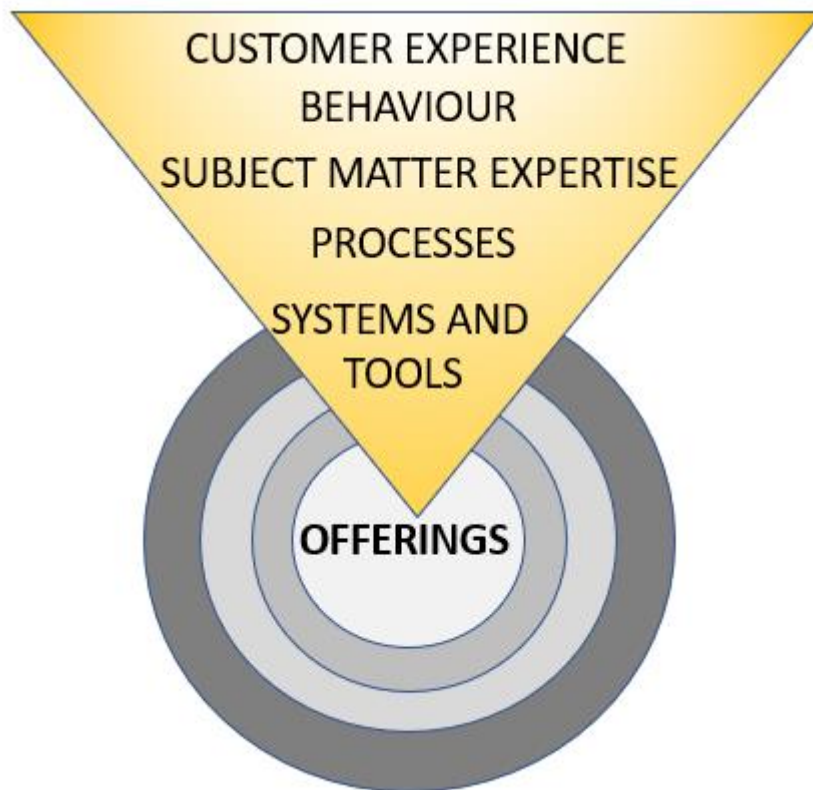


Figure 5. Layers of customer experience (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 3).

Stickdorn et al. have well described the customer experience process so that the only way to get to the offerings is to go through all layers which all contributes to the customer experience (see Figure 5 above). Whether the whole customer experience is excellent, mediocre or poor is all dependent on how well or poorly all factors - all layers - are connected to each other. How the employees of the customers are behaving when interacting with them? How good is the expertise of the employees? How well do the different processes work and are the tools and different systems up-to-date and working smoothly? If employees of the company are not interested in their jobs and also the systems are not working properly, it all effects directly to how customers are experiencing the service they receive. All factors need to work properly and complement each other as they can make or break the company in a long run. Stickdorn et al. also remind that customer experiences are not only influenced by the actions of the company but also by external factors. These are, for instance, reviews by other people, discussions with friends and waiting. Therefore, it is extremely vital that the companies take everything that is in their power into consideration to provide their existing and potential future customers the best customer experience they possibly can. (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 7,10.)



This is something that also Luomuspaja finds extremely important and as being the commissioner of this research is trying to execute even better than before by listening to their customers and hence, improving their services.

## 6 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social media refers to communication between people in the Internet. People create and share different type of content in various social media services like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Yammer and YouTube. In addition, different blog platforms, like WordPress.com are popular. Social media provides a lot of possibilities to everyone who has an access to the Internet. From a modern marketing perspective social media is an effective tool for creating and maintaining customer relationships. Social media consists of different platforms and communities that provide text and content. Consumers do not always have to be members of different communities which makes it possible for anyone to take part in discussions regardless of their education or profession. One of the characteristics of social media is immediate distribution of published content. While this is a good thing for companies, it is also challenging as especially negative things can spread extremely fast without any warning. (Kananen 2013, 13–14.)

Social media has changed fundamentally the way people are communicating with each other. No one can avoid social media anymore and especially if one works with marketing and advertising. Companies must be in social media and entrepreneurs need to include in to their business plans how to utilize social media and networking in their business. Often these are different platforms and blogs that are connected to the business and the target audience. Companies can, for instance, have their own WordPress blog, Facebook page and Twitter account or they can choose some other social media channels that better suit their purposes. (Olin 2011, 13–14.)

### 6.1 Facebook

Facebook is one of the most popular social media platforms in Finland together with YouTube and WhatsApp, as they all have over 2 million users every month. Along with these platforms, Instagram is also extremely popular having around one million users per month. These are significant amounts considering the whole population of Finland and that approximately half of the population is active users of these social media platforms. It is impossible to ignore these figures in terms of finding and engaging the target audience. As social media gives excellent opportunities to close connection, active maintenance and active engaging, Facebook is by far the best platform for all these

purposes. On Facebook it is possible to share high-quality content with all possible elements, such as text, picture, audio and video. The best tool to get audience and traffic is Facebook's Audience Insight which helps companies to reach the target audience of their choice and fine-tune their social media marketing plans. (Raespuro 2018, 96–105.)

There are several good reasons why it is important for businesses to be on Facebook. Most likely the customers and potential customers are on Facebook as mentioned earlier, around half of Finland's population use Facebook actively each month. Facebook is like a modern version of traditional market place or café where people spend time many hours per week. Facebook can be thought of as a showcase for one's business. When companies share interest content on Facebook they increase their visibility and receive more followers. (Fellman 2019.) Followers are people who have opted-in to follow a page or profile on Facebook. The followers then receive updates from the companies they follow in their own timelines. (Anderson 2017.) With Facebook the companies can keep in touch with their customers, ask their opinions, receive feedback, engage the customers, and discuss with them. Moreover, Facebook is an important channel for customer service and when it is done publicly, it creates also a positive company image. An active Facebook builds a trust as it shows that the company does exist. In social media marketing it is important to have clear goals and somehow brand or personalize the company in order it to stand out from the crowd. Good examples for doing this is to reveal or tell something about the company or its owners or employees – show what happens behind the scenes. It is also good to remember not to only sell something but instead create interesting content to the followers and customers. (Fellman 2019, 13–15.)

There are also some things that the companies need to avoid when using social media as marketing channel. The companies should remember not to try to be active in too many social media channel as the activity then gets easily scattered. Instead, It is better to focus only on couple of social media channels and master them. When using social media as marketing channel it is a must to remember to update the chosen channel frequently with good content. Companies should also have clear goals when they use social media and they should also invest in that in case they wish to get results. In addition, it is also important to plan and try boldly, and remember that everything changes fast in social media, thus one should not either plan a whole year ahead on Facebook. (Fellman 2019, 13–15.)

There are various ways to advertise on Facebook and one can use all of the methods or the ones that suit one's marketing and business plans better. Companies tend to use Facebook marketing when the marketing budget is less than 8000 euros a month as there are other marketing options for those who have bigger budgets per months to use. Most common ways to use Facebook as marketing tool are:

- Sponsored (paid) advertising
  - This is the most common way to advertise on Facebook
  - Planning is done the same way than in any other marketing channel and includes the following five elements:
    - Name of marketing campaign
    - Schedule
    - Budget
    - Pricing
    - Making sure that the target page, which is either the marketer's own Facebook page or group or web page, includes the content that was promised on the advert
- News feed advertising
  - Marketing messages that are shown on followers' own feed
  - Higher click rates than sponsored adverts
- Facebook groups, pages and events
  - Facebook groups bring similar people together and makes it easy to share common interests or activities
  - Companies' Facebook pages are optimised for communication, information and content sharing, engaging the existing customers/followers and getting new followers through the recommendation of existing customers/followers
  - Facebook events
    - An excellent way to inform customers and followers about upcoming events organised by the company. (Olin 2011, 19, 23, 32–33, 50, 64, 86, 99, 112.)

## 6.2 Newsletters and e-mail marketing

E-mail marketing has been divided to newsletters and e-mail communication between two or more parties. Newsletters are considered as one-way mass communications, such as sales offers. Target audience for these are the customers or personnel of the company. Newsletters equates to massmarketing or direct marketing. Today, this type of marketing is often considered old and it has also received a bad reputation because of junk e-mails and because the consumers are not able to regulate receiving the e-mails other than deciding whether to open or delete the e-mail or not. However, e-mail marketing is still an effective way to market when the consumer has shown an interest toward the services or products of the company. E-mail marketing is also a good way to keep in touch with the customers and it is often perceived as personal marketing. Even though, e-mail marketing and newsletters' return of investment is often relatively good, its biggest problem is that e-mail systems often classify incoming newsletters as spam. According to some estimates, only one out 100 e-mails leads to opening of the e-mail. (Kananen 2013, 102–103.)

A prerequisite for email marketing is a customer register that is up to date. Many companies send their newsletters without personalisation and that then has an affect on throughput rate that stays low. Targeted and personalised e-mail requires that recipients can be segmented somehow. All companies know at least something about their customers, at least what they have bought before. The starting point for personalised newsletters is to know the customers' purchasing and online behaviour which leads to the detailed differences in e-mail communication. Without this knowledge segmentation and personalisation is superfluous. Moreover, in order to have a control over a large amount of e-mail addresses, some kind of database is necessary. (Kananen 2013, 104–105.) E-mail database is based on customer register of which the generic software is commonly referred to as CRM (customer related marketing). Customer management tools can be connected to e-mail marketing in the same way as other selective marketing, such as sales. These type of tools are based on database softwares that include a lot of information of the customers. These databases are used for searching segmented and relevant subsets of the company for which the e-mail marketing is targeted. Segmentation creates better results and conversion rate gets higher. (Kananen 2013, 110–111.)

### **Conversion and web analytics**

Conversion can be described as measurable measure done by a visitor on a website. Examples of conversions are a purchase on webshop, filled-in Internet form, visiting a web page, clicking a link or button on webpage, length of the visit, average page views and reading a blog, news or an article. (Suomen Digimarkkinointi 2019.) Conversion can also be ordering a newsletter, giving an e-mail address or watching a video. (Kananen 2013, 67.) It is essential for the companies to define their business-relevant conversion goal that they want to achieve. The goal should support the realization of their business strategy and measuring it should be unambiguous. Measurement should be done with web analytics tools, such as Google Analytics. To be successful, it is important to be able to interpret the data received with the web analytics tool. A mere visitor information is not enough as in order to draw conclusions it is important to know more about the visitors; where did they come from and what did they do on the web page and equally importantly what they did not do. (Halonen 2012.) It is possible to follow the conversion results, for example, with Google AdWords which shows the conversion rate. Conversion rate is important to an entrepreneur as it tells how many people have purchased a service or a product per visitor which shows a value of one conversion. An entrepreneur can then calculate how valuable is a visitor's action on the web page converted into euros. (Suomen Digimarkkinointi 2019.) If drop-outs of visitors are high (low conversion rate), it tells that something on the web page does not work and desired result does not happen. Reasons for this can be, for example, that the web page does not satisfy the visitors for one reason or another, web pages receive wrong type of traffic, visitors do not know what they should do on the web page and the visit does not lead to the desired end-result. (Kananen 2013, 68.) The good thing is that anyone can learn search engine optimization (SEO) relatively easy in order to optimize their web page. It is also possible to buy the optimization services from a third party. However, it is good to remember that optimization is continuous activity as the network environment changes all the time. In addition, due to same reason, continuous testing of the functionality of the measures is required. (Kananen 2013, 70.)

### 6.3 Blogs

Blogging is a good way to create remarkable content. A blog can give potential customers a way to engage with the company and give them a premature sales pitch by conversing these potential customers via the blog. Blogs can also change the web page from an online brochure to a living hub, a marketplace. In addition, blogs can dramatically

improve companies' search engine rankings. (Halligan and Shah 2010, 35.) At its best, one can use a company blog to promote the business and engage customers. Of course, the content needs to be good easily shareable and it can then be used as the foundation of social media marketing. If company wants to have a blog on their web page they should then also write and update the blog regularly as blog that has not been updated for months or even years only reflect badly on the company brand, making it look like stagnant instead of dynamic and progressive. (Macarthy 2014, 221–222.) Blogs are seen as electronic diaries or as information channels and client drivers for companies' web pages. One or more people can maintain the blog and the administrator of the blog can also give readers a right to comment on the blog which then makes it more interactive. Blogging is characterized by personality. Companies can have blogs that highlight the company's official perspective. (Kananen 2013, 149.)

People are using Internet to find information and expertise and in order to engage a reader as a permanent reader, the blog needs to be somehow useful to the reader. The benefit and usefulness for the reader is subjective but the writer has to be able to produce valuable information to the reader in an interesting way. (Kananen 2013, 150.) It might be challenging to think about new topics to write about regularly but it can be tackled by taking one important topic and writing about it from variety of different standpoints. (Macarthy 2014, 223.) In order to get audience to the blog companies should also remember to market their blog for example in their newsletters. As it was discussed earlier, it is important that the companies are also following the amount of visitors to their blogs and where the visitors are coming from. Based on the number of visitors one can draw conclusions about the success of the content. The standard tools of web analytics can be of help also with this. Search engine optimisation helps also in company ranking that Google does with their algorithms. Using correct words do not help as such as in blogs the content and text matter. Companies can build their blogs to be one of their marketing channels and the good thing about the blogs are that they do not require a big budget as marketing tools of social media and Internet are nearly free. (Kananen 2013, 153, 156–157.)

## 7 EXECUTION OF RESEARCH

The research follows the service design method, Double Diamond, as well as the timetable, both described earlier in this research. The chosen methods are implemented and the focus is on the earlier presented problem areas. The owners of Luomuspaja are most interested in gathering feedback from their customers and finding the best practice to keep it going also in the future. The commissioners are also interested in to find out what their customers have to say and most importantly, act upon the given feedback and suggestions. In addition, the commissioners are interested to find out which would be the best marketing channel to use. The results of the different surveys as well as the service provided by Luomuspaja are analysed and based on them the author will suggest the owners actions in regards to the possibilities for improvements in the service they provide.

### 7.1 Co-design

Co-design is part of service design process. One of the key elements of the service design is to involve stakeholders to the service design process, to develop the service together with the service designers. Co-design does not, however, mean that everybody who are involved in the process would decide what kind of service is to be produced. The main goal of co-design is that all parties are heard equally and all views related to the service are taken into consideration in the data collection and analysing phase. From these different views service designers pick the best and the most suitable elements that suit the predefined goals of the service development. Co-design is one of the service design methods, not an actual development tool. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 116–118.) The author has been in close communication with the owners of Luomuspaja since the beginning of the research, initial communication at the end of 2017 that is, until the end of the research in spring 2019, and has all the time kept the owners aware of everything and has successfully involved them to the service design process. This co-design method involved five longer meetings with Luomuspaja's owners. First meeting and brainstorming session was held at Luomuspaja's premises in 26th of October 2017 where the author and the owners started to plan the framework for the research and point out what were the biggest issues that Luomuspaja faced. Based on the meeting the research questions for this thesis were formed and reviewed more closely in the



meeting in November 5<sup>th</sup> 2017 at Luomuspaja. However, even though the research project was initiated then at the end of 2017, the actual work started later in the spring, in March 2018 with deciding which questions to use in the first questionnaire and what would be the best way to collect feedback with it. Later in the same year, in August the 15<sup>th</sup> 2018, the author proposed the idea of creating another questionnaire which was welcomed by the commissioners. Together with Kirstilä and Eriksson the author had a new brainstorming session in August 19<sup>th</sup> 2018 where they together concluded that the best time to collect more valuable feedback would be at the Osaava Nainen and Terve Olo exhibition where Luomuspaja was to attend later in October 2018. That left the author about two months to fine-tune the questions and create the online-questionnaire. The questionnaire was reviewed with the commissioners in October 13<sup>th</sup> 2018, about two weeks before the exhibition. The author had a meeting of the final results of the research with the commissioners in February 11<sup>th</sup> 2019 where the author also gave development suggestions based on the results.

## 7.2 Stakeholder map

Stakeholder map illustrates who all are involved in the experience and shows who are the most important actors involved. Stakeholder map helps to better understand who all are involved in the ecosystem. (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 59.) The stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved in this thesis project are presented below in the Stakeholder map, Figure 6.

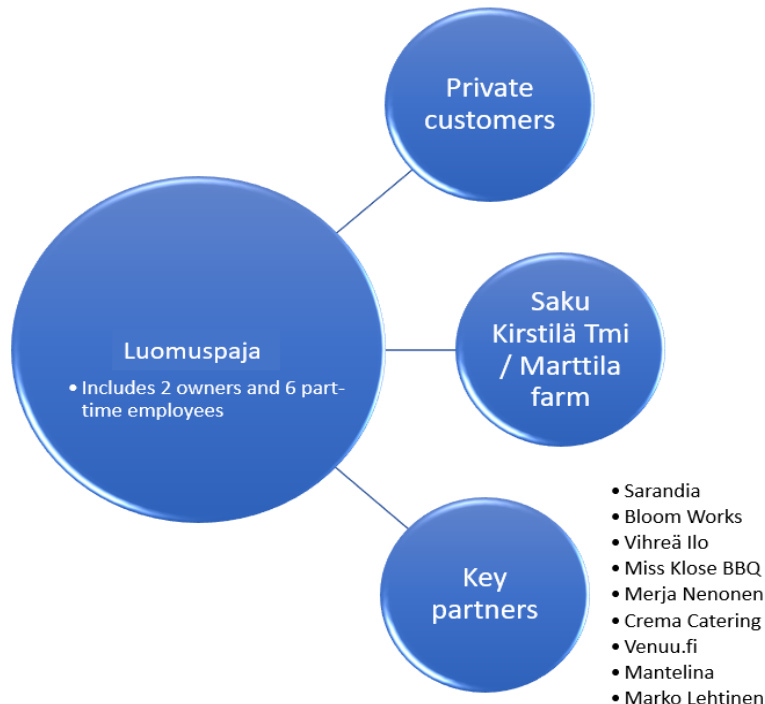


Figure 6. Stakeholder map of Luomuspaja.

The main stakeholders of this survey and in Luomuspaja's ecosystem is Luomuspaja and Saku Kirstilä Tmi. / Marttila's farm who rents premises to Luomuspaja and who also acts as a biller when it comes to electricity, heat and other essential commodities. Other stakeholders are Luomuspaja's employees, customers and key partners who are listed also in the Business Model Canvas. Luomuspaja cooperates with other entrepreneurs especially when they organise big events, such as Christmas market and Harvesting event. However, some of the key partners are leading and / or teaching some of the courses and workshops at Luomuspaja. These key partners are:

- graphic designer, Sarandia
- flower shop, Bloom Works
- natural cosmetics workshops' leader, Vihreä Ilo
- Fast food restaurant, Miss Klose BBQ
- hairdresser for braid workshops, Merja Nenonen
- catering services, Crema Catering
- promotional agency, Venuu.fi
- drawer / designer, Mantelina
- construction works, maintenance, Marko Lehtinen

### 7.3 Business model canvas

Business model canvas is a rather simple tool that can be used to map out a company's business model by using nine building blocks. This tool can be used to understand the influence of many options on the business, employee and customer experience. It is also possible to use business model canvas to compare competitor's business models to yours which can help one to see the areas where one needs to differentiate from competition. (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 76.) Business model canvas is a good and visual platform and tool to use for business development and useful template to use in workshops. Business Model Canvas helps to understand the key business functions and it also brings out the relationships of different functions. Business model canvas' one task is also to show how companies create and bring value to their customers. Business model canvas is divided into nine segments which all represent one key function of a company. (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 175–176.) Luomuspaja's business model canvas is presented below in the Figure 7. The business model canvas explains the core elements that are the drivers of Luomuspaja's business The business model canvas was inspired by the online tool provided by Canvanizer (2019) but the author created the template herself. The business model canvas is separated into nine different segments; key partners of Luomuspaja, key activities, value propositions, customer relationships, customer segments, key resources, channels, cost structure and revenue streams.

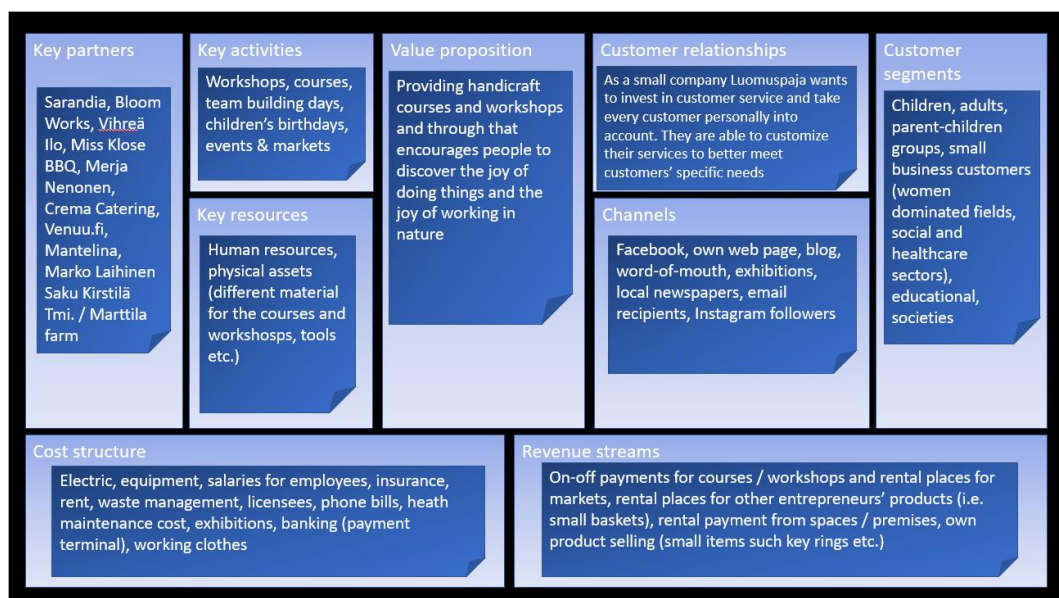


Figure 7. Business model canvas of Luomuspaja.

## 7.4 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is used both for own learning and to improve and development of own services. With benchmarking one can compare different players of the specific industry, what kind of services, products and strategy do they have. Benchmarking is investigating, evaluating, observing, and a good tool to learn about the best practices used by other companies. Benchmarking is also good for pinpointing bad practices which do not work. It can also be used to find new niche areas and also for utilizing completely some other player's logic to own business. Benchmarking can make it also easy for the companies to change their strategic plans when they have found out how their competitors work. In addition, benchmarking can also be used as a tool to stand out positively from other companies when market supply has been investigated with the help of benchmarking. Many companies can also cooperate with each other but companies usually still do not want to share very detailed views of their strategies so that is one reason why benchmarking is a good way to find out more about the other companies. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 138–139.) No one can own any ideas so it is alright to borrow, copy and make use of ideas that are proven to be good and functional. It is also beneficial to explore successful solutions and bring them customised into one's own business. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 185.)

In this research, benchmarking was also used to find out whether there were other similar companies available whose service offering would match with Luomuspaja. The main idea was also to find out what kind of services other similar companies offer and would there be something that Luomuspaja could also take on to their service offering. Benchmarking was done purely on the Internet.

The author started the benchmarking by defining categories to which she wanted to find the answer. Following this, researching was done on the Internet to find out similar Finnish companies than Luomuspaja. Companies whose service offering was similar to Luomuspaja were selected for the benchmarking study.

The chosen companies for the benchmarking were the following companies.

### **Verstas 247, Business A (Limited company)**

Verstas 247 is a company located in central Helsinki. Verstas 247 was selected to be one of the benchmarked companies due their very similar business with Luomuspaja,

and also because Kirstilä and Eriksson have found them interesting. Verstas 247 offers handicraft courses, workshops and events for people of all ages. Verstas 247's business idea is to function like a gym. People can become members and receive a pass which gives them a permission to come and go to the premises of Verstas around the clock. Verstas 247 provides the premises and equipment for its members and makes it possible for people to try different things without having to buy the needed equipment for themselves. Verstas also provides basic handicraft material for its members. It is also possible to buy a share worth of 50 euros and become an owner of Verstas 247. (Verstas 247 2019.)

### **TaavaNainen, Business B (Sole trader)**

TaavaNainen is a single person's company where a craft entrepreneur makes jewellery, cards, reflectors and other little things. In addition, the entrepreneur arranges courses where she teaches people to use different craft techniques and tools, and she also does fund-raising. TaavaNainen has also an online shop and small boutique in Helsinki, TaavaNainen Putiikki, which is the only shop where one can find furniture and supplies for doll houses. (TaavaNainen 2019.)

### **Sirpa Luukkonen, Business C (Sole Trader)**

Like TaavaNainen, also Sirpa Luukkonen is a small one person's company. Sirpa Luukkonen creates interior and art ceramics and makes jewellery, cards and oil paintings. She has won Entrepreneur of the year 2012 in Huittinen award and been active in different projects aimed for handicraft entrepreneurs which all have boosted arts and crafts industry and handicraft entrepreneurs' marketing, networking and internationalisation. Sirpa Luukkonen works also as a travel guide in Huittinen area. In addition, she arranges tailor made courses where she teaches handicraft and occasionally some events. The webpage did not give more specific details about the courses nor events. (Sirpa Luukkonen 2019.)

### **Ideoista Todeksi, Business D (Sole trader)**

Ideoista Todeksi is relatively versatile in their service offering. Like the previous companies, also this one is a company of one woman, who organises handicraft workshops and courses. Her own events include, for instance, wellness evenings, non-stop workshops and different work shows, events for couples to strengthen their relationships and above all this she also is a nail artist and provides nail artist services.

She also offers her hand to other people to organise events. In addition, Ideoista Todeksi also has an online shop where she sells interior design, jewellery and accessories, to name a few. Ideoista Todeksi is located in Ruovesi, Pirkanmaa region. (Ideoista Todeksi 2019.)

### **Helmikauppa Blingi, Business E (Sole trader)**

Helmikauppa Blingi is a small shop in Turku centrum specialised in making and selling components and parts for jewellery making. They also repair jewellery that have got broken or have seen already their best days. Like all the other companies in this benchmarking, also this one is a small shop run by one woman. In addition to running the shop, she also organises different types of jewellery making courses. In her courses she teaches how to use different material and techniques. The courses have been themed as, for example, leather jewellery course, earring course, bracelet course, glass locket courses et cetera. Helmikauppa Blingi does not have an online shop. (Helmikauppa Blingi 2019.)

All the above little handicraft companies were selected due to some similarities at least with the first glance. More detailed view in benchmarking revealed how similar or dissimilar they actually were (see Table 1 below). Company names are shown in the table 1 below as A, B, C, D and E due to long real company names and better readability of the table. Only Luomuspaja's name is shown in the table to better understand the comparison.

Table 1. Benchmarking Luomuspaja vs. other similar businesses.

Category	Luomuspaja	A	B	C	D	E
Offers handicraft courses / workshops	x	x	x	x	x	x
Reasonable prices per course	x	x	x			x
Wide range of courses	x	x	x		x	x
Customer loyalty program						
Organises markets / big events	x	x	x		x	
Interesting environment	x	x			x	x
Activities for children (specifically mentioned)	x				x	x
Activities for adults	x	x	x	x	x	x
Activities for whole family	x					x
Online shop		x	x		x	
Easy booking system		x				x
Real-time info on availability (courses/free places, products, other services)		x				x
Information about coming courses & activities	x	x			x	x
Prices clearly shown	x	x	x			x
Information about the company / owners	x	x		x	x	
Fund-raising, charity work	x		x			
Courses also on weekends		x			x	
Inspiring blog		x			x	

As mentioned earlier, all gathered information was from the companies' own web pages. The author picked the categories by thinking what kind of features were the most interesting and important features that these type of companies could provide on their own web pages which would interests also possible customers. The author also briefly discussed with different people to find out what kind of features they would like to find out from the web pages.

Company A was most similar with Luomuspaja but this was not surprising as their service offering was very much alike. Company A provides different type of handicraft courses, workshops and events to their customers and to anyone who is interested to try out. None of the companies offer customer loyalty program which means that regular customers would get some reduction in the course price when attending again in the future. This, however, still could be happening but it is just not mentioned on the web page. The author still thought that the reason for this was that these companies are small and the prices for their courses are already reasonable and relatively low and therefore no reductions are needed. However, the companies can still sometimes have some

special one-time offers like Luomuspaja did at the Osaava Nainen and Terve Olo exhibition in 2018 as a thank you gesture for people to answering to one of the surveys that was done for this research. Company A, though, has an interesting idea around their business. Anyone can buy a stock worth of 50 euros and become a shareholder of the company. Their business is run like gyms which means that people can go to one course and pay only for that, or they can buy a serial card for 10 times or pay a monthly or annual fee and attend to as many courses, workshops and events as they can.

Company C did not provide much information about the courses or workshops they offer. It was clear, that the company's owner is busy and talented and is involved in many events and happenings, The company's web page also revealed that the owner provides courses herself but in order to find out more about their contents, prices and locations, one needs to contact the owner by phone or email. Most of the companies showed clearly on their web pages the prices of the activities they organise, which makes it easy for potential customer to make the decision whether the activity is worth going and whether it has a good price-quality ratio or not. Of course, this price-quality can be properly evaluated after participation to the activity.

Only two of these companies, Company A and E, showed on their web page the real-time situation when booking a place to a course. This feature would be excellent feature for all companies as it is informative and customer does not have to wait for the answer back whether or not the course was already fully booked. The author thought that it would also be extremely useful functionality for Luomuspaja to have on their webpage. Majority of these benchmarking companies are using rather traditional email booking where customers either need to send an email to the company and express their interests in attending to the course. Some of the web pages also had a form where customer fills in their contact details and which course they would like to attend and send it off. Companies B and C did not have any information on how to enroll but only the contact details were presented. Thus, the author assumed that people should either call or send an email and request more information on the availability of the courses and workshops.

Some of the companies have also an online shop where they sell their own products. Luomuspaja has recently, at the end of 2018, opened a possibility to other small entrepreneurs to sell their products in Luomuspaja's premises. Luomuspaja also sells some of their own products but they do now have an online shop where one could buy their products. Their core business is not to sell their products but to sell their expertise on teaching people how to create products themselves. Based on the benchmarking, it



seemed to be relatively common, that handicraft companies sell their own products rather than teach their own expertise as their core business. This is what Luomuspaja has been trying to aim too, to differentiate themselves from other similar companies and based on the benchmarking, they have also succeeded in that.

Company D's profile was rather similar with Luomuspaja. Both companies have equivalent service offering and the backgrounds of these owners were also surprisingly similar. There were of course some dissimilarities in their service offering but the author recommended the owners of Luomuspaja to have a closer look at this company to see if there are any services Kirstilä and Erikosson could also think of bringing in to their own service offering.

None of the companies revealed anything from their strategies but that was not surprising as this benchmarking involved small private companies which usually do not reveal that kind of information to public. What was common for all the companies, including Luomuspaja and excluding company B, was that all of them were small companies, run by one or maximum two persons, all women. Majority of the companies were sole traders and all of them had been founded based on the interest of making living on something they all had first done as a hobby.

## 7.5 Service safari

Service safari is one of the service design methods to understand services. In service safari researchers go to the location that is being investigated to see and experience the service him/herself. Service safari can be focused only on particular service or a range of services. Service safaris are usually done in the beginning of the process as they are easy way to give a good idea of what part of the services work fine and which do not necessarily so well. The key of the service safari is to identify relevant and engaging services that give insights to the researchers. The output of the Service Safaris can be written or visual records and can also include photographs, videos or drawings. (Design Council 2018, 14.) The author herself wanted to see the service also from a customer point of view and to see if there was anything she could have pinpointed to be improved, things that already worked well and possibly something that were still missing.

The author attended three different workshops that Luomuspaja arranged. In addition, the author had been a visitor in couple of harvesting events and Christmas markets. All

these workshops and events were organised in 2017 and 2018. One harvesting event the author attended before this research had started, but the author decided to include that event to this research anyway as she visited Luomuspaja then as a regular customer. Therefore the author was able to evaluate and compare the event to the later harvesting event, when she acted already as an observer using service safari method.

### 7.5.1 Harvesting event

The first event that the author took part was the harvesting event in autumn 2017. This event was organised slightly before the author originally discussed with the owners of Luomuspaja about doing this research for them. The harvesting event had also been organised before 2017, so the farm had lots of visitors who were already familiar with the event. When the author compared the harvesting event to the same event a year later in 2018, the biggest visible changes were that there were slightly more visitors and entrepreneurs selling their own products. In addition, Luomuspaja had organised more activities for the children who visited the event with their parents. Kirstilä had also included their own two giant rabbit pets as an attraction point for the children in 2018, and these rabbits were visible to the audience near one of the children's activity map points. As an observer, the author also paid attention to the facilities and surrounding areas. Between 2017 and 2018 Luomuspaja had done some bigger changes to the surrounding areas and facilities. When Luomuspaja still did not have a proper parking lot in 2017, it meant that visitors parked their cars all over the farmland, and also close to the farmhouse and Luomuspaja premises. By the year 2018, Kirstilä and Eriksson had already built a small parking lot next to the premises of Luomuspaja, where all visitors could now park. However, the parking lot is not huge and thus majority of the visitors of bigger events, still have to park their cars on the road and anywhere else where there are available spaces. This time, in 2018, Luomuspaja had, however, blocked visitors to park close to the farmhouse and Luomuspaja's premises to provide safer area for the visitors. Of course, some of the entrepreneurs still had to park somewhere in the backyard of the farmhouse with the permission of Saku Kirstilä (the owner of the farm), but that was handled so that it did not cause any problems for the visitors and did not block anyone's way.

The author enjoyed the atmosphere that Luomuspaja had managed to create. All visitors, including the author, seemed to be happy and enjoyed different activities. The weather

was sunny and relatively warm which also made the author to enjoy the outdoor event. It was great to see how children found the surrounding of farm land interesting and organised activities amusing. Luomuspaja had also asked a giant rabbit mascot to walk around in the farm and talk to the children. The author thought that this was a brilliant new addition that clearly delighted both children and adults. Below in the Figure 8 a collage of pictures taken from one of the harvesting events arranged by Luomuspaja.



Figure 8. Harvesting event 2018 at Luomuspaja.

### 7.5.2 Christmas market

The author also visited both Christmas markets in 2017 and in 2018. The same points stood out as in the harvesting events. In addition, one good improvement that Luomuspaja had also done since 2017 was that they had changed the entrance to the old cowshed, where majority of the market activity took place. Back in 2017, one still had to either take rather steep stairs upstairs to the cowshed next to Luomuspaja's entrance, or walk to the main entrance of the cowshed. Many people took the stairs as they were right next to the premises of Luomuspaja, which also arranged different workshops during the event. The stairs were also next to the cafeteria area which has always been located in front of the cowshed as a kiosk type of cafe. This easily created jams in the stairs and in the entrance area of Luomuspaja. Luomuspaja blocked the stairs in 2018, and the only entrance to the cowshed is nowadays the main entrance on the other end of the cowshed. This does not cause any big jams in the entrance area as the main entrance is much wider and will not get blocked easily even with large amount of visitors.

Both harvesting event and Christmas market have similar agenda. They both are open for different entrepreneurs to come to sell their own products, and Luomuspaja also organises workshops in their premises as well as different activities for the children. Entrepreneurs have their own small dedicated areas both inside and outside of the cowshed where the visitors can come and see their products and make purchases. Figure 9 below shows one entrepreneur's products that were for sale. As an observer the author noticed that the lightning of the cowshed could be improved as it was rather dark in there, especially in the Christmas market when it is already relatively dark in the daytime. Some additional lighting would definitely be welcomed. Another thing that the author noticed was the temperature of the cowshed. It could be heated maybe with some extra radiators so that it would be more comfortable for the entrepreneurs and visitors. However, the author noted that since majority of the exhibitors were inside the cowshed and not outside, the cowshed was still well protected from the wind, unlike many other Christmas markets arranged for example in Turku centrum.

The atmosphere in the Christmas event was Christmassy and it made the author and her companions feel joyful. Kirstilä's mother worked at the market and served Christmas porridge to the visitors dressed up as a Christmas elf. All these types attentions to little details greatly increased the good atmosphere. The Christmas market is always organised in late November when the temperature is always cold. Due to many cold months in Finland and as some of the activities are always arranged outside and some inside the cowshed, it could be an idea in the future to provide fleece blankets to visitors in case they feel that extra warmth is needed.

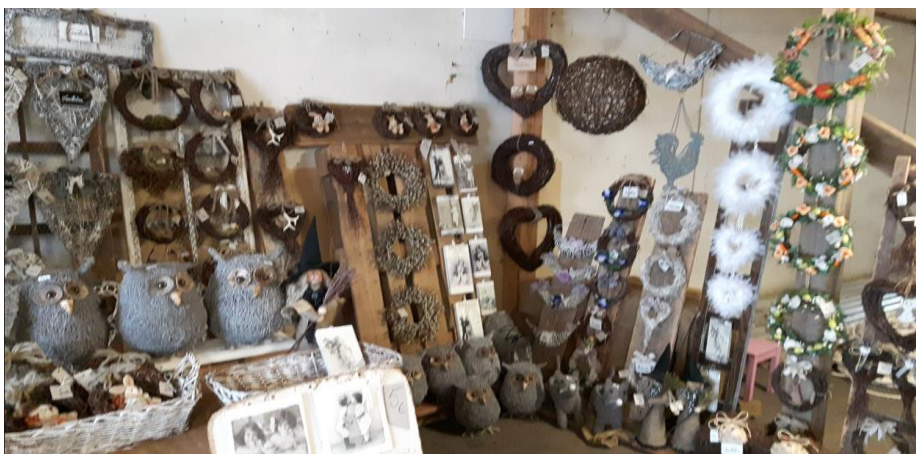


Figure 9. Products for sale on the Christmas market.

### 7.5.3 Braid workshop

The author also participated three different workshops to see how the different courses with different teachers worked in practice. First one that the author took part was braid workshop in May the 7th 2018. In that workshop a hairdresser run the course and taught the participants how to make different type of braids. The instructions of the course stated that participants should take someone with them who they can practice the braids with. The author's pair got ill just before the course but fortunately there was one other person without a pair so they teamed up and had both a head to practice with. The workshop went well. The hairdresser used one of the participants as a model when she showed different braid styles and techniques. After that she walked around to help people to do the braids correctly and gave some tips. The workshop lasted two hours and the time went fast as the time for practice is only one hour per person. The hairdresser had brought all needed supplies (comb, brush, salt spray to create texture for the hair and hairbands) with her for the participants to use during the course. The hairdresser had also made small packages consisting of hairbands, comb and salt spray which the participants were able to buy after the workshop. The course cost 20 euros per person and included the teaching, supplies to work with as well as tea, coffee and some biscuits. The author found that reasonable price for the two hour class. The enrolment for the course was done via e-mail. Customers can see from Luomuspaja's web page which courses and workshops they have to offer, and when the customers have picked the ones they would like to participate, they send an e-mail to Luomuspaja to enroll to the courses. In case the customers do not want to send an e-mail, calling to Luomuspaja is also an option. After that they will turn up to the course and can pay the course at the premises of Luomuspaja. If the course happens to be fully booked, Luomuspaja will notify the customers about that prior to the course and they also try to fastly update that information to their Facebook page as well as to their web page.

### 7.5.4 Glass locket course

The second course the author participated was a glass locket course on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018. The enrolment happened the same way as to the braid class. The author had planned to go with a friend who would act as a main observer but unfortunately also this time the author's friend got ill and the author needed to participate on her own and act again as

the main and only observer. This time the other owner, Kirstilä, was present only in the beginning of the course and left shortly after. Before she left, she reminded participants about the price of the course and how many jewellerys it included and that with extra money it was possible to make more jewellerys if someone was interested and had time to make more than the three that were included in the price. After this information, a relatively new employee took over and acted as the teacher for the course. The teacher was nice and friendly and showed carefully what and how to do different things. The author noticed that people, including the author herself, felt relaxed and started fairly soon chat with other people. Some of the people had arrived with their friends so they of course had been talking with each other all the time, but also people who were strangers to each other started talking and sharing ideas of what kind of jewellerys to make and what could be a good picture to place under the glass. Coffee, tea, juice and biscuits were included in the course price and it was nice to have a cup of coffee in the middle of the jewellery making and then continue again. This little break offered a small break from the work which allowed the brain to create new ideas again for the handicraft work.

The course was scheduled to last two hours but it went a little overtime as some people made more than three jewellerys and those who did not, were still working on with their three jewellerys. For the author it did take a long time to find pictures that she approved for her jewellerys (see Figure 8) as she had not remembered to take her own pictures with her. Some people had taken a picture of their child or some other important picture they wanted to put behind the glass. The author thought that, prior to the course, it might be a good idea for Luomuspaja to send an automatic reminder to the participants about what the participant should remember to do (if the course requires any own preparation) so that the actual course time is then not used too much for preparation work. However, in the glass locket jewellery making, one step is to find the picture but that could be done also earlier or by providing selection of pictures to use. One solution is to extend the workshop time from two to three hours. In addition, the lights could be brighter as at that point of time, it was fairly dim inside. Dim lighting of course creates a nice atmosphere but especially in the dark season of the year it would be good to have brighter light in the workshop as the courses are usually held in the evenings.



Figure 10. Glass locket jewellerys made in the course.

#### 7.5.5 Charity workshop

The third workshop that the author took part was Luomuspaja's charity workshop for cancer society called Fuck Cancer. Altogether 25 people were able to participate the workshop where during two hours everyone tried to make as many bracelets as possible. All bracelets were made for the cancer society and the society then sold them to collect money for their charity work. The workshop Luomuspaja arranged was free and included all the material and strict instructors for the bracelets. Material and instructions came from the cancer society and it was not allowed to do any other kind of bracelets than the ones the society had instructed as they all needed to be exactly the same (see Figure 9). The atmosphere was nice and extremely social as people were laughing and joking while trying to make as many bracelets as possible in the given two hour's time. Closer to the end of the workshop it was found out that there were not enough material for all bracelets and Luomuspaja's owners needed to step in to find some similar material from their own stock. This, of course, was not Luomuspaja's fault that the material run out, as all the cancer workshop material was provided by the cancer society. Nevertheless, this did not anger anyone as the workshop was organised for a great purpose and this way Luomuspaja could only inform the cancer society about the correct amount of the material needed for the coming Fuck Cancer workshops. Everything went well and everybody felt good about taking part of charity work.





Figure 11. Workshop of Fuck Cancer bracelets.

Below, in Table 2, the notes from the different workshops summarized.

Table 2. Summary of service safari.

SERVICE SAFARI	CURRENT STAGE	IMPROVEMENT AREAS
Harvesting event	Popular and congested, good atmosphere, lot of activities	Outdoor lights, signs, parking
Christmas market	Popular, good atmosphere, lot activities, needs more lights due to dark time of the year	Outdoor lights, signs, extra radiators, parking
Braid course	Good atmosphere, good teaching	Longer course time
Glass locket course	Good teaching, good atmosphere, good variety of material	Information letter, material
Charity workshop	Good cause, good atmosphere, people want to take part and help	Material check with the cancer society
Common notes to workshops and courses	Generally good teaching, activities and atmosphere in all courses, workshops and events	Enrolment system, course availability information, payment options

Below also a summary (Table 3) of the whole service safari experience with different areas that stood out.



Table 3. Areas that stood out in service safari.

AREAS THAT STOOD OUT
Events, such as Christmas market and Harvesting event have both clearly grown in size since earlier years
More external entrepreneurs have taken part in the big events
Parking in the farmland during the events have been challenging
More activities have been added to the events to attract both children and adults
Entrance to market area has been changed and separated from Luomuspaja's entrance
Lights are quite dim everywhere and could be changed to brighter ones – especially in Luomuspaja's premises
Heating in the cowshed could be improved as it can be a bit cool in there during Christmas markets
Some courses / workshops require more time and could last little bit longer
Prices are reasonable and relatively inexpensive
Coffee, tea, juice, water and some small snacks are also always included in the prices as well as some pre-decided amount of material that is needed for the course / workshop
It is possible to use more material with additional cost. For example: a glass locket course costs 20€ and includes material for 3 jewellers and drinks and snacks and if one wants to make more jewellerys, the cost for one extra is 5€.
Teachers are all very friendly and professional
Atmosphere is encouraging and friendly. In addition, participants are often willing to help each other if needed

## 7.6 Mystery shopper study

Mystery shoppers are used to send in to the place that is being observed to audit specific areas of the service that has been specified by the commissioner. Mystery shoppers are given instructions which they need to follow in order to provide feedback about the service they audit. (AQ Services 2018.) The author wanted to try this method to see whether the feedback from the mystery shoppers provide similar or different feedback than from the other customers who are asked to provide feedback after the workshop. The author asked four people to act as mystery shoppers in Luomuspaja's courses or workshops. The mystery shoppers were given seven questions about Luomuspaja, including questions about the whole service process, from enrolment to the end of the course. The survey was done in Word document in Finnish language, which the mystery shoppers filled in after they had attended to the workshops. All mystery shoppers attended in different times during 2018. No specific dates or workshops were asked as the main idea was not to target any specific course or workshop but rather to evaluate the whole service process. However, one of the mystery shoppers was also asked to

evaluate Luomuspaja's Christmas Market 2018 as the author knew that this mystery shopper had also planned to visit the market. All mystery shoppers were female, aged between 37 and 64. All mystery shoppers lived either in Turku or in surrounding areas.

The mystery shoppers were asked to evaluate the following areas. The questions and answers have been translated from Finnish to English.

1. *How did you experience the service offering of Luomuspaja?*

All four mystery shoppers felt that the service offering was currently versatile. They also mentioned that it would be good if the most popular courses, such as jewellery making courses, were arranged more often. One mystery shopper also suggested that Luomuspaja could ask their customers which would be the courses the customers would like to have more often.

2. *How did you find the enrolment system of the course?*

The mystery shoppers all thought that Luomuspaja's email booking was easy. However, they all mentioned that it would be good if the booking system would be more real-time. They suggested either a direct link as a booking to the course or an online booking form where one can see the availability of the places to the course in real time. In addition, they said that in the current form it would be good to receive a confirmation after the booking is done.

3. *Do you think the current payment method is sufficient, or would you like some other options?*

Currently the courses and workshops can be paid at Luomuspaja when one arrives to the course or workshop. Three of the four mystery shoppers felt that the current payment system is sufficient enough and as one of them stated that it does not really matter which payment method is in use as all methods nowadays are rather easy and fast to use. One of the mystery shoppers, however, felt that it would be easier if one could get immediately payment details in order to pay the course in online bank prior to the course. The author thought that this was a valid point. However, it would need Kirstilä and Eriksson to make changes to Luomuspaja's payment system so that they could then also give the money back in case the participant gets ill and is not able to attend the course. Despite this, this kind of method is already widely in use in many other companies so it probably is easily realizable.

4. *How did you find the price-quality ratio?*

One mystery shopper did not answer the question but three others did. All of them found the price-quality ratio good in general and mentioned that many of the courses are courses they had not been able to find elsewhere and therefore it has not been so far necessary to compete with the prices. One mystery shopper said that there are some courses that she found expensive but as she had not participated to those particular courses herself, she was not able to give any opinion on whether those courses price-quality ratio was justified or not. In general all the courses were fairly priced, she thought.

5. *What do you think works well when thinking about the whole process starting from the moment you found an interesting course up until you attended the course? Here you can also take into account the course environment, i.e. physical spaces (interior spaces of Luomuspaja, environment of Luomuspaja, car park, lighting, etc.) as well as guidance and materials.*

This question received lot of good feedback from the mystery shoppers. It showed that they had really paid attention to the whole process and thought about possible improvement ideas. Mystery shoppers found, in general, the whole process pleasant and easy-going but they did also have some ideas on how to improve the overall process and customer experience even further. Prior to the course, it was hoped, that the participants would get a short welcome e-mail that would also include instructions on how to get to Luomuspaja and guidance where to find the car park and where the actual Luomuspaja's premises are located. It was also noted that Luomuspaja lacked proper signs from the car park that would show the visitors where the workshop is being held. The author went to Luomuspaja's premises to see the signs and noted that some existed but they were not easily visible in the dark and the sign in the parking lot was located too low to be seen if a car had been parked in the first lot. These signs are presented below in the Figures 12–20. The Figures show the path from the bigger road, next to the farm land, to the premises of Luomuspaja. In the daylight it is easy to see the signs but in the dark times it is not easy to read the signs until the signs are very close. In addition, the sign in the Figure 15 is easily blocked behind parked cars which then leads people not finding the way to Luomuspaja that easily. The solution would be to place this sign higher so that it is still visible even when there are parked cars in the parking lot.



Figure 12. Road sign to Luomuspaja.

Road sign is good size and very visible in the daylight. However, in the dark time it is not easy to see what the sign says. It is good, though, that the sign has reflective material in it as it then gets attention of a driver. Solution could be to write the name with big black letters to the gray lower part of the sign to make it more clear what the sign says.



Figure 13. Road signs to Luomuspaja.

The signs in Figure 13 are very well visible and there are no need to do anything to these signs.



Figure 14. Sign to parking lot.

Guidance to the parking lot is done with the three different signs shown in the Figure 14. These signs are located well, next to the entry for the parking lot. However, they could be located slightly higher to make them even more visible for the visitors.



Figure 15. A sign guiding to the stairs.

A sign, in the Figure 15, pointing to the stairs that leads to premises of Luomuspaja is easily blocked by the first car that parks to the parking lot. This sign could be located higher for better visibility. It is also seen in this picture that during the dark times of a year the stairs can be quite dark and some lights could be installed next to stairs in order to visitors to better see where they are going as well as preventing possible accidents due to darkness and stairs.



Figure 16. Stairs leading to Luomuspaja.

Figure 16 shows one sign that is located at the end of the stairs. The location is good and ensures visitor's feeling that she or he is on the right path. As one can see, during a day time it is easy to see and walk in the stairs but in the dark time there could be some lights guiding the way.



Figure 17. Sign next to stairs.

Closer caption of the signs at the end of the stairs is seen in the Figure 17. Kirstilä and Eriksson have placed also a movable stand (see Figure 18) after the stairs to guide the visitors to the right place and preventing the visitors to go to the farm house (red house in the Figure 17).



Figure 18. Movable stand.

Moreover, Kirstilä and Eriksson have placed a big sign to the wall next to the door of Luomuspaja which is relatively visible for the visitors. This sign's visibility in the daylight and in the dark is shown below in the Figures 19 and 20.



Figure 19. Luomuspaja sign in daylight.



Figure 20. Luomuspaja's sign in the darkness.

The mystery shoppers and the author noted, though, that when there are some activity in Luomuspaja, the candles are lit next to the door of Luomuspaja, shown in the Figures 19 and 20, making it therefore easier for customers to see the outside sign.

In addition, also the mystery shoppers felt that there could also be more lights outside from the parking lot to Luomuspaja as the path and stairs to the Luomuspaja were fairly dark, especially in the dark time of the year. One mystery shopper also mentioned that this is important especially when one participates the course for the first time and has no previous knowledge of the area and premises. Mystery shoppers also mentioned that even though the lighting in the Luomuspaja was idyllic, it still would be nice to have little more light available especially during those course and workshops where one needs to work with small details. One also mentioned that this is especially important to the older people. The author thought that maybe Luomuspaja could purchase some table lights that could be used by the participants in case they need more light as it could be bigger renovation to renew the whole lighting system in the workshop. Table lights would be cheaper, faster and an easy to fix. Outdoor lighting is of course bigger issue for the owners to consider.

Mystery shoppers also mentioned that current Facebook marketing of coming courses and workshops has been a good information channel as it reaches big audience easily. However, they also said that Luomuspaja' web page should also include an up-to-date list of coming courses and dates. One mystery shopper also suggested an idea / wish box to the customers to Luomuspaja's premises where the customers could leave their ideas of what kind of courses and workshops they wish Luomuspaja could arrange in the future. One suggestion was also to arrange realistic experiences at Luomuspaja's surroundings as the big farmland could provide a framework for that. This idea was not, however, opened up in more detail. In addition, one suggestion was to arrange longer courses where participants could continue their work from the point where they left it in

the previous time. Workshops for the whole families were also suggested for Luomuspaja to arrange in the future.

6. *What do you think could be improved, when thinking about the same aspects mentioned in the previous question?*

Majority of the improvement suggestions were given to the question number five but some feedback was received still also to this question. One mystery shopper also mentioned the extra table lamps like the author thought earlier. Moreover, more signs outside and generally more light were also requested again by the mystery shoppers. They also mentioned that during the bigger events it would be good to have lollipop ladies or men to guide the heavy traffic. The author remarked, that since these mystery shoppings had been done, the owners had hired one person to guide the traffic during the peak hours of the Christmas market in 2018 indicating that this request might have already been told to them by the previous markets' visitors.

7. *Would you participate again Luomuspaja´s courses or workshops?*

All mystery shoppers answered that they would absolutely participate again in future courses or workshops.

8. *How would you evaluate Luomuspaja on the scale 1–10 and why?*

The average grade for Luomuspaja by the mystery shoppers was 8,4. Two of the mystery shoppers gave Luomuspaja 8, one 8.5 and one 9. Reasoning behind the grades were that there is always room for improvement and due to current lightning and guides one feels that 8.5 is a fair grade. A capture of the mystery shopper questionnaire that was given to the mystery shoppers can be found from the list of appendices (appendix 1).



The results of the mystery shoppings are summarized below in Table 4.

Table 4. Mystery shopping findings.

MYSTERY SHOPPING'S MAIN FINDINGS IN BRIEF
Current offering is quite versatile
Popular courses / workshops could be arranged more often
Booking, availability and payment should be working real-time
Price-quality ratio was generally found good by all mystery shoppers
Instruction and welcome letter was hoped to be received prior to the course / workshops
Better and more visible signs to parking lot and to Luomuspaja premises
Brighter lights to the workshop and outside
Longer lasting courses
Traffic guides for big events
All mystery shoppers would definitely go back
Average score was 8,4 out of 10

## 7.7 Surveys

In service design there are a huge amount of different research methods that one can choose from in order to get meaningful data. In this research both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used in the surveys. Quantitative methods are often surveys and sample sizes are usually large. Quantitative research's findings can be expressed as numbers or percentages as the quantitative research method uses statistical and mathematical methods. Qualitative research methods try to understand people's daily experiences and tries to receive the answers to questions like why and how. This method is used to obtain insight about people's emotions and attitudes. (Martin and Hanington 2012, 36–37.) The surveys in this research had both quantitative and qualitative questions in order for the author to receive better data and feedback about Luomuspaja's status quo and their customers' wishes for the future. However, the author wanted the main focus of the surveys to be on qualitative questions as like also Tuulaniemi says, in qualitative research the main focus is to draw conclusions from more multi-dimensional research data than what the mere quantitative data would provide. The results of qualitative research are more descriptive, evaluating and creative. Qualitative research answers to questions what, how and why. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 144.)

Survey is a good method to collect information and data from many participants. They can take the form of a questionnaire or face-to-face interview. Survey is also a good method to use as it is easy to analyse and manage and it is usually possible to conduct surveys with relatively low cost. Surveys are also easy to complete and they are flexible for participants with regard to time to complete the survey. (Curedale 2013, 252.) The author and the commissioners agreed in the beginning when planning the research that it would be the best way to use couple of different surveys (online and paper form) in order to reach as many of their customers and potential future customers as possible. It was also decided as this way it is possible to receive a big amount of data and draw meaningful conclusions based on them. It is also relatively easy to get customers to participate the service design process when using survey as one of the research methods. This is important as the benefits of co-development is to commit all parties to service development process (Tuulaniemi 2011, 117). According to Tuulaniemi, one of the most critical steps of service design is increasing customer understanding which is the phase where feedback is gathered and then analysed to design services to meet customers' needs and wishes. That is why it is critical to detect and identify customers' real needs and motives and then be successful. Customer surveys are used for information acquisition which means researching that type of material that can be directly utilized as such. Customer understanding is both qualitative and quantitative but the understanding of customer needs and aspirations that are based on practical experience received by qualitative research is more compelling and significant for service planning and development. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 142–143.)

#### 7.8 Customer survey 1, paper questionnaire

The author and the commissioners started to think about the questions to be asked from the customers in November 5<sup>th</sup> 2017. First customer survey was decided to be a paper form which Luomuspaja's owners and their employees would use after every course to collect feedback from their private customers (see appendix 2). The questionnaire was created simply with Microsoft Word as it had been planned in the beginning of the research with the commissioners.

The author and the commissioners agreed that the paper questionnaire should be short enough so that people have time and will to answer to it, but it should include the questions that answer to the research questions and would therefore help Luomuspaja

and the author to study the current stage and improvement possibilities. The end result was that four questions were created for the paper form; two numerical and two open ended questions. It was available always during every course or workshop arranged in Luomuspaja's premises. It was the teachers' of the workshops and courses responsibility to make sure that they asked the participants to fill in the survey to provide valuable feedback to Luomuspaja. It was also agreed with the commissioners that the teachers would also mention to their customers that the feedback was used to improve their services and that it was also used in master's thesis for Turku University of Applied Sciences. The questionnaire was in Finnish as Luomuspaja's operating language is Finnish and majority of their customers' mother tongue is Finnish.

### **Results from the paper form**

Feedback from Luomuspaja's customers were collected with the paper form since March 20<sup>th</sup> 2018 until February 5<sup>th</sup> 2019 leaving it plenty of time to receive enough customer feedback and also from different types of courses and workshops. The caption of the paper form can be found from the appendices (appendix 2).

In the beginning of the feedback form the instructions were clearly written to inform the respondents how to fill in the form. This was done because people can easily interpret scales wrong without proper instructions. The author used to work nearly a decade in a research company where she noticed that kind of behaviour of people who took part in different surveys. The first question was *'How would you rate the course/workshop' on a scale 0–5 where 5 is the best grade and 0 the worst?'* The second question was *'How would you rate the price-quality ratio of the course/workshop?'* These two were the only numerical questions in this survey. The last two questions were open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are good to use as they give the respondent freedom to give as detailed answer as they would like to give without any limitations. This is a good way to receive relevant answers and get more information and clarifications to the answers behind the numbers. Open-ended questions can also give some very unexpected of unique knowledge that closed survey questions or numbers would not able to give, Open-ended questions are also a good way to gather feedback that one needs that could not be discovered by asking only yes/no or multiple-choice answers. (Questback 2015.)

The first open-ended question in this particular form asked the respondent *'How could we develop our business?'* followed by the second open-ended question *'Free word'*,

allowing the respondent to give feedback about anything she/he felt relevant and what had not already been mentioned previously.

In total, 105 individual feedback were given during late March 2018 and early February 2019. This was a very good result. The owners mentioned that sometimes the teachers did not remember to ask participants to give feedback for the courses and workshops, but nevertheless, the result was good and gave a clear picture of what majority of Luomuspaja's customers thought about the current stage, service offering and possibilities for future. The courses and workshops where the feedback were collected from, were concrete mass courses where concrete mass was used to make for example lanterns and elves, glass locket jewellery courses, macramé, soap making workshops, wreath courses where recycling material and natural resources were used for making wreaths, natural cosmetics making courses and braids courses. Below, in the Figure 21, a distribution of the courses where the feedback was gathered.

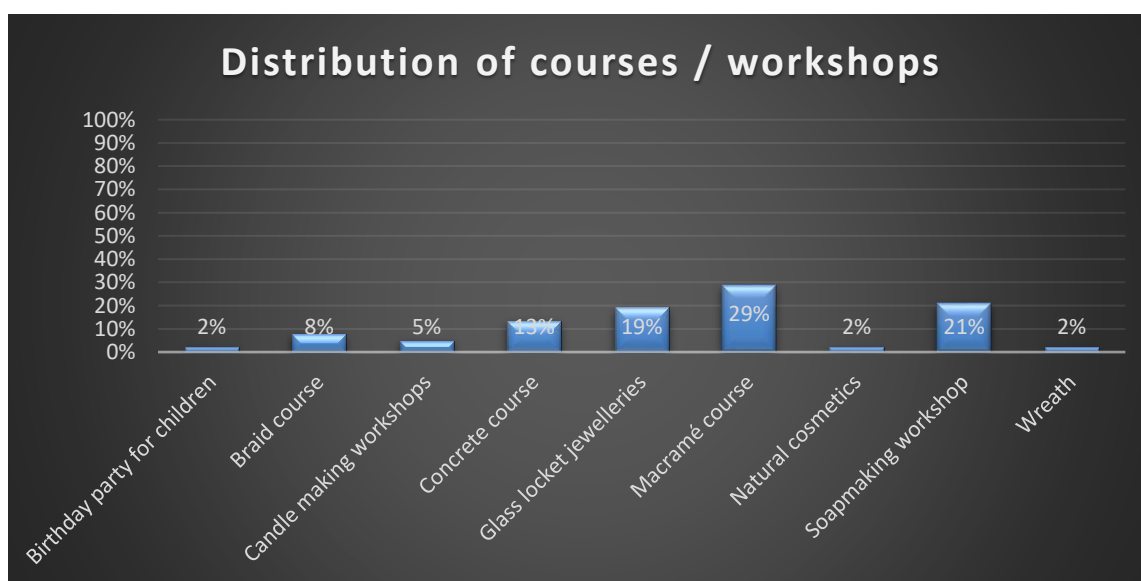


Figure 21. Distribution of courses.

Majority of the feedback was collected from macramé, soapmaking and glass locket jewellery courses. This also supported the service offering as these courses and workshops are the most popular ones and they are also arranged on a regular basis (Kirstilä and Eriksson 2019).

Majority of the respondents gave 4 or 5 to the overall grade for the courses and workshops. However, some customers rated some courses or workshops slightly lower, 3, which resulted the overall grade of the courses to be at 4.7. This was extremely good

result and backed up the feeling what the commissioners already had about the overall opinion of their service offering. However, this still did not mean that the customers did not have any improvement suggestions or new ideas for future services. These suggestions and improvement comments are summarized after the Figure 23.

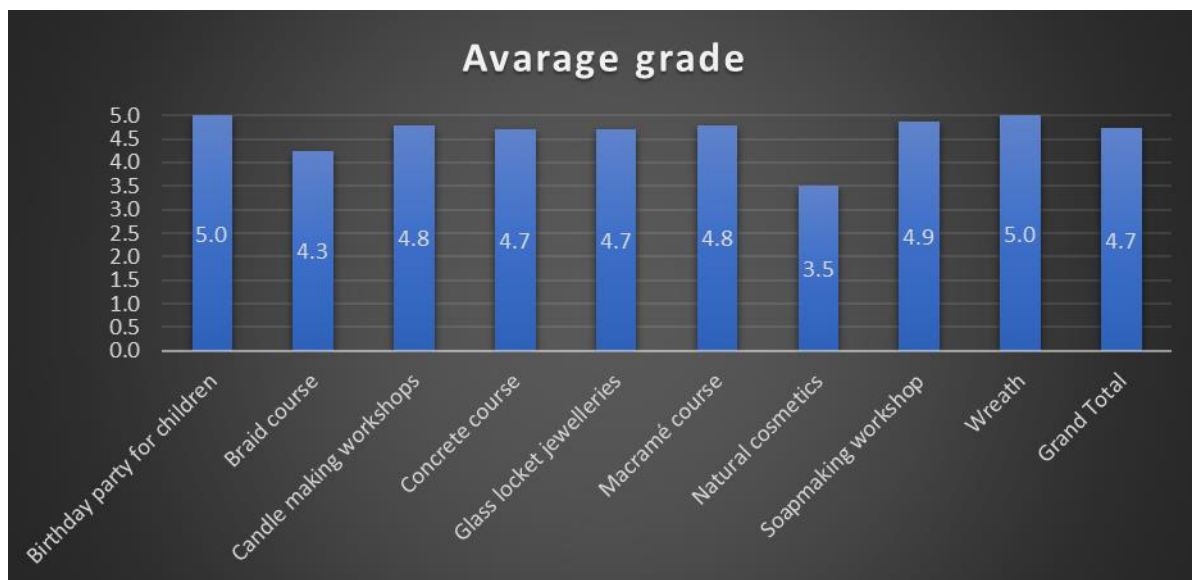


Figure 22. Average grade for the course.

All courses and workshops were rated extremely high when the respondents were asked do the quality of the course / workshop match with the price Luomuspaja charges from the courses / workshops. Natural cosmetics workshop received the lowest grade, 3,5 (see Figure 22 above). The participants from that course explained that they were happy with course and the idea of teaching people how to make their own make-up from natural ingredients was brilliant. They were also content with the setting of Luomuspaja. However, the slightly lower grades compared to other courses were explained with too many participants of the courses and the level of competence of the participants. It was suggested that the number of participants of the course could be smaller and there could be two different levels of the course; one for the beginners and one for the advanced.

Feedback results showed also that the customers find Luomuspaja's courses and workshops price-quality ratio good as all evaluated courses received good ratings. Macrame and soap making courses received the highest price-quality ratios (4,9) and candle making course the lowest. However, this course received 3,6 which is still very good (see Figure 23).



Figure 23. Price-quality ratio of the course / workshop.

Customers were also asked how, in their mind, could Luomuspaja develop their business. Thirty-one percent of all respondents had some comments or improvement suggestions whereas 12% said that they could not think of anything or they thought everything was already great or that they had not yet enough experience from the courses to provide improvement suggestions. A little over half (56%) of the respondents did not give any answers to this question.

Surprisingly, majority of the comments of the respondents who gave an answer to this question were rather scattered, meaning that there was not only one same idea or suggestion that everyone would have suggested, but instead the variety of suggestions was relatively wide. The respondents suggested new course ideas but they also commented the lights of the workshop and the signs that guide customers to Luomuspaja. The customers wished the lights to be brighter and signs to be a little bigger. In addition, some customers also hoped for more and better advertising of coming courses so that they will not miss any interesting courses or workshops they would like to attend. With regard to the courses and workshops, the customers thought that Luomuspaja could arrange different courses for beginners and advanced. They also suggested some courses to last longer in time, for example by 30 minutes and to make sure that there is always wide enough selection of ingredients. The author was slightly surprised that not many people commented on money as that is typically a topic that people like to comment and suggest lower prices. Some comments regarding the prices were given, though, and the respondents commented that some courses felt slightly too

pricey when compared to the amount of material given and used. Some participants suggested that it would be good if there was a possibility to pay the courses and workshops in advanced online as currently it is a time directly off the course itself when people pay the courses on the premises.

Seventy-one percent (75 individual feedback) of the respondents answered to the last *'Free word'*-question. All of these answers were good feedback to Luomuspaja about good courses and professional teachers. None of these comments included any improvement suggestions or anything negative issues. Many customers commented that everything went very well and they really enjoyed and will definitely come back for some other course or workshop in the future.

#### 7.9 Customer survey 2, online questionnaire

Soon after the first survey had been properly kicked-off in March 2018 and feedback started to come in, the author and the commissioners started to think about also having another questionnaire which could also be used for potential customers. Google Forms had already been selected as the platform for the online feedback process in November 2017 and the author, Kirstilä and Eriksson believed that this was still the best tool to use. The commissioners thought about different places and times when to conduct the survey and the author planned the questions to be asked. The author wanted to get answers to how people have heard of Luomuspaja and which channel would they prefer to hear about Luomuspaja. She also wanted to give them a possibility to give ideas for service offering and give feedback in general. This survey (see appendix 3) was conducted online and it did not include any numerical questions. This survey was also done in Finnish.

#### 7.10 Results from the online questionnaire

The second survey was originally targeted for people, who visited Luomuspaja's stand at Osaava Nainen and Terve olo exhibition in 2018, which Luomuspaja participated in November 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> at Turku Fair Center, and to people who visited their Facebook page. The author and the owners of Luomuspaja were wondering prior to the exhibition about which form would be the best and the most ideal to use at the exhibition. They came to conclusion that online questionnaire would be the fastest and easiest. People

usually stop by at the stand for a short moment and do not necessarily want to use paper and pen for writing as it is faster to use a keyboard. It was agreed, that Luomuspaja would use their tablet which people could use to leave their feedback. The author and the owners also thought how to get people to leave feedback and the owners contemplated that it might be a good idea to have some kind of inducement that would make people to give feedback easier. It was decided with the commissioners that the best way to get the people to answer the survey at the exhibition, was to give them a little incentive, which in this case was 5 euros worth of discount. The discount could be used in any of their courses or workshops. This turned out to be a successful idea as during the exhibition weekend 81 people answered to the survey. A capture of this online questionnaire can be found from the appendices (appendix 3). Due to busy time schedule of the commissioners, the questionnaire was never published on Luomuspaja's Facebook page.

As this questionnaire and its answers were all in Finnish, the author translated them in English to this chapter. The online questionnaire did not have any numerical questions as it was also targeted to Luomuspaja's potential customers who might have not known about them yet. Therefore, the author and the owners considered open-ended questions to be better than numerical as the purpose was to inquire people's awareness and interest of Luomuspaja and their service offering.

The first question of the questionnaire was *'Where / How did you hear about Luomuspaja the first time?'*



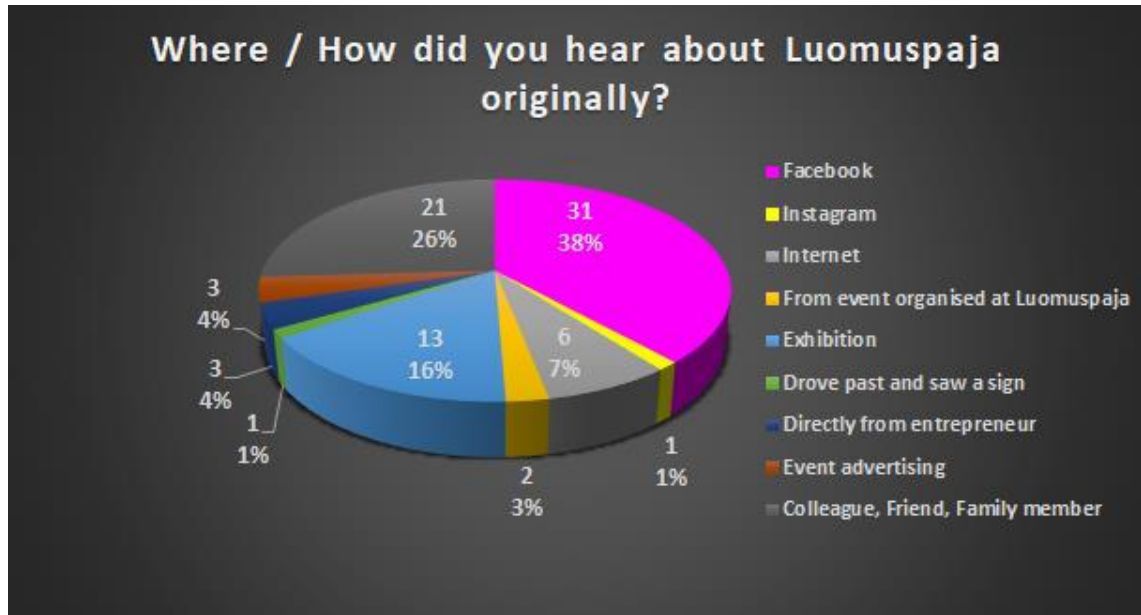


Figure 24. How did you hear about Luomuspaja.

As Facebook is Luomuspaja's main channel for marketing, it was not surprising that most respondents, (38% of respondents, 31 individuals) had heard about Luomuspaja in the first instance from Facebook (see Figure 24). Twenty-six percent of the respondents mentioned that they had heard about Luomuspaja from their colleague, friend or family member. This also supported Luomuspaja's own image as the owners firmly believed that the second best marketing method for them has been word-of-mouth marketing. These two top methods have been confirmed for Kirstilä and Eriksson many times verbally by their customers when the owners have asked them how did they find Luomuspaja. Six respondents (7%) mentioned that they had heard from Luomuspaja on the Internet but this was not specified whether it meant Facebook, Luomuspaja's web page, Instagram, blog or possibly their newsletter. Thirteen (16%) people from all respondents had purely heard from Luomuspaja the first time at the exhibition where they answered to the survey. The rest of the respondents had heard about Luomuspaja from either the entrepreneurs themselves, saw a event advertised or had attended an event which was organised at Luomuspaja and one had driven past the farm and seen Luomuspaja's sign by the road. Only one percent of the respondents had heard about Luomuspaja from Instagram. Based on the results, the author and the owners discussed about how big potential Instagram could offer for Luomuspaja. If the commissioners would like to reach younger people, Instagram could possibly be the place to be. Currently, Luomuspaja is on Instagram but is not an active user. If one wants to reach

younger women which are Generation Z and Millennials, one must reach over to Instagram and advertise there as Instagram's main audience consists of 18–34 year-old women and men. Facebook is older social media platform than Instagram and has gained the biggest popularity and therefore has an enormous audience worldwide. (Smart Insight 2018.) This means, that it is equally important for Luomuspaja to continue advertising on Facebook as it is to see the big potential of Instagram and start reaching out to new customers on that platform.

The second question focused solely on advertising channels by asking which method or channel would be the best one to receive information and advertising about Luomuspaja's courses, workshops and other activities (see Figure 25).

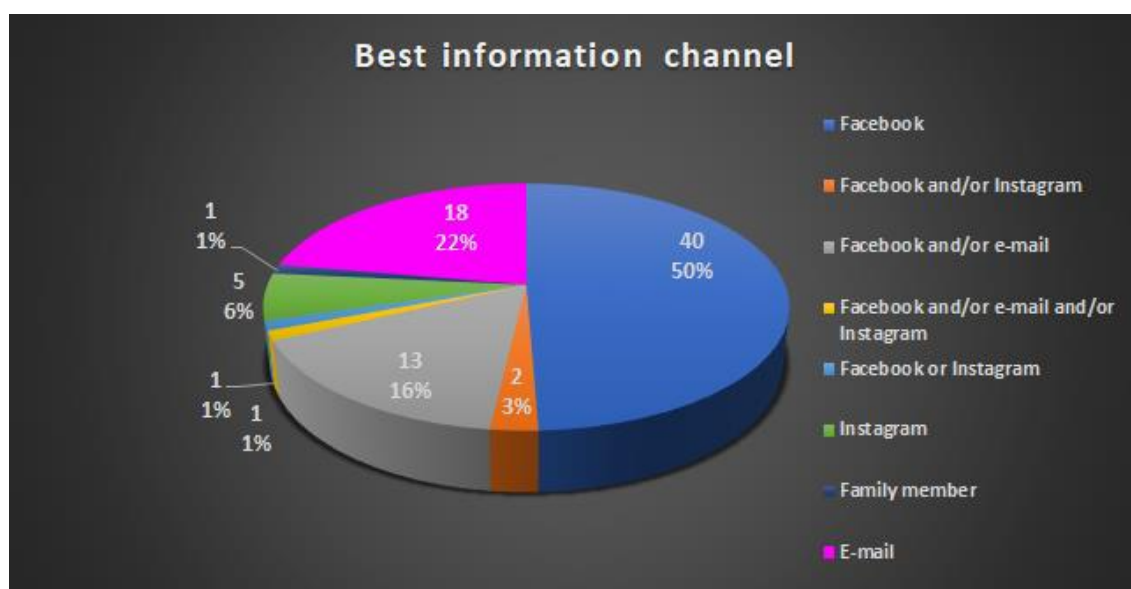


Figure 25. Best information channel.

The results of this question also supported Luomuspaja's current marketing strategy and the image they had of the situation before seeing any data. Exactly half of all the respondents (50%) considered Facebook as the best information channel through which Luomuspaja could market their coming courses, workshops and events. Traditional e-mail marketing was still seen fairly strong as 22% of the respondents would prefer to receive information about Luomuspaja's service offering via e-mail. With regards to the Facebook and e-mail marketing channels, 16% of the respondents were happy to use them for marketing. Rest of the respondents seemed to be content with either Facebook, Instagram or e-mail marketing. One person commented that he or she relied on receiving

the information from a family member. Only 6% of the respondents mentioned that the main marketing channel should be Instagram.

The third question gave the respondents a freedom to express their wishes concerning what other courses, workshops and events should Luomuspaja arrange. Out of the respondents who took the opportunity to give suggestions on different ideas, 33% said that they found them interesting. These proposals were relatively extensive and included ideas, such as, drink and food course, chocolate course, clay course, interior design course, bullet journal course, lace course and hama bead course for adults. Respondents also commented that it would be great if Luomuspaja would provide more courses in the evening time. Also, more courses for children were requested. One of the most interesting suggestion was a proposal to cooperate with art therapist. This type of fascinating cooperation would definitely differentiate Luomuspaja to some extent from other similar companies. Some of the suggestions included courses that Luomuspaja already has in their service offering, such as candle making courses and braid courses. However, some proposals were nearly the same what they already offer but with a new twist. These were, for example, a macramé jewellery course and Eastern eggs made of concrete. Currently Luomuspaja provides macramé courses where the participants make tapestry and concrete courses where the participants make lanterns or elfs from the concrete mass. Seventeen percent of all respondents also answered that they did not have any ideas or proposals or that they were not that familiar with Luomuspaja's current service offering that they could have given any development ideas. Some of them also said that the current offering is already good enough and does not need any improvement.

As Luomuspaja has their own blog, which has not been in very active use, they wanted to ask whether their customers would be interested in reading their blog with changing theme and ideas and instructions on different handicraft. The commissioners, Kirstilä and Eriksson, were interested in activate their blog again in case there are people, especially among their customers, who would like to read it. Ninety-three percent of the respondents answered to this question, and it was a pleasure to find out that 91% of all who answered to this question expressed their interest in reading Luomuspaja's blog. The rest, 7 individuals (9%) were not interested in the blog (see Figure 26 below). The results of this question clearly recommends Luomuspaja to activate their blog again.

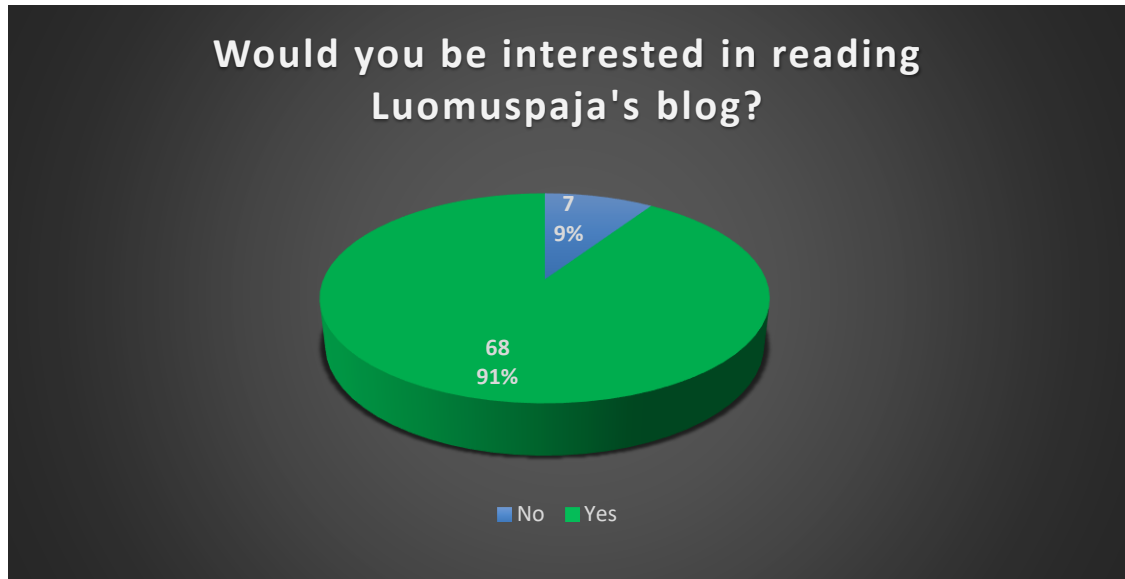


Figure 26. Interest in reading Luomuspaja's blog.

The final question of the questionnaire was a free word. The respondents were able to leave any comment or suggestion they had not yet given earlier in the questionnaire. Thirty percent (24 respondents) of the respondents left a comment to this questions. Majority of them were clearly Luomuspaja's current customers as many of them thanked Luomuspaja's owners and employees for their good service and great atmosphere. Some of the respondents also gave some ideas concerning the courses and workshops, such as, that it would be good to have two days' long courses for some handicraft courses in order to finish the creation, and some respondents gave some course content suggestions.

### 7.11 Persona

Personas are created to represent an archetype based on real research. They are not stereotypes but profiles to represent a particular group of people, such as customer group or users. However, personas are fictional and their needs that are expressed in their profiles are usually cut across several groups cutting down possible marketing silos that might withhold the efforts of service design. Personas are created to better understand different customer groups and their specific needs and they are seen as useful reference throughout the whole service design process. Personas usually include portrait image, name, demographic information, quote, mood images, description and

some statistics. All these are often used to give more detailed view of this particular customer segment that the persona is representing. (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 41–42.)

The author created a persona (Figure 27) that represents Luomuspaja’s regular customer. The persona was created based on the information received from Kirstilä and Eriksson from the meeting that was held on February 11<sup>th</sup> 2019 at Kirstilä’s residence.

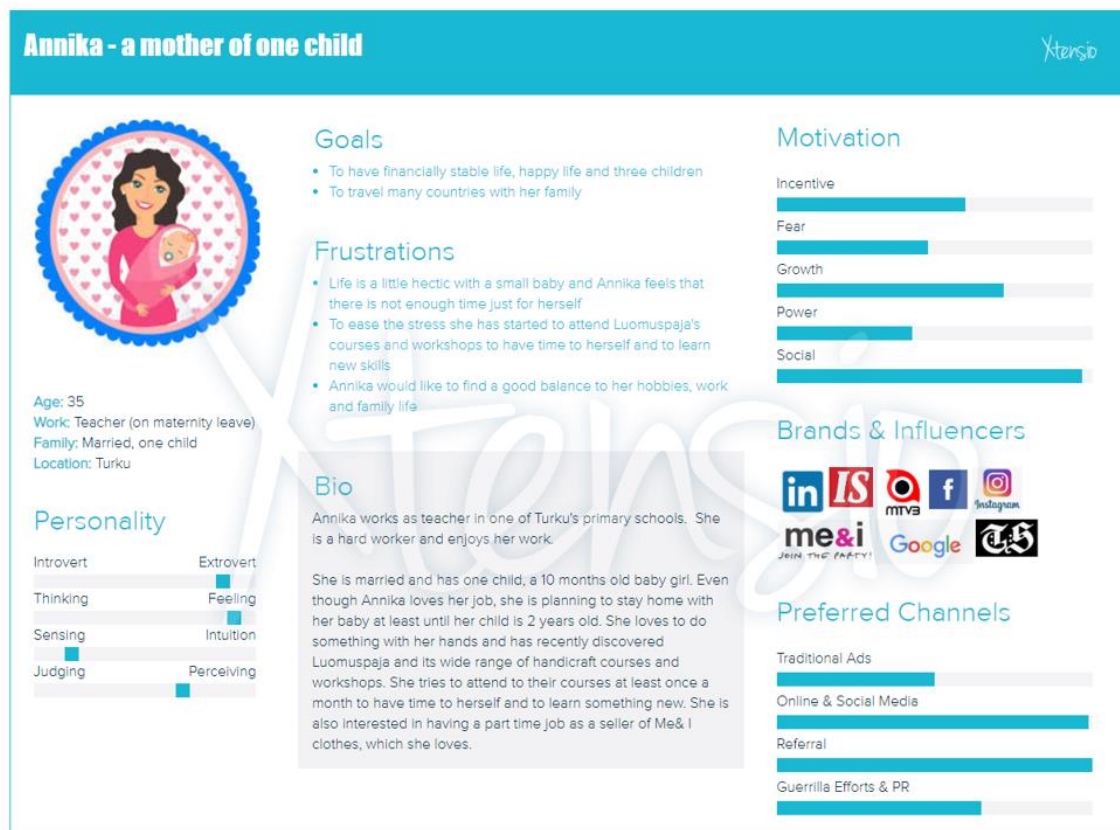


Figure 27. Persona Annika (Template: Xtensio 2019).

Persona, Annika - a mother of one child, represents majority of Luomuspaja’s customers who attend to their courses, workshops and events which are open for everyone. Based on the information received from Luomuspaja’s owners, a typical participant is a mother in her 30’s who lives either in Turku or in surrounding areas. This typical customer is usually a teacher or a nurse or works in a social and health industry. This customer type also seeks time for herself from her hectic family or work life. The customer is well aware of new trends with regard to handicraft and likes to attend to Luomuspaja’s courses and workshops as they are ready-made packages where the attendee does not have to usually do much else than turn up and enjoy the couple of hours spent in the course.

Easiness is the key word. (Kirstilä and Eriksson 2019.) The persona was created with a free online tool provided by Xtensio (2019).

## 7.12 Customer journey

According to Stickdorn et al. a customer journey map visualizes customer's experiences over time. Customer journey maps help to find gaps in customer experiences and to find a potential solution as the customer journey maps include key steps of customer's experience. Journey maps include information of how customer recognize his/her need, how the customer searches information and how the service is found. It also includes how the customer possibly books and pays for the service and if something goes wrong and whether the customer uses the service again in the future. Customer journey maps are used to visualize existing or potential future customer experiences and are also "structured as a sequence of steps". (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 44.) Customer journeys are usually described in different phases. These different phases are pre-service period, service period and post-service period. In the pre-service phase the customer is either directly in touch with the company or searches information about the company some other way. Customer receives the real value of the service provided by the company in the service period and during the post-service period the customer can, for example, give feedback about the service to the company. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 79.)

### **Customer journey of the persona**

Below, in Figure 28, is presented Persona, Annika's, customer journey when she uses Luomuspaja's services.

The customer journey was created with a free online tool provided by Realtimeboard.



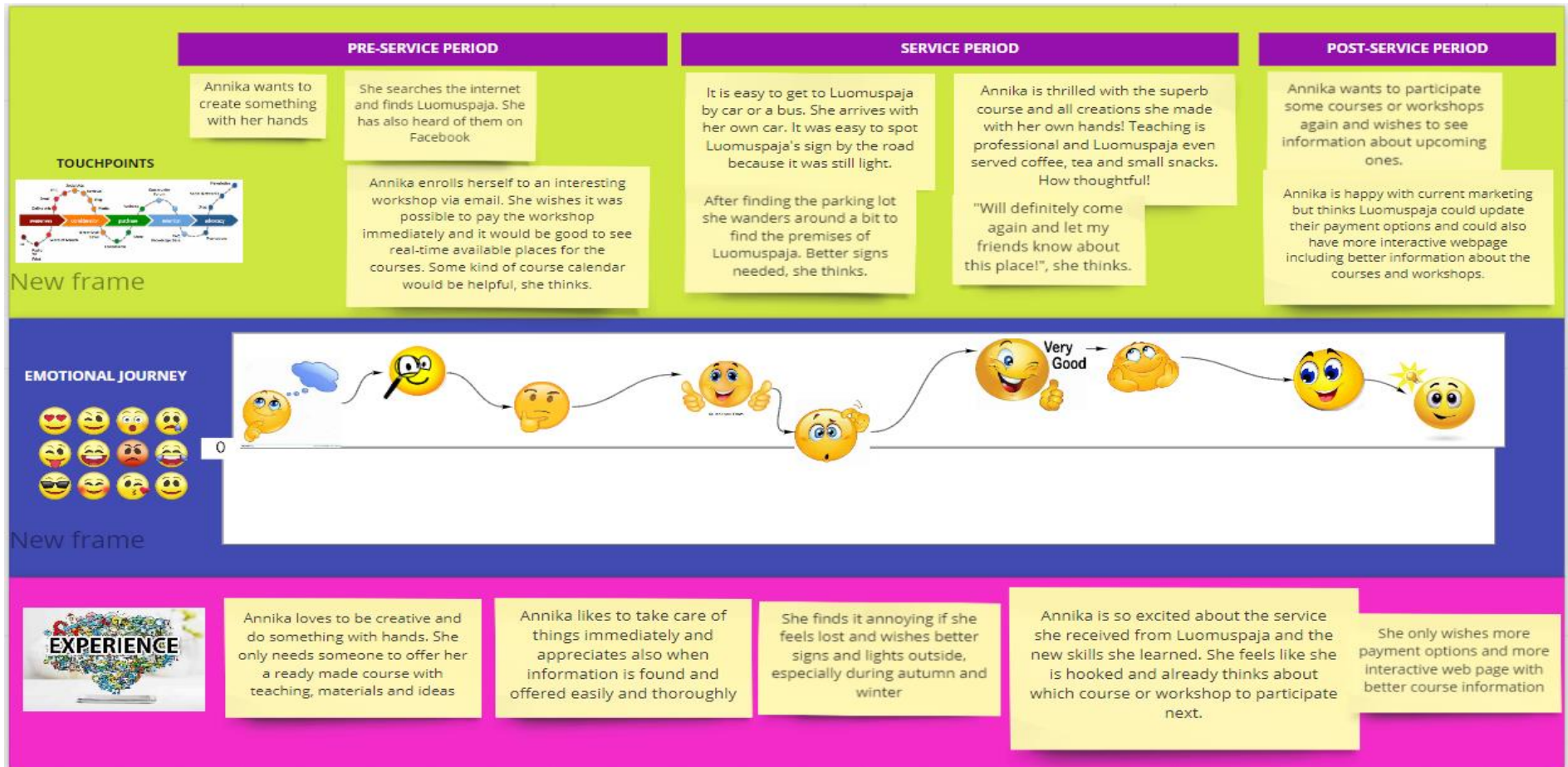


Figure 28. Customer journey of the Persona (Template: Realtimeboard 2019).

Persona's customer journey went, in general, relatively smoothly from the first touchpoint to the last touchpoint. The persona often has either heard from Luomuspaja from someone she knows and this person has spoken highly of Luomuspaja and their services. Often this persona has seen an advert on Facebook where Luomuspaja advertises their upcoming courses, workshops or events. Customers can enrol themselves to the courses or workshops via e-mail or by calling. To the bigger events the customers can just turn up and no enrolments are needed then. The persona thought that it would be a good idea to pay the course already then when enrolling to the course. She also hoped that she could still fit in to the course as the web page did not give that information when she enrolled. She thought that perhaps the personnel would inform her then if the course was already fully booked. The persona found Luomuspaja easily as it was relatively easy to drive there and when arrived, it was still light so the signs guiding to the farm, where Luomuspaja is located, were easy to spot. The persona only struggled a little after parking her car to the parking lot as one of the signs that guides people to the stairs leading to Luomuspaja, was hidden behind someone else's car. She thought that it would be better if that particular sign was higher to avoid people not seeing it. The course went well and the persona was satisfied with the course and its professional and friendly teachers. She definitely wanted to return for some other courses or workshops in the future.

Customers were often satisfied, in general, about the courses, workshops and events they attended and they often mentioned it directly to the teachers and / or wrote about it to the feedback form they were given at end of the course or workshop. Those times when the customers did give feedback they suggested new course or workshop ideas or suggested more payment options and better and real-time information to Luomuspaja's web page. These customers were often interested in coming back and they often told about Luomuspaja to their peers.

### 7.13 Service blueprint

Service blueprints is described as continuation or extension of customer journey maps. In service blueprint the idea is to describe and connect customer experiences with frontstage, backstage, employee processes and support processes. Frontstage means the area where the customer is in direct contact with the company and its employees / owners and backstage represents people and processes that the customer cannot see.



Support processes are activities which the rest of the company and its possible external partners execute. (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 54.) According to Tuulaniemi, the first lane of service blueprint reveals the whole value chain that the service provider offers to their customers as on this first lane different functions and actors of the service chain are described from customer's point of view. Different layers of service blueprints make it possible for the companies to develop long service chains but Tuulaniemi points out that the benefits are lost if the service blueprint is done from the service provider's point of view. Customer perspective opens new value propositions to service chains. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 211–212.)

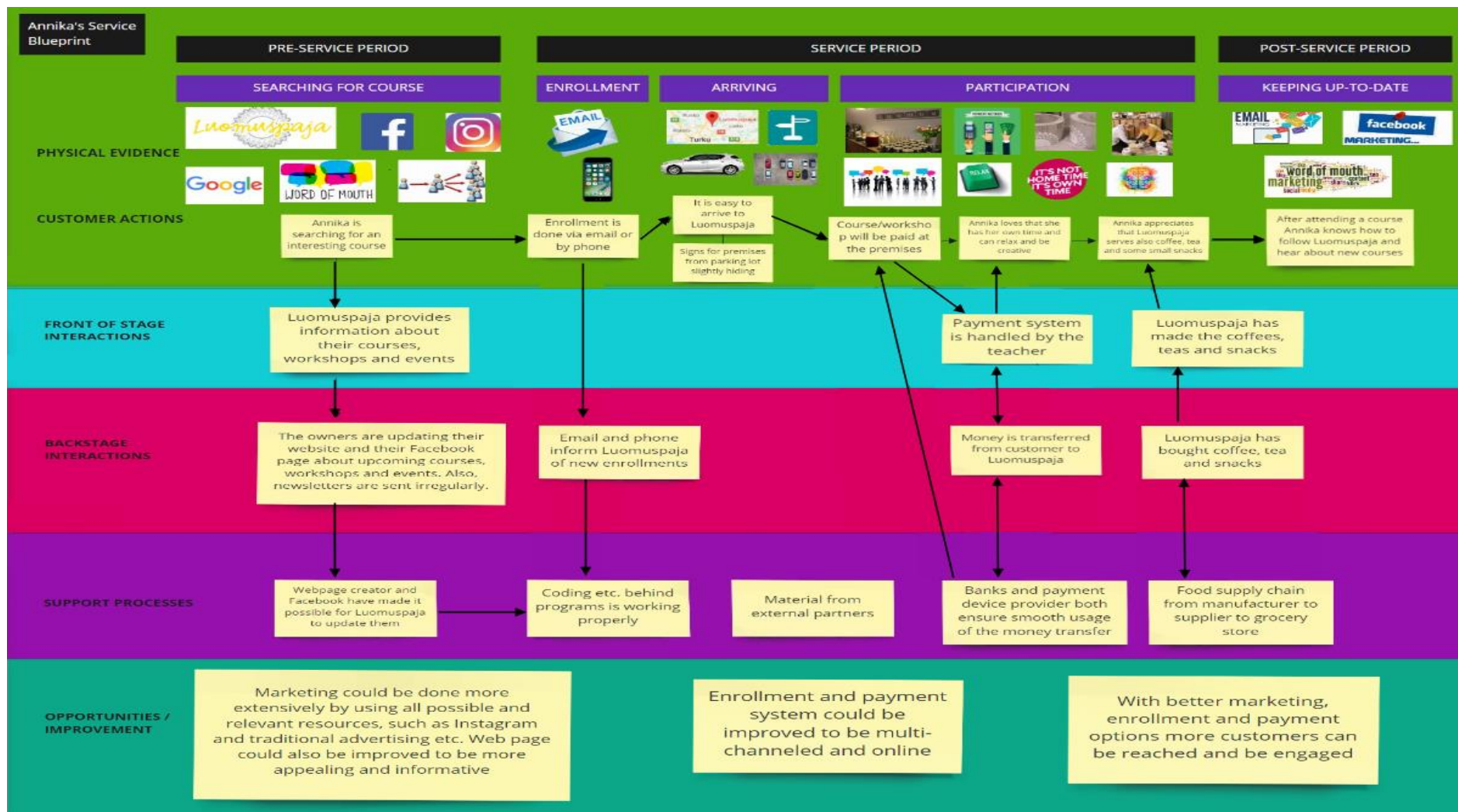


Figure 29. Service blueprint of Luomuspaja (Template: Realtimeboard 2019).

Service blueprint for Luomuspaja (Figure 29) was made from the persona, Annika's, point of view. The blueprint was also made with the free online tool provided by Realtimeboard, as was the customer journey. The blueprint shows from left to right, starting from the upper left corner and first row how the persona found information from Luomuspaja and how she was able to enrol herself to the course of her choice. The blueprint then shows how she found the premises of Luomuspaja and participated the course. The upper right corner of the service blueprint shows how she was able to get more information about the upcoming courses, workshops and events after she had participated the course and was already familiar with Luomuspaja. Here below, in Figures 30–35, a more closer caption of these steps.



Figure 30. Pre-service period.

In pre-service period (Figure 30 above) the customer has already shown interest in participating in some kind of handicraft course or workshop and is searching information about different service providers. The customer had also been receiving referrals of Luomuspaja and their good courses and workshops.



Figure 31. Service period.

During the service period (Figure 31 above) the customer experienced the enrolment process, arrived to the premises of Luomuspaja and participated their course or workshop. Like in pre-service period, also during service period all different functions of the service chain were described visually.



Figure 32. Post-service period.

The post-service period (Figure 32 above) describes the actions the customer went through after the service she / he received. It also shows which different functions of the service chain belongs to it.

There are also plenty of actions that the service provider, Luomuspaja, performs in order to create a pleasant experience for their customers when they attend to their courses and workshops and to make it possible for their customers to know of their existence. In the Service Blueprint those actions have been shown in the front of stage interactions-phase (Figure 33 below).

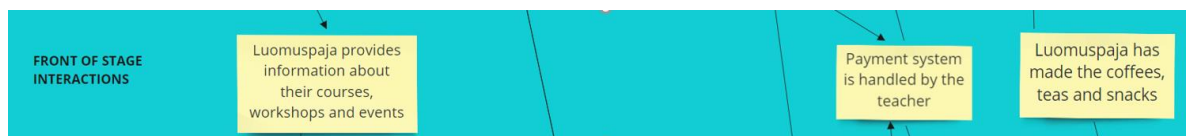


Figure 33. Front of stage interactions.

There are several backstage interactions to be made in order to make it possible to arrange one course or workshop. These major factors in Luomuspaja's support processes (see Figure 34 below) are the service providers for their webpage, Facebook's administrators and coders, Luomuspaja's external partners who they sometimes receive some of their course or workshop material from, and also banks and bank payment device providers who provide the smooth operation between the customer and Luomuspaja. Of course, there can sometimes be many other actors behind the scene when it is, for example, one of Luomuspaja's big events in question. However, this service blueprint focused on their regular courses and workshops they arrange every week, several times a week.

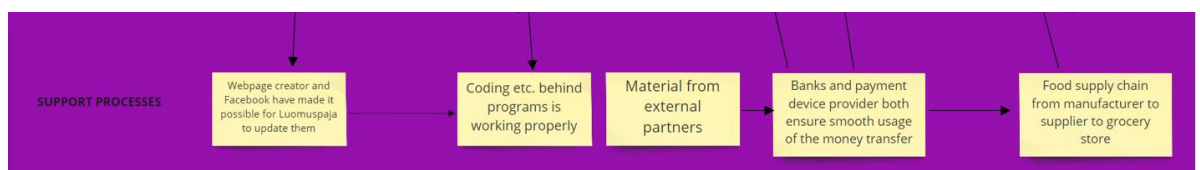


Figure 34. Support processes.

It is clear, that there were several things that could be done differently or be improved (see Figure 35) from the current stage. These have been discussed more in detail in the development suggestions chapter later in this research.

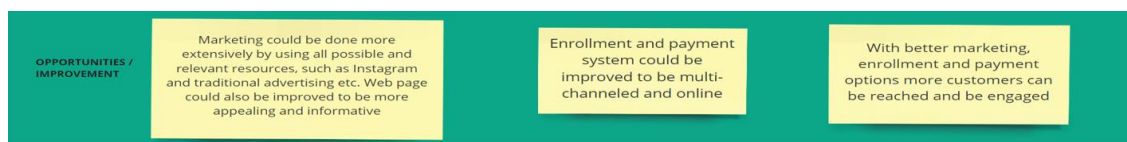


Figure 35. Opportunities and improvements.

When looking at the service blueprint made from the customers' point of view, one can suggest that the marketing could be done more extensively as currently Luomuspaja mainly uses Facebook, their web page and also referrals as their primary marketing methods. In order to reach wider audience it is advisable that Luomuspaja would market their services other ways, too. These methods are discussed more in the Development Suggestions chapter later in this research. The author had also other suggestions to the commissioners with regard to the payment methods and enrolment process which were all based on the author's own experiences from the service safari as well as as the feedback gathered from the mystery shoppers and Luomuspaja's existing and potential customers. These were not only improvement suggestions as such, but these development ideas can also create new opportunities to Luomuspaja. These suggestions are also explained more in this research's Development suggestions chapter.

#### 7.14 Prototyping

According to Tuulaniemi prototyping is one of the essential parts of service design process. Prototyping is testing a service. The idea of prototyping is to test whether the developed concepts work as they should work. The idea of prototyping is to increase understanding of the service that is being developed to find out which parts work and which parts need to taken off the service. Prototyping is also done in all phases of the service development. With prototyping it can be found out, for instance, does the service work, is the service interesting from customer's point of view and is the service easy to use. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 194–195.)

As one of the goals of this research was to build a customer feedback system to Luomuspaja, the author considered that this goal was successfully met. Both online and paper forms were tested during the research and both methods were found equally successful. At the same time that these different methods were tested, a lot of valueable feedback for Luomuspaja was also gathered which will be used to improve their services.



Luomuspaja will continue asking feedback after every course and workshop they arrange and will carefully study and save the received feedback. Together with the author they have also considered of having this online questionnaire in the future if they decide to have a tablet or a pc at the Luomuspaja's premises, which could be used by their customers for leaving feedback. As the results of this research, the owners of Luomuspaja have been planning to do big changes to their enrolment and payment system as well as to their webpage. The online questionnaire is also possible to be included in the service process where the customers would automatically receive a link to the questionnaire after they have participated to the course or workshop. Kirstilä and Eriksson also plan to use the current online questionnaire that was used during the exhibition in the future exhibitions for continuous improvement of customer service and experience. For the continuous customer insight process, the author built a working prototype using Google Forms as current platform and provided all materials and databank to Luomuspaja for future feedback handling. This current feedback collection method will be used before the new web page, payment and enrolment process are ready, to make sure that the new customer insight process is uninterrupted. The author also promised to help with the data gathering and handling in the future, if needed. Google Forms make it easy for people to collect feedback and view the results as one can export them to Excel sheet or the results can be viewed in the graphs that the Google Form automatically provides of the results of the questionnaires. It has also been recommended by the author for Luomuspaja to review the questionnaires annually and change the questions if and when needed. It is vastly important that the questionnaires collect the information Luomuspaja needs and it is equally important to also act upon the received feedback and not just gather it and do nothing.

Some feedback results also indicated that as the enroll and payment processes have not been executed very modern way in the current process, updated webpage could be of help in this as the current webpage is not capable for these functions. Based on the feedback, another important prototype was made for Luomuspaja in addition to the feedback process. This was a sketch of a new webpage with a new fresh and modern look, easy usability with all relevant information for the existing and potential customers. Further below is the sketch made by the author (see Figure 38) of how the webpage could look like. Firstly, before the sketch, two snapshots of their current web page are presented to illustrate the difference. Figure 36 shows how the current main page looks like. Luomuspaja has also listed their upcoming courses and workshops in text form on the lower part of their main page, which is not very interactive (see Figure 37).

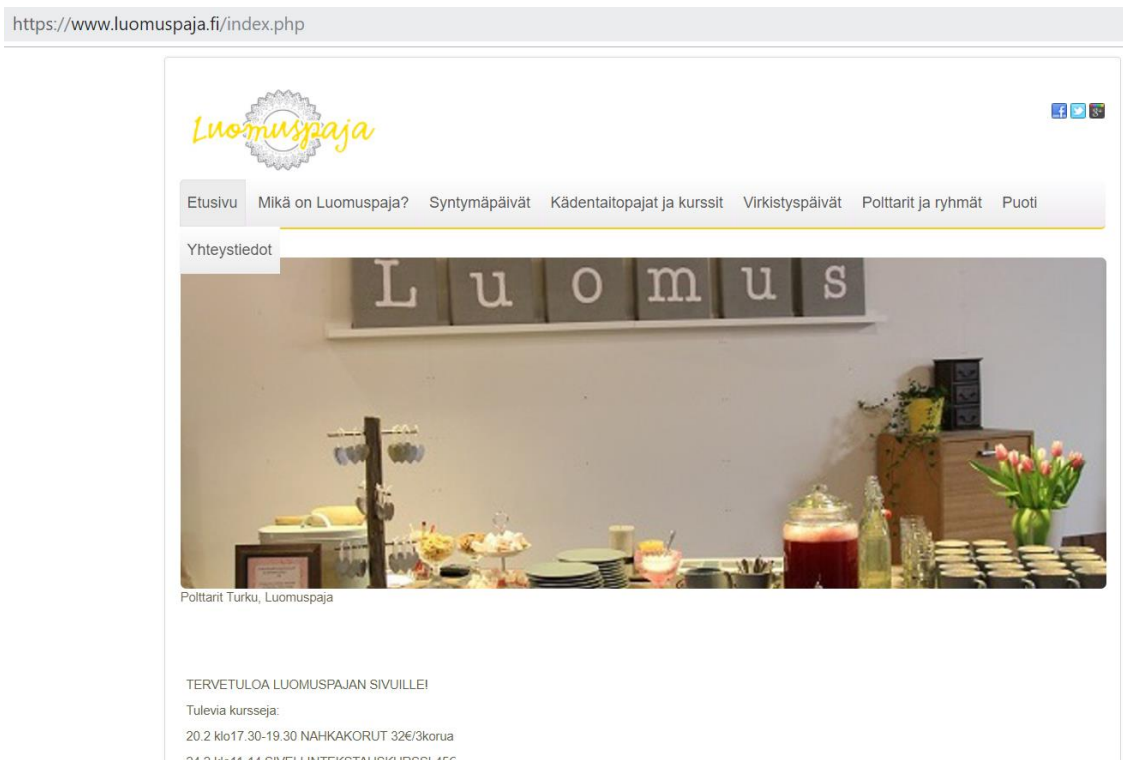


Figure 36. Web page of Luomuspaja.



Figure 37. Luomuspaja's current view of upcoming courses and workshops.

Below is a sketch that the author designed to give guidelines for Luomuspaja's new and more informative and interactive web page. Currently, Luomuspaja's web page is outdated and it will need to be more appealing and interactive as well as provide relevant and comprehensive information about all the services Luomuspaja provides. Note, that



this will only be used as a guideline and will, undoubtedly, change when Luomuspaja starts the renewing process with a professional web designer and developer. However, this sketch will show both Luomuspaja and the web designer and developer immediately which are the key elements that should be found on the first page. All texts on the web page should be interactive and open more information when clicking on them. In addition, the “enrol here for course or workshop”-button in the middle of the web page would open a calendar view where customers can see all upcoming courses and workshops. From the calendar view one could also find the information whether the courses and workshops would still have room for new participants, and it would also be possible to directly enrol to the course or workshop from the that view.

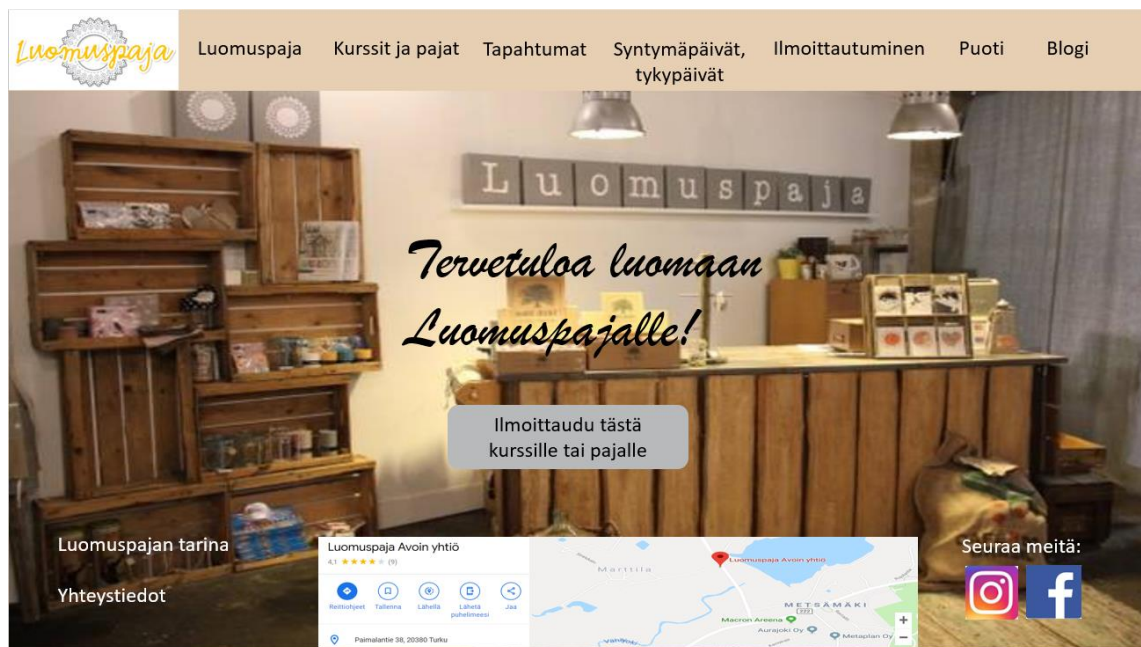


Figure 38. Sketch of Luomuspaja’s new web page suggestion.

## 8 DEVELOPMENT SUGGESTIONS

The author met the owners of Luomuspaja on February 11<sup>th</sup> 2019 at Eeva Kirstilä's home which is at the farm where also Luomuspaja is located. The author went through with the owners all the feedback that had been collected during the previous 11 months. The owners were satisfied when they heard the results and they were interested in hearing the development suggestions.

It was clear that all of their existing customers were in general satisfied with Luomuspaja and their service offering. However, some improvement areas arose from the results and they are presented below with the development suggestions. The development suggestions have been ideated by the author based on the results and gained information from Luomuspaja's current and potential customers as well as the benchmarking study of the similar companies.

### **Enrolment system**

Currently Luomuspaja's enrolment system is a little outdated and needs other options alongside. Now it is possible to enroll to a course or workshop by sending an e-mail to Luomuspaja or by calling them. It is recommendable that Luomuspaja updates their system so that customers are able to enroll online by either clicking a link when selecting an interesting course where one wants to participate and / or by filling in an online registration form which would confirm the customer about successful participation immediately after the customer has submitted the registration. One suggestion to enrol is through Facebook, but the author believes that this might not be the easiest option as it probably would require Facebook talking to Luomuspaja's own system which might not be easy to execute.

### **Information / welcoming e-mail**

It would be a good idea to send an information / welcoming e-mail to customers when they have enrolled to a course or workshop. This e-mail would include all necessary information on how to find Luomuspaja and what all the customer should take into consideration prior to the course. With this the author means, for example, instructions on how the customer can prepare for the courses if there are something that the customer should bring with her / him. For instance, if customer plans to attend a glass locket workshop, the e-mail could remind to bring own pictures the participant wishes to

place under the glass. The e-mail would also inform that Luomuspaja provides material in case the participant does not want to or forgets to bring own pictures. This e-mail should be sent to the participants only a day or two before the workshop.

### **Payment option**

For now, the only options to pay Luomuspaja's courses and workshops are card or cash payment at Luomuspaja's premises in the beginning or at the end of the course or workshop. Some respondents wished there to be other options available. Suggestion is to update the payment system to include also the possibility to pay online prior to the course / workshop when the customer is registering to the course. This requires Luomuspaja to update their own webpage to enable this as this would also need the linkage with online banks. An early step towards the proper online payment would be to automatically provide payment details to customers when they register to the courses / workshops. This would make it possible for the participants to make the payment in their online bank.

### **Outdoor signs and lights**

While this research has been in progress, Luomuspaja has already made a larger sign (Figure 11) by the road to make it easier to see where to turn to the farm where Luomuspaja is located. However, the other signs – parking and the signs pointing to Luomuspaja (Figures 14-15) – are currently located so that they are easily hidden behind cars that have been parked at the far end of the parking lot. The owners of Luomuspaja have built stairs (Figure 16) at the far end of parking lot that are leading to the premises of Luomuspaja. However, due to signs that can be hidden behind parked cars and dim lighting, these stairs can sometimes be missed which leads customers to wander around the farm looking for a right place. The suggestion is to lift up the current signs as the signs are good size but placed too low. Another suggestion is to add more brighter lights by the stairs and Luomuspaja's entrance so that customers can easily see them and will not need to guess which building is the correct one. In addition, the owners of Luomuspaja could make some clear sign to show which area is private area to also prevent customers knocking the door of the farm house.

### **Traffic guides**

During this research the commissioners also noticed themselves that during their big events, traffic guides are necessary to have in order to prevent chaos when hundreds of

people are coming and going at the same time in the limited area made for traffic. The owners also found new areas where customers can park their cars as their normal parking lot for course and workshop participants is limited. In addition, they planned an alternative route to guide people off the farm land. These were also the author's suggestions but this issue was so visible that the owners had realised it themselves and also received direct feedback about it during their big events.

### **Website update / modernizing and web analytics tools**

Luomuspaja's web page needs updating and modernizing as currently it is not very interactive and it is outdated. This web page update is also necessary if Luomuspaja's owners want to develop their enrolment and payment system as in its current form, how the web page is built, it is not possible to develop the current systems much further. It has also been requested that the web page would have a real-time course calendar where customers could see in calendar view the availability of courses and workshops, and they could also see real-time situation of available seats. At the present time, this is not possible and the customers do not know immediately if the course / workshop they wish to participate is fully booked or not. Having a proper calendar view would also help the owners and their employees as one functional calendar would prevent double-bookings and possible confusions and misunderstandings.

In addition, it is recommendable that whilst building a new and functioning modern web page, web tools are also taken into use to optimise and develop the business further. Google, for example, provides useful tools that are easy to use and inexpensive. Web analytics is a must in modern business even if the business idea itself is rather traditional. It is vastly important for the business owners to know which way to steer and develop their business and to know how are their methods, systems and tools functioning.

### **Fleece blankets**

As many activities of Christmas markets are outside, it could be an idea to have fleece blankets available for people who feel that they need extra warmth. The Christmas market has always some outdoor activities also for children, and parents often need to wait for their children to finish their activities or games. Parents can get cold whilst waiting outside and the fleece blanket could provide extra warmth for them if that is needed. The author noticed during the Christmas market that some people's body language revealed that they were cold as people start moving or jumping on spot when they are getting colder. That is how the idea of fleece blankets was generated in the author's mind.

This could make the visitors to stay also a little longer at the market and possibly make them purchase more.

### **New and longer courses**

Many new course ideas were received from the respondents of the surveys. Some of the course ideas were courses that Luomuspaja already offers but there are also many good ideas that are realisable. Some customers also wished Luomuspaja to have separate courses for beginners and more advanced as this would ensure that everyone would get the help they need during the course / workshop and it would also be easier for the teachers to make the course / workshop structures clearer when the level of competence is known in advance. As Luomuspaja nowadays has six employees it would be advisable and relatively easy to arrange courses and workshops also during the weekends when many people have more free time than during the week nights. It would also be good to extend the length of those courses that need more time for preparation and post-work. One option is to have two or more separate sessions with the possibility for the customers to carry their handicraft work with them in a box or something similar. Luomuspaja is not able to store the handicraft items made by the customers due to limited spaces.

### **Improved Service Blueprint**

Based on the improvement suggestions the author has given, a new service blueprint was done to illustrate how the customer experience would change. As it is not possible to make all improvements at once, it is recommendable to prioritize which improvements should be done first. The author suggested that Kirstilä and Eriksson could first update their web page, enrolment and payment system as these would make their business more accessible. If possible, Kirstilä and Eriksson could take care of the other suggested improvements at the same time, which are quick to implement, such as improving signs, lighting et cetera. The author illustrates in Figure 39 how Luomuspaja's customers' service blueprint could look like after the web page, enrolment and payment systems have been renewed. The improved service blueprint has been done from the same persona's point of view as the earlier service blueprint (Figure 29).

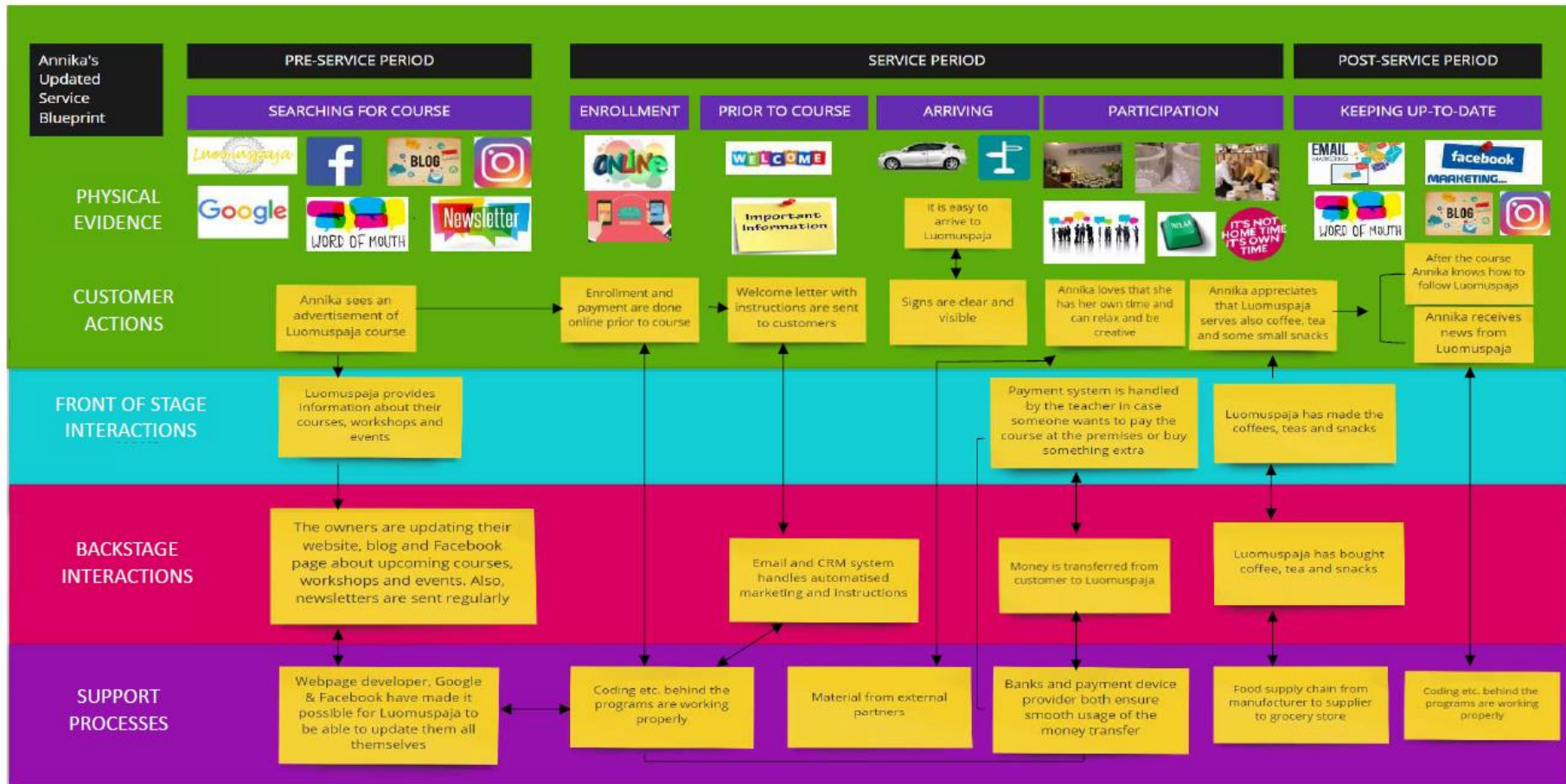


Figure 39. Improved Service Blueprint (Template: Realtimboard 2019).

## 9 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The different methods used in this research supported immensely well the goals to solve the initiated problem areas that Luomuspaja had faced and they gave good answers to the research questions. Luomuspaja's current and potential customers were happy to take part to this research and provided their help by giving answers to the questions they were asked. Giving valuable feedback works also for customers' own benefit as when Luomuspaja listens to their customers and develop their services accordingly, it takes customer experiences to a new level. This is also an answer to one of the research questions; how to engage the customers to return also in the future. When customers' needs and expectation are listened, they feel that they are appreciated and will come back. In addition, the owners of Luomuspaja, Kirstilä and Eriksson, were very active and keen to be a part of the research. During the whole journey they provided assistance when ever it was needed. This was a good example of well functioning service design and co-design process.

It is easy to develop the presented development suggestions even further in the future. Luomuspaja's owners have also showed that now after the first years of Luomuspaja's existence, they have more tools to better tackle possible hick-ups they might face. This research has given Kirstilä and Eriksson concrete information what their customers think and feel, and what are the current pain points that need more attention. This research has also given clear suggestions and ideas how to implement them.

This research did give answers to the research questions. Customers mainly find Luomuspaja on Facebook or hear about them from someone they know. The commissioners had an inkling of this prior to this research and the research results confirmed that. The main channel the customers wish Luomuspaja to use for marketing remains to be Facebook, Facebook and / or e-mail or Facebook and / or Instagram. These social media channels seem to be the ones that the customers of Luomuspaja use the most and therefore it makes sense that the commissioners will continue using these channels in order to reach their target groups also in the future. If Luomuspaja listens to what their customers have said and acts then accordingly, the commissioners will be able to improve their business and engage their customers to return to Luomuspaja also in the future. Based on the research data the author can conclude, that it is possible for Luomuspaja to improve their services and also to create something

new. The feedback received for this research provided many good ideas on how Luomuspaja could improve their current service offering and from these ideas it is also possible to develop new courses and workshops. When using the research data as a basis and a solid starting point for their development process, Kirstilä and Eriksson are able to differentiate their business clearer from their competitors. Luomuspaja has already managed to differentiate themselves to some extent from their competitors by having teaching as their core business instead of product selling. However, they could create new business opportunities, for example, by co-operating with art therapy professionals. This would make them stand out even more from their competitors as well as expand their customer base. However, in order to maintain and grow their business and customer base, they will need to modernize their web page and take the main social media channels into active use to reach all potential customers. Moreover, web analytics tools should be taken into active use in order to follow the business development from all perspectives. As the web page needs to be modernised and re-built, it should be relatively easy to connect web analytics tool at the same to the new web page. This would then provide useful and valuable information to Kirstilä and Eriksson about their current and potential customers and business growth opportunities. The continuous feedback process can be installed into the new web page and it can be linked to the enrolment and payment process. The system would automatically send a link to an online questionnaire to all customers who have participated Luomuspaja's courses and workshops and would provide the feedback data automatically to the owners. Thus, the feedback process created in this research project would be in continuous use in modern and functional way. This will also take the customer experience to a new level.

This thesis progressed as it was initially planned with the commissioners. The owners of Luomuspaja were extremely supportive along the way and were all the time available when it was needed. All meetings initiated by the author were always set up within a reasonable timetable, which was always within few days or a week or two from the proposal. The research process itself was successful as all parties were really interested in the outcome and keen to improve the whole service process. The research questions and problem areas planned together with the commissioners, and the methods used in this thesis, supported Luomuspaja and the author to receive the set goals.

The results of the different methods used in the research supported each other and contributed in development suggestions given by the author. The author was particularly pleased with the amount of feedback that was received for this thesis. The amount



exceeded the author's expectations as due to the author's background in research company, it was known and therefore prepared that it might be difficult to get people to give feedback to online and paper questionnaires. The surveys provided a lot of useful and valuable data to the author and to Kirstilä and Eriksson. In addition, mystery shoppers, observations and the benchmarking study, provided useful insight to the development process. Moreover, co-design and brainstorming with Kirstilä and Eriksson were tremendously helpful and fruitful and created clear paths for the author to follow. Based on all these results it is much easier for Kirstilä and Eriksson to start developing their business and services further.

The Double Diamond was found as useful tool to guide the author during the thesis process. By following the Double Diamond process it was easy to stay on track with the design process. Stakeholder map, business model canvas and persona helped the author greatly to understand Luomuspaja's business deeper and see clearer the big picture.

The writing process itself has been an excellent learning process and has made the author to better and deeper understand all aspects of service design process. This research also helped the author to understand deeper why different service design tools and methods are good to use in the process. Time management was never an issue during the research project. The author purposefully started the thesis project early enough, at the end of 2017, to make sure that there would be plenty of time to gather feedback and customer insight with different methods and tools, in order to receive the data and reach the goals in planned schedule. The author also made sure that there was enough time to change the plans in case some of the methods would have not worked or been successful. In addition, the owners of Luomuspaja were always easy to reach and they always responded to questions in a reasonable time. The project was not delayed at any time and did not face any difficulties which made it easy for the author to finish the thesis one month ahead of the planned timetable. All this was possible due to good and thorough planning, excellent and frequent communication between the commissioners and the author, and because of the well chosen tools and methods that fit the purposes perfectly.

Originally, the author and the commissioners did discuss about organizing a workshop to brainstorm development ideas with Luomuspaja's customers. The idea was then left out from this thesis because of other chosen methods were thought to be more suitable for the first ever bigger development project done for Luomuspaja. It is possible that this

type of workshop will be organized in the future if Kirstilä and Eriksson want to investigate other service possibilities or further process the development suggestions based on this research.

The author has high expectations, and trusts, that Kirstilä and Eriksson will follow the development suggestions that were formed based on this research for Luomuspaja. Both owners of Luomuspaja have shown a real interest toward the process from the beginning and have all the time been immensely keen on developing their business further. This is the reason why the author believes that Luomuspaja will be successful also in the future.

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## **Discussions**

Unstructured face-to-face discussions with Eeva Kirstilä and Kerttu Eriksson 26.10.2017, 5.11.2017, 19.8.2018, 13.10.2018, 11.2.2019

## Mystery shopper questionnaire

1. Millaisena koit Luomuspajan palvelutarjonnan?
2. Millaisena koit kurssin varaustavan?
3. Onko nykyinen maksumenetelmä mielestäsi riittävä, vai kaipaisitko joitain muita vaihtoehtoja?
4. Minkälaisena koit hinta-laatu suhteen?
5. Mikä mielestäsi toimi hyvin, kun ajatellaan koko prosessia siitä asti, kun näit itseäsi kiinnostaneen kurssin siihen pisteeseen, kun olit osallistunut kurssille? Voit huomioida tässä myös kurssiympäristön, eli fyysiset tilat (tarkoittaen Luomuspajan tilat, Luomuspajan ympäristö, parkkipaikka, valaistus jne.), sekä ohjauksen ja materiaalit?
6. Entä mitä seikkoja voisi mielestäsi parantaa ajatellen samoja seikkoja, kuin edeltävässä kysymyksessä mainitut?
7. Osallistuisitko uudelleen Luomuspajan kurssille?
8. Minkä arvosanan antaisit Luomuspajalle asteikolla 1-10? Miksi?

# Questionnaire 1



## **Palautekysely**

Kurssin nimi ja ajankohta:

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Arvioi alla olevat kysymykset asteikolla 0-5, joista 5 = erittäin tyytyväinen, 4 = tyytyväinen, 3 = en tyytyväinen, mutta en tyytymätönkään, 3 = tyytymätön, 1 = en lainkaan tyytyväinen ja 0 = ei koske minua.

Minkä yleisarvosanan antaisit kurssille? (Ympyröi mieluisin vaihtoehto)

5 4 3 2 1 0

Vastasiko kurssin hinta ja laatu toisiaan? (Ympyröi mieluisin vaihtoehto)

5 4 3 2 1 0

Miten voisimme kehittää toimintaamme?

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---

---

Vapaa sana:

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**Kiitos palautteestasi!**

## Questionnaire 2

### Asiakaspalaute Luomuspajalle

Olemme erittäin kiitollisia, jos vastaisitte alla oleviin aihealueisiin, joiden avulla voimme entisestään parantaa asiakaskokemustasi sekä palveluitamme. Palautteenne on meille todella arvokasta!

**\* Required**

Mistä / miten ensimmäisen kerran kuulit Luomuspajasta? \*

Your answer

Millä tavalla mieluiten haluaisit saada tietoa Luomuspajan tulevista kursseista ja muista aktiviteeteista? (esim. Facebook, uutiskirje/sähköposti, Instagram, Twitter, joku muu tapa)? \*

Your answer

Toivoisitko Luomuspajan järjestävän jotain muita kursseja / palveluja, kuin mitä palvelutarjonnassa nyt on? Jos kyllä, niin mitä?

Your answer

Olisitko kiinnostunut lukemaan uutiskirjeen kautta myös Luomuspajan blogia, jossa on vaihtuvia ohjeita ja ideoita?

Kyllä

Ei

Tähän voit halutessasi jättää muuta palautetta Luomuspajalle

Your answer

**Luomuspaja kiittää arvokkaasta ajastasi ja palautteestasi!**

**SUBMIT**

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.