



Developing Support Services for Internationalization

Case: Tampere Chamber of Commerce

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis was conducted as a case study for Tampere Chamber of Commerce. Tampere Chamber of Commerce is a leading business organization in the Tampere region. The case study aimed to find new training solutions for internationalization for the companies in the region of Pirkanmaa. This was done through investigating the current state of the companies' international operations and collecting information on the companies' related challenges.

The research for the theoretical frame was implemented as a desk research, using various databases, business publications, and pieces of literature to review existing, factual data to support the discussed topics. A quantitative research in the form of a survey was conducted in cooperation with Tampere Chamber of Commerce. The survey was sent to a selected group of Tampere Chamber of Commerce member companies. It aimed to gain a coherent image of the companies' current internationalization status, and to form clear insights on related challenges and desires of the companies. The data drawn from the survey was then analyzed and used to create a new training concept based on the voiced opinions of the respondent companies.

The survey findings showed that the respondent companies are well-equipped in international trade. However, there is more potential to be used. Considering the material derived from the research, Tampere Chamber of Commerce can further help the companies that plan internationalization to tackle their challenges. The research also shined light on what the companies already practicing international trade experience in their current situations. A new training concept was presented as a conclusion for this thesis for the commissioner to consider.

Key words: internationalization, export, training, facilitation, strategy, chamber of commerce, internationalization knowledge, challenges, risks, SME

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1 INTRODUCTION

Exporting is common amongst the companies in Finland. It is also essential for a small country like Finland. The more we get revenue from exporting, the more solid the foundation of our well-being as a society is. Many jobs also depend on exports, and the more the small and medium sized companies (SME's) increase their exports, the more jobs are generated. That again is what Finland needs to thrive, having a high number of educated people. (Vuori 2017.)

The growth of exports in Finland is illustrated in table 1, the exporting of goods from the whole of Finland increased with 13,3% as of December 2019, compared to December 2018.

TABLE 1. Preliminary statistics of the international trade of goods, December 2019

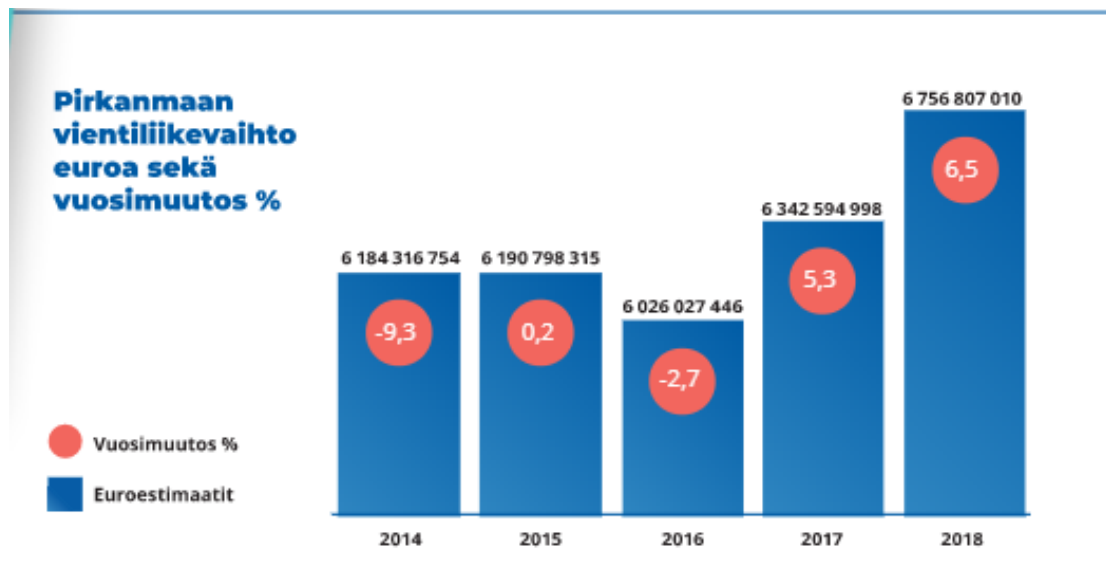
Table 1: Exports 2017-2019, million euro

Month	Total			EU total			Euro zone			External trade		
	2017	2018	2019*	2017	2018	2019*	2017	2018	2019*	2017	2018	2019*
1	4 633	5 214	5 840	2 825	3 114	3 675	1 873	2 009	2 530	1 807	2 100	2 165
2	4 376	4 807	5 145	2 649	2 870	3 065	1 631	1 810	2 015	1 727	1 938	2 080
3	5 457	5 411	5 495	3 248	3 209	3 280	2 133	2 153	2 115	2 209	2 202	2 215
4	4 563	5 610	5 500	2 652	3 563	3 170	1 634	2 480	2 035	1 912	2 047	2 330
5	5 605	5 368	5 815	3 559	3 235	3 480	2 486	2 066	2 245	2 046	2 133	2 335
6	5 137	5 431	5 265	3 091	3 242	3 040	2 017	2 067	1 920	2 046	2 189	2 225
7	4 746	5 004	5 065	2 829	2 901	2 820	1 931	1 870	1 885	1 918	2 104	2 245
8	4 769	5 101	5 075	2 866	2 915	2 960	1 837	1 750	1 865	1 902	2 186	2 115
9	5 011	5 200	5 310	2 991	3 066	3 120	1 930	1 956	1 960	2 020	2 135	2 190
10	5 338	5 811	5 720	3 299	3 473	3 380	2 146	2 219	2 155	2 039	2 338	2 340
11	5 300	5 776	5 080	3 148	3 447	2 975	2 026	2 160	1 895	2 152	2 330	2 105
12	4 776	4 948	5 605	2 697	2 850	3 550	1 690	1 822	2 590	2 080	2 098	2 055
Dec	4 776	4 948	5 605	2 697	2 850	3 550	1 690	1 822	2 590	2 080	2 098	2 055
Change		3,6 %	13,3 %		5,7 %	24,5 %		7,8 %	42,2 %		0,9 %	-2,0 %
Cum. 1-12	59 711	63 682	64 915	35 854	37 883	38 515	23 333	24 363	25 210	23 857	25 799	26 400
Change		6,6 %	1,9 %		5,7 %	1,7 %		4,4 %	3,5 %		8,1 %	2,3 %

(Finnish Customs Statistics 2020, 2.)

This thesis is focusing on the region of Pirkanmaa, and the current situation of exporting in the region. As table 2 indicates, the turnover from exports in Pirkanmaa region has kept increasing substantially from the year 2016 onwards.

TABLE 2. The exports turnover and annual change % of Pirkanmaa 2014-2018. Blue: Estimates in euros (€). Orange: Annual change in percentages (%).



The local businesses in Pirkanmaa have become increasingly international, but there is still more potential to be used in terms of internationalization. Tampere Chamber of Commerce aims to provide the best possible support functions for its member companies in terms of legal help and exporting documents. It additionally works as a networking platform, organizing a large variety of events, trainings/lectures, and seminars. It is very involved in the progress of the region, for example by hosting committees in various areas within political and infrastructural matters. (Tampere Chamber of Commerce.)

To optimize their services to the ongoing situation, Tampere Chamber of Commerce investigates the situation regularly. The issues experienced by the local businesses' experts are important to recognize. It is also important to compare to previous years' results to know where development has happened, and where not. (Tampere Chamber of Commerce.)

Tampere Chamber of Commerce has commissioned this thesis, with the purpose of researching the current situation of internationalization within the region. The internationalization process can be challenging, as it is complex. Tampere Chamber of Commerce aims to help the businesses in the area to reach their full potential once entering the foreign markets.

The research on the current situation is conducted through a survey, which will seek answers to these research questions: How can Tampere Chamber of Commerce answer to a company's internationalization needs? What could be done differently, to better optimize the trainings for internationalization? What area of the internationalization process do the companies need the most support in?

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework discusses the concept of internationalization. It provides explanations to the core terminology, key factors, issues and required competencies in international trade.

2.1 Internationalization

Internationalization refers to the action of starting to do business beyond the borders of the company's home country.

International trade is a term used to describe an action in which merchandise or intangible goods, such as services, are sold from one country to another. It has historically started by a person or a company selling products such as clothing, vehicles, and machinery to different countries. In today's world, services have become as important in international trade. The services traded internationally can include for example construction, accommodation, banking, and consulting.

International business differs from domestic business in several ways. The economic environment is often different in countries, along with the infrastructure and culture. These are all key factors, that determine how business is done in a particular country. Consequently, it is essential for an internationalizing business to have the competence to operate in a foreign environment. This means being able to adapt their strategies and products to fit the specific country's environment. (Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenber 2017, 36-40.)

Today's world is more open to people than ever before. This phenomenon could be referred to as "borderless". This is a term that first emerged in the reports in the United Kingdom and Australia. It simply means that in today's world the physical and geographical borders of countries are becoming increasingly blurred and irrelevant. This can be seen for example in education and communication between parties, which is all effortlessly facilitated on electronic platforms. On the other hand, when this is looked at from international trade's angle, the geographical borders and the cross-border knowledge is becoming increasingly

valuable, as the regulation, insurance, and funding are in key roles when implementing sales internationally. (Knight 2015, 2.)

Finland being a small market, the competition for businesses operating within the country is tough. Therefore, it is only natural that many companies are looking to expand their operations to the international markets. Expanding one's business operations beyond a country's borders offers a different market, and possibilities to gain visibility and a new customer base. (LAMK pub. 2019.)

2.1.1 Means of internationalization

Exporting

Exporting is one of the most common means for a company to operate internationally. Exporting is a trade, where a product is sold from one non-EU-country to another. Exporting can be highly beneficial to a company, as it means spreading their products and gaining visibility in other countries. (Segal 2020.)

Importing

Importing is the opposite of exporting. In importing a product is bought from a non-EU-country, and it is brought into the country the buyer is in. Before the import it is essential to confirm where the product was produced. Considering taxation and customs clearance this is crucial information. (Finnish Customs.)

International e-commerce

E-commerce has opened lots of possibilities for spreading one's products around the world. While making it relatively easy to gain visibility, having an online store operating internationally requires taking many things into consideration. The things that should be considered revolve around language, currency, cultural viewpoints related to content, and efficient implementation of customer service. (Šabanović 2018.)

Joint venture

In joint venture a subsidiary or a parent company owns a company with another, external company. This is most commonly an arrangement chosen based on its benefits, such as the resources of the external party and financial benefits.

(Murray 2020).

Service export & project export

Service export refers to a service that is simply brought from one person in a country to another in another country. Service export is a term that can be used for many types of services. These may be projects of a larger scale, such as infrastructural construction or film shooting in a foreign location. However, the services may be less visible, such as financial services. Financial service exports can include for example rent from one country to another, currency exchange services, stock purchases internationally, license and royalty fees etcetera.

Knowhow and expertise are another service that can be exported, and it may have to do with tax advisors, translation, or IT services. The services can also be people being physically brought to another country to execute a service. For example consultants, geologists, the production crew of a film or a concert.

(Nagel 2016.)

Project export again refers to a similar activity, but a one-time occurrence in terms of a project. Exporting one project can however open a door to a reoccurring service, in terms of for example maintenance of an installed machine.

(Saari 2010.)

Foreign Direct Investment

A foreign direct investment is when a direct investment is made from one country to another. This can be for example a sales unit, or a manufacturing unit.

Foreign direct investments are commonly made in open economies, that allow for the investor to indulge in high prospects for growth and that facilitate an above-averagely skilled workforce. (Chen 2020.)

Foreign contract manufacturing

In foreign contract manufacturing companies sign contracts where one “hires” the other to manufacture their products for them in a foreign land. This means that the hiring party provides the manufacturing party with all the specifics, and sometimes also materials required for production. The quality, certification, quantity, delivery details amongst others are to be determined in the contract. When dealing with companies from different countries, it is essentially important to determine every single detail in the contract, leaving no room for mistakes. Foreign contract manufacturing could simply be described as outsourcing. (Global Negotiator 2020.)

Licensing

In licensing the company that has invented a product/brand sells the right for other companies to manufacture the product with certain terms and payments. Typically, this is a small percentage of the sales, but once the product sells, the amount becomes remarkable quite fast. Licensing can be highly beneficial for both parties. The licensee can shoot their product into the stars just by getting a well-known brand name associated with it. The licensor will benefit financially once these products sell, and naturally spreading their name even more. (Entrepreneur Europe 2020.)

Licensing is a great way to widen one’s product category range in a way that once applied to a functioning product, almost guarantees success. The licensed intellectual property can be merchandise or art, such as music. Countries excluding the U.S currently account for more than 40% of the worldwide total of licensed product revenue. (Licensing international 2020.)

Franchising

Franchising means buying an already existing business, where the franchisor is involved by providing assistance in running the business. The franchisor is paid by the franchisee for their involvement. Typically, a franchise is when an established chain’s individual outlet is run by an entrepreneur. For example, in the

Finnish market R-Kiosk is a known franchise. The greatest benefit of being a franchisee is getting a business model, that is already proven to work. The franchisor also trains the franchisee to run the business. (Entrepreneur Europe 2020.)

2.1.2 Internationalization knowledge

According to Fletcher, Harris, and Richey Jr. (2013), there are three key knowledge areas for internationalization. These competencies shall be mastered by the management of the company that aims to internationalize. (Fletcher et al. 2013, 5-8.)

Market entry knowledge

To succeed in a foreign market, the company needs general knowledge on the ways that businesses and institutions operate differently in different countries. Cross-cultural knowledge is presented as an important part of market entry knowledge. It is a crucial factor in international business, as it entails ethics, equality, cultural differences, languages, and habits in business. Coherent knowledge in cross-culturalism is an asset when internationalizing because it can potentially reduce costs in the process.

It can help prevent costly mistakes made when there is not enough knowledge of the related procedures and the cultural differences. Gaining this knowledge often requires networks in the target country. (Fletcher et al. 2013, 5-8.)

Localization knowledge

The localization knowledge is needed to gain a strategic understanding of opportunities within the target country. This type of knowledge will ensure that the decisions made are going to be strategically fruitful, and that the operations abroad will be able to thrive in the long-term. The strategies formulated with coherent localization knowledge can be used for several different international markets through segmentation and clustering. (Fletcher et al. 2013, 5-8.)

International enterprise knowledge

The knowledge that falls under this category entails the ability to effectively manage the operations of the enterprise across multiple country borders. The company will with this be more understanding of why the partners have diverging behavior in different countries. Understanding this will make it easier to deal with. Cross-border transactions are in key positions in international companies. The knowledge related to adapting the product to different markets, logistics, customs, incoterms, legislations, and currency is essential. International enterprise knowledge is derived from experience. Thus, the knowledge can be gained within the specific firm, or externally, the internal knowledge may be more effortless. The firm's practices should be learned and understood extensively, and then put into objective information that is shareable between old and new international markets. This means that the knowledge of both the firm, its history and resources is here combined with the knowledge of the target environment. (Fletcher et al. 2013, 5-8.)

2.1.3 Internationalization process for companies

Strategic planning as a basis for decision making

The individual decisions made on various things shall be understood from a strategic point of view. A framework shall be created for entering the international market. The choosing happens in consideration with a company's resources and skills, that are applied to the challenge as well as the opportunities in the target environment. These three key factors are to be considered in a strategy for entering the target market:

1. Business model
2. Essential factors for success
3. Strategic key principles/actions

With the business model, factors related to the company's offering in the target market are defined, as well as the customer profile. A business model aims to name a value position within the target market. Other practical key factors are

defined, such as cooperative details etcetera. Once defining the factors that will seal the success of the company, an analytical approach is needed. The major benefit/selling argument for the potential customer is defined. (Äijö et al. 2005, 23-24)

The final section of the strategy aims to clarify and operationalize the practical actions that shall be taken to reach the set goals. (Äijö et al. 2005, 23-24)

These three core components are matched together to create a coherent plan of action, that deploys the skill set of the company, finding ways to succeed. With strategic planning a risk analysis shall be crafted to avoid surprise risks, that may arise from the target environment, or the company's own weaknesses. (Äijö et al. 2005, 23-24)

There are three main approaches to internationalization. In the organic approach the company's own resources are used, in terms of for example finance, manpower and skills. This approach is often slow, and laborious. The risks related to this approach however are very small. (Äijö et al. 2005, 23-24)

The co-operative approach is a hybrid of the company's own resources and outsourced help. This can refer to financial aid or for example external expertise. This is optimal for a company that has gained recognition/success rapidly in its domestic market. The risks related to this are shared, which makes it a relatively safe approach to use, once implemented with awareness and knowledge. (Äijö et al. 2005, 23-24)

The most outsourced approach is called Born Global. This refers to an approach, where a lot is outsourced, and a greater part of the carrying force is external. This is usually implemented by utilizing an already existing network. This approach is best suitable for a larger, established company. The risks in this approach are often the highest amongst these approaches. (Äijö et al. 2005, 23-24)

2.1.4 Challenges related to internationalization

In order to gain a more personal insight into challenges a company beginning international trade may experience, a phone interview was conducted with Tuomo Hammar, the CEO of Diesel Power Finland Ltd.

Diesel Power Finland was founded in 2004. It is a company that offers solutions for spare power generators and fire pumps globally and in Finland. The diesel and electric motor pumps are tailored for the customer's needs.

The international trade of this company mainly consists of importing parts for the machines. (Diesel Power Finland. 2020.)

According to Hammar, as they are operating in an extremely technical field, the products including the parts are tailored, and are not consumer products. Thus the standards for quality and safety are extremely high. The trade done by this company happens almost entirely within the EU, which makes the process easier in terms of customs. (Hammar 2020.)

The thing that surprised Hammar in the initial stages was that the business manners between countries were remarkably different. First he mentions that conversations and oral agreements are binding for Finns as a default, and it was shocking to notice that in other countries they do not apply. He goes on to say that it was challenging to make contracts, because the other party may attempt to postpone the contract signing, or become evasive, and the process slows down. (Hammar 2020.)

He finishes by stating that having this experience, he thinks it is essential to determine all details in the early stages of negotiations, and write everything down clearly in the contract to avoid misunderstandings. The key factors include technical content, schedules, quality, and delivery terms. In case of a mishap, who is responsible? Extra caution with the details is required when doing business between cultures. (Hammar 2020.)

When asked to further describe how the cultural differences influence his business, he specifies some factors. He begins by saying that the Finnish

culture is very to-the-point, straight forward and honest. That can lead to feeling like there is a lot of back and forth, when dealing with other cultures. He has experienced that in negotiations at times the other party does not admit if they have not understood. A big surprise and complication he faced, was that the business fluency in English is insufficient in several countries even in Europe. (Hammar 2020.)

In the beginning of his current career Hammar went to a few trainings and events related to internationalization. He however found them somewhat disappointing in terms of expertise, and was left with a feeling that he had been to a business presentation. He then ended up tackling the challenges alone. (Hammar 2020.)

He feels that it has been challenging to find peer support. This is partly because his company's standards for the quality of the products have turned out to be especially high compared to their peers'. (Hammar 2020.)

When asked to give a tip to someone beginning to do international trade, Hammar says that as a Finn it is good to always be skeptical of everything, when negotiating and signing contracts. It is good to keep in mind that establishing a business relationship where both parties can truly trust each other takes time. (Hammar 2020.)

2.1.5 Risks related to internationalization

The globalization process is a complex process. where risks are omnipresent. Once operating in a foreign domain, a company is exposed to four major risk types, according to Cavusgil, Knight, and Riesenberg. The four major risk types are cross-cultural risks, country risks, currency risks and commercial risks. These are going to be further explained below. (Cavusgil et al. 2017, 41-42.)

Cross-cultural risk

Cultural values and beliefs tend to be slow to change, some even permanent. Therefore, any seemingly minor cultural conflict or misunderstanding will easily tarnish a person's image and reputation. Business habits and values are derived from these cultural values and ethics, and therefore play a key role in international business understanding. Language barriers can also act as a fuel to the fire, and create misunderstandings and therefore conflicts. In today's world there are translation services available for everyone, and they may be very functional in many cases. In many languages, however, there are words and idioms that cannot be translated, or may have a totally different meaning in another language. This is something the translation applications cannot pick up on. Therefore a common language or at least awareness of the matter is an asset to both parties when doing business together. (Cavusgil et al. 2017, 41-42.)

Country risk (political risk)

Country risk derives from the possibility that a drastic change in a company's economic, political or legal environment can bring a wide range of risks to a company operating in a foreign land. Changes to these could affect the way the business is done. (Cavusgil et al. 2017, 41-42.)

Currency risk (financial risk)

Currency risk refers to risks that arise from fluctuation in exchange rates. Radical fluctuation can decrease the company's value, as well as increase the purchasing price of goods used for production. (Cavusgil et al. 2017, 41-42.)

Commercial risk

Commercial risk can be used to describe risk factors, that are decision-based. For example a company's management's poor judgment and bad choices in terms of business procedures. This can be a result of a poorly planned strategy or tactic. (Cavusgil et al. 2017, 41-42.)

A commercial risk can occur when making decisions in marketing, buying, designing of products, choosing business partners, pricing or timing. These risks are also present when operating domestically, but in those cases the errors may not be as costly and complex as they would be in a foreign market. This can be due to the fact that in foreign markets the regulations are potentially different from the company's own country. They may also be set to protect the party in their own country, which makes it difficult for the foreign company to simply terminate a contract. (Cavusgil et al. 2017, 41-42.)

Commercial risks can also be derived from the inability to provide a satisfying level of customer service, or to otherwise answer to the expectations of the customer. This will tarnish the company's reputation. (Cavusgil et al. 2017, 41-42.)

In order to thrive in international markets, a risk management plan is essential. Researching target environments constantly in order to predict future risks and changes in the environment can save the company from a lot of harm afterward. (Cavusgil et al. 2017, 41-42.)

2.2 Trainings for internationalization

Tampere Chamber of Commerce has been offering trainings for internationalization throughout the years. The selection is made typically by the Tampere Chamber of Commerce Training Manager, Susanna Keskinen. Keskinen was briefly interviewed on the phone, and asked to elaborate the training selection process.

According to Keskinen, the themes for the trainings mainly consist of financial management, human resources management, leadership, sales, marketing, communication and internationalization. The themes are planned to fit the needs and desires of the member companies. The feedback from trainings is continuously monitored, and a training need survey is regularly delivered to the member companies and possible external participants as well. (Keskinen 2020.)

Changes in regulations, legislations or any changes that impact the environment of the companies in the area are likely topics for trainings, and therefore, carefully followed by Keskinen. Topics like these are included in the trainings with a practical touch. In the area of Pirkanmaa and in the member companies there are various types of experts, specializing in different fields. Thus the trainings are often executed in co-operation with these local experts. (Keskinen 2020.)

Keskinen explains that she works tightly with the other training managers and experts of other chambers of commerce in Finland, sharing ideas. For internationalization-related topics internal support is often available, because director Markus Sjölund is the expert of international matters at Tampere Chamber of Commerce. (Keskinen 2020.)

Exhibit 1. Training calendar of Spring 2020 (only internationalization trainings)

KANSAIN- VÄLISTYMINEN

Incoterms® 2020 ja sopimusehdot

Ti 21.1. klo 9–16
Technopolis Yliopistonrinne
Asiantuntijana asianajaja,
OTT Lauri Railas, Railas Oy



Kansainvälisen kaupan arvonlisä- verotus

Ti 18.2. klo 9–16
Technopolis Yliopistonrinne
Asiantuntijana Tax Director
Ritva Nyrhinen,
PricewaterhouseCoopers Oy



(Tampere Chamber of Commerce 2020.)

As illustration 1 indicates, the Spring 2020 training calendar only includes two topics of internationalization. The first one is about the new Incoterms 2020, and contract terms. The second one is about VAT in international trade.

Exhibit 2. The training calendar of Autumn 2019

TALOUS- HALLINTO	HENKILÖSTÖ- HALLINTO	KANSAIN- VÄLISTYMINEN	MYyntI JA MARKKINOINTI
<p>Arvonlisäverotus ja kirjanpito osto- ja myyntireskontran näkökulmasta To 3.10. klo 9-16 Technopolis Yliopistonrinne Asiantuntijoina KHT, JHT Hanna Keskinen sekä johtaja Harri Huikuri, BDO Oy</p>	<p>Henkilöstön palkitsemis- ja kannustinjärjestelmät Ke 25.9. klo 9-12 Technopolis Yliopistonrinne Asiantuntijoina veroasian- tuntija Sakari Putkonen ja lakimies Johanna Fagervik, KPMG Oy Ab</p>	<p>Vientiprosessi kuntoon! Ti 22.10. klo 9-16 Technopolis Yliopistonrinne Asiantuntijana Marika Nummila, Samex Solutions Oy</p>	<p>Hakukoneoptimointi – mitä, miksi, miten? Ma 30.9. klo 13-16 Technopolis Yliopistonrinne Asiantuntijana konsepti- suunnittelija Anssi Kosonen, Markkinointitoimisto Bermuda Oy</p>
<p>Taloushallinnon valmennuspäivä To 10.10. klo 9-15.30 Technopolis Yliopistonrinne Asiantuntijana kirjanpidon asiantuntija Teija Kerbs, Helsingin seudun kauppakamari</p>	 	<p>Incoterms® 2020 – uudet ehdot voimaan 1.1.2020 To 7.11. klo 9-15 Technopolis Yliopistonrinne Asiantuntijana asianajaja, OTT Lauri Railas, Railas Oy</p>	
<p>Ennakkoperintä 2020 Ma 18.11. klo 13-16 Technopolis Yliopistonrinne Asiantuntijana oikaisu- lautakunnan johtava puheen- johtaja Tomi Peltomäki, Verohallinto</p>	<p>Työlainsäädännön ajankohtaispäivä Ti 29.10. klo 9-16 Technopolis Yliopistonrinne Asiantuntijana lakimies Kirsi Parnila, Helsingin seudun kauppakamari</p>	<p>Remburssi maksu- tapana -workshop: tulkinat ja käytännöt sekä vinkit asia- kirjojen tekoon To 21.11. klo 9-15 Technopolis Yliopistonrinne Asiantuntijana rahoitus- pääliikö Leila Heikkinen, OP Yrityspankki Oyj, Trade Finance</p>	<p>Instagram-markkinointi yrityksille ja organisaatioille Ti 5.11. klo 9-16 Technopolis Yliopistonrinne Asiantuntijana Creative Consultant Lotta Kinnunen, LM Someco</p>
			<p><i>"Valmennus onnistui työn ohessa hienosti. Ryhmä oli sopivan kokoinen ja Vesa loi ammattitaidollaan hyvän, keskustelelevan tunnelman."</i></p>
<p>Kauppakamarin veropäivä 2019 Ke 27.11. klo 9-16 Technopolis Yliopistonrinne Asiantuntijoina mm. KHT, toimitusjohtaja Henry Kampman, Revisium Oy sekä Executive Director, OTK, BPS, eMBA Tomi Viitala, Aalto-yliopisto</p>	<p><i>"Ajankohtaista tärkeää asiaa, selkeä kouluttaja ja hyvin järjestetyt puitteet."</i></p>	<p>Pirkanmaan vientipäivä To 19.09.2019 Technopolis Yliopistonrinne Pirkanmaan vientipäivä -tapahtumaa on järjestetty vuodesta 2017 alkaen ja viime syksynä tapahtuma keräsi yli 200 kansainvälisyydestä kiinnostunutta kävijää. Tampereen kauppakamari on tänäkin vuonna kutsunut mukaan parhaat kumppanit tarjoamaan tukea, hyötyä ja ajankohtaiskoulutusta vientiä harjoittaville ja kansainvälistyville yrityksille. Tervetuloa mukaan kansainvälistymisen ja viennin huipputapahtumaan! Lisätiedot: www.tampereenkauppakamari.fi/tapahtumat, Markus Sjölund, markus.sjolund@tampereenkauppakamari.fi</p>	
<p>Osakeyhtiön tilinpäätös Ke 11.12. klo 9-15 Technopolis Yliopistonrinne Asiantuntijana KHT, toimitus- johtaja Henry Kampman, Revisium Oy</p>			

(Tampere Chamber of Commerce archives 2019.)

In the internationalization section ("kansainvälistyminen" in Finnish) there are the following internationalization-themed trainings: Exporting process, Incoterms 2020, Letter of credit as a payment method-workshop. Additionally the annual Export Day of Pirkanmaa. Export Day is a networking event, where

representatives from different companies can come together to listen to a lecture and discuss a timely topic related to exporting together. This has been a very popular event due to its social nature.

Exhibit 3. The training calendar of Spring 2018



(Tampere Chamber of Commerce archives 2018.)

The calendar of 2018 Spring shows that the trainings for internationalization were Letter of credit for exporter and VAT in international trade.

Exhibit 4. Training calendar Autumn 2017

TALOUSHALLINTO

- Osto- ja myyntilaskujen kirjanpito- ja arvonlisäverokäsittely 5.10.2017
- Kauppakamarin veropäivä 2.11.2017
- Ennakkoperintä 28.11.2017
- Osakeyhtiön tilinpäätös 13.12.2017
- Osakeyhtiön ja omistajayrittäjän verokysymyksiä 24.1.2018

HENKILÖSTÖHALLINTO

- Voimavarat ja onnistumiset esimiestyön perustana 26.10.2017
- Näin hoidat YT-prosessin oikein 14.11.2017
- Miten parannan rekrytointien onnistumista ja luon positiivisen työnantajakuvan 18.1.2018
- Työoikeuden ajankohtaispäivä – vältä karikat 31.1.2018

KANSAINVÄLISTYMINEN

- Pirkanmaan Vientipäivä 19.9.2017
- Tulli-ilmoittamisen ajankohtaispäivä 3.10.2017
- Vientiprosessi toimii! 9.11.2017

ESIMIESTYÖ JA YRITYSJOHTO

- Sisäinen viestintä, esimiehen viestintätaidot ja coaching 29.8.2017
- HHJ – Hyväksytyt hallituksen jäsen -kurssi alkaa elo- ja lokakuussa
- Game on! – Lean teoriasta käytäntöön pelaamalla 12.9.2017
- Yrityksen ympäristövastuu 27.9.2017
- HHJ – Puheenjohtajakurssi 11.-12.10.2017
- HHJ Hallitus ja strategian toteuttaminen 13.10.2017
- Yrityskaupan vaiheet ostajan ja myyjän näkökulmasta 15.11.2017
- HHJ Hallitus ja myynnin johtaminen 30.11.2017

MYYNTI JA MARKKINOINTI

- Datavetoinen uusasiakashankinta 21.9.2017
- Social Selling 25.10.2017
- Opi mittaamaan sosiaalisen median rahallinen hyöty 16.11.2017

MUUT KOULUTUKSET

- Asiantuntija sosiaalisessa mediassa – ota someviestintä haltuun! 6.9.2017
- Julkinen hankinta tarjoajan näkökulmasta 13.9.2017
- Rekisterinpitäjä ja tietosuojasetus – tiedätkö velvoitteesi? 10.10.2017
- ERP:istä eroon; nyt tehdään tulosta liiketoiminta-alustalla! 23.11.2017
- Excel intensiivikurssi 30.11.2017

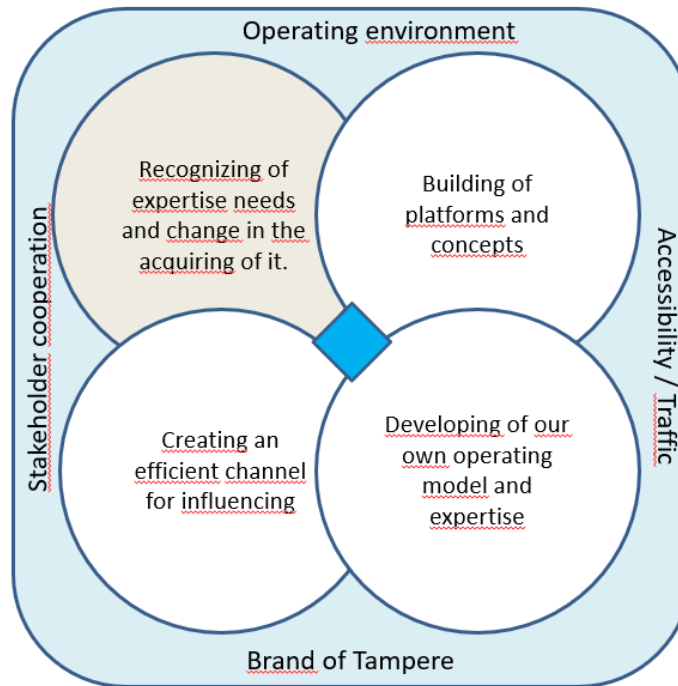
(Tampere Chamber of Commerce archives 2020.)

The training calendar of 2017 Autumn shows that the Export Day, Customs day, and Exporting process were organized within the internationalization category.

2.2.1 Chamber of Commerce strategy 2020-2025



Chamber of Commerce 2025



Challenge:

- Understanding of the business operation's development and renewal.

The role of Chamber of Commerce in matters important to businesses:

- Networker
- Facilitator
- Communication channel

TAMPEREEN
KAUPPAKAMARI

Tampere Chamber of Commerce has started working on a strategy renewal. As this initial plan shows, the goals are set to be met in 2025.

The goal of this thesis is to focus on bringing Tampere Chamber of Commerce tools to implement the part of the strategy that aims to build new platforms and concepts. The survey is conducted in order to recognize the key issues the businesses experience in internationalization, and the solutions presented in this thesis are implemented according to the key focus areas in the new strategy. The customers are going to be helped by creating new ways to operate.

(Tampere Chamber of Commerce 2020.)

3 RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter discusses the research method. The quantitative research was conducted as a survey. The survey had a standard set of questions given by the commissioner. The survey was edited to fit the purpose of this thesis, focusing on the training needs and challenges of the respondent companies.

3.1 Survey

The survey was conducted on an online platform, Questback. The link to the survey was sent through email to 1191 people. The mailing list was retrieved from Tampere Chamber of Commerce's CRM-system. The final selection was made by applying filters such as: Export countries determined, and import countries determined.

The survey of internationalization is conducted biennially, to monitor the development of the situation within the region. The results are used to further optimize the internationalization-related services of Tampere Chamber of Commerce in the future. The results are especially beneficial for making decisions about the training topics. This thesis will use the survey results as a basis for the new training concept. The questions included in this thesis were the ones that are relevant in terms of this research, not all questions.

The survey is sent with an invitation, that is used to present the concept of the survey, and to convince the receiver to take the time to answer it. An invitation message is typically a few sentences long.

According to the Behavioral Theory by Ritter and Sue, it is effective to use incentives and a strategy that appeals to the receiver's emotions. This could be for instance a sentence that indicates how helpful it would be for the sender company to have the receiver answer the survey. This does not only appeal to the person's sense of responsibility to help, but additionally makes them feel pleased with themselves. The feeling of satisfaction with oneself derives from a human being's need to feel generous and useful. (Ritter & Sue 2007.)

Considering this, the invitation for this survey includes a mention of Tampere Chamber of Commerce using the results to improve the services they offer to the customers. The appeal is hoped to be increasing the response rate.

3.2 Questions

The questions consisted of 11 questions, that were either multiple choice or open-ended. The background questions focused on finding out the size of the business, the type of international operations it practices and whether they have an internationalization strategy. The research-related questions aim to clarify the situation of the challenges the respondent experiences within the crucial phases of the internationalization process, and what market they are aiming to establish themselves in. The respondents that answered that they are not internationalizing or planning to internationalize, had the survey end there with the question of why not.

The questions were determined originally by the Tampere Chamber of Commerce, as the information they need is always the same in order to be able to directly compare with the previous survey results. The questions about challenges experienced and the event type desired were specifically crafted for this thesis, as the internationalization factors that are found most challenging, are the ones that will be taken into consideration when designing the future training palate.

3.3 Respondents

The respondents of the survey were mostly CEO's, sales managers, marketing managers and export managers. The target people were simply extracted from Tampere Chamber of Commerce's CRM-system, and the companies have chosen their contact people themselves. The companies selected to receive the survey were companies that are members of Tampere Chamber of Commerce.

4 SURVEY RESULTS

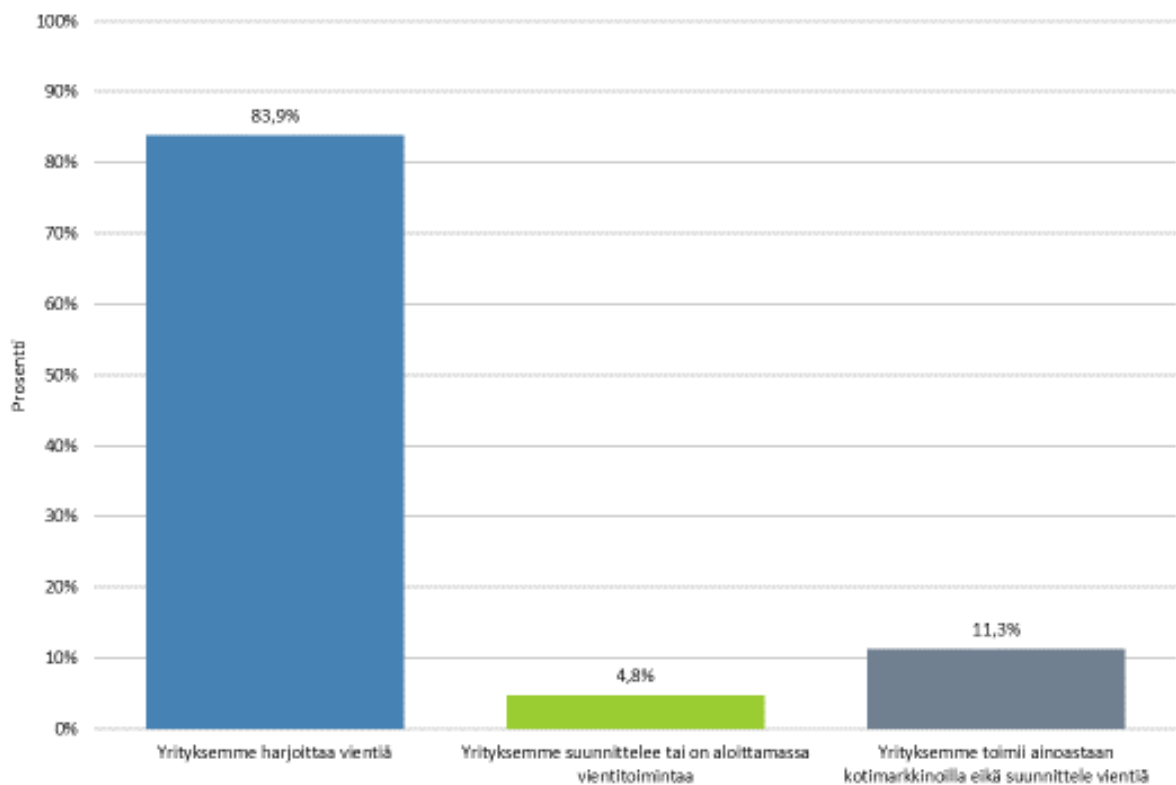
This chapter focuses on the numerical data that was extracted from the survey. The data will be displayed in the form of a pillar or pie chart for maximum clarity and readability. The survey got 169 answers.

4.1 Data derived from the survey

1. The company's exporting status as of today

Pirkanmaan kansainvälistymiskartoitus 2020, palvelukartoitus

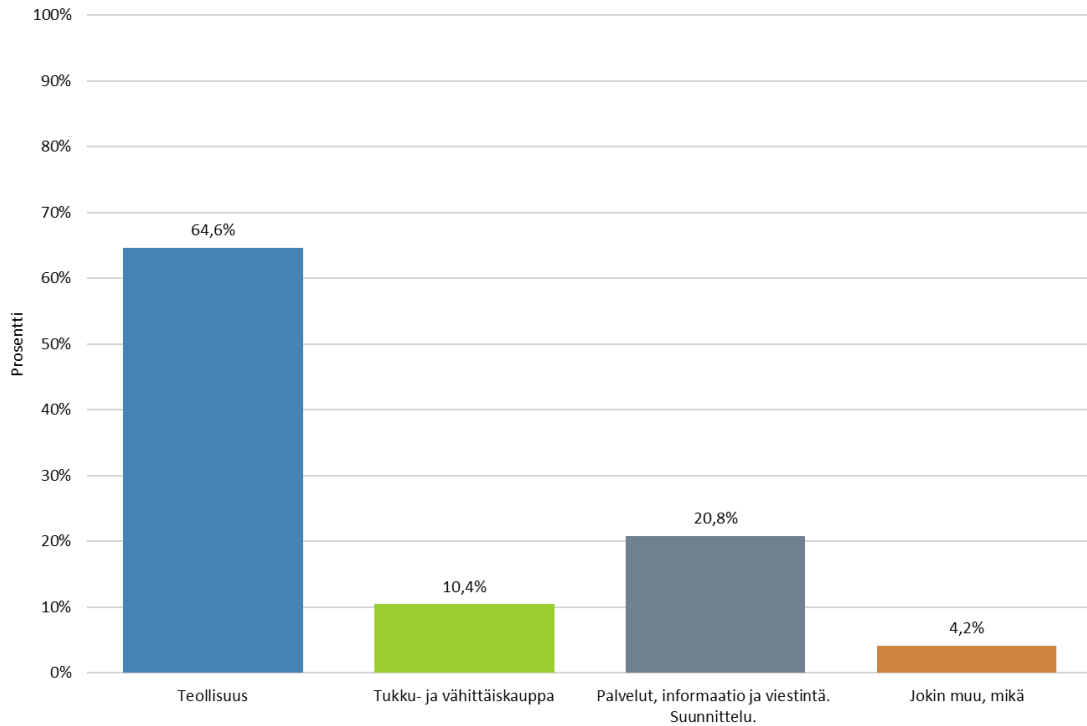
1. Yrityksen viennin status tällä hetkellä



As the results of the very first question indicate, 83,9% of the companies are exercising exporting. 4,8% are planning or starting exporting, and 11,3% are only operating in the domestic market and not planning to internationalize.

2. The main industry of the company

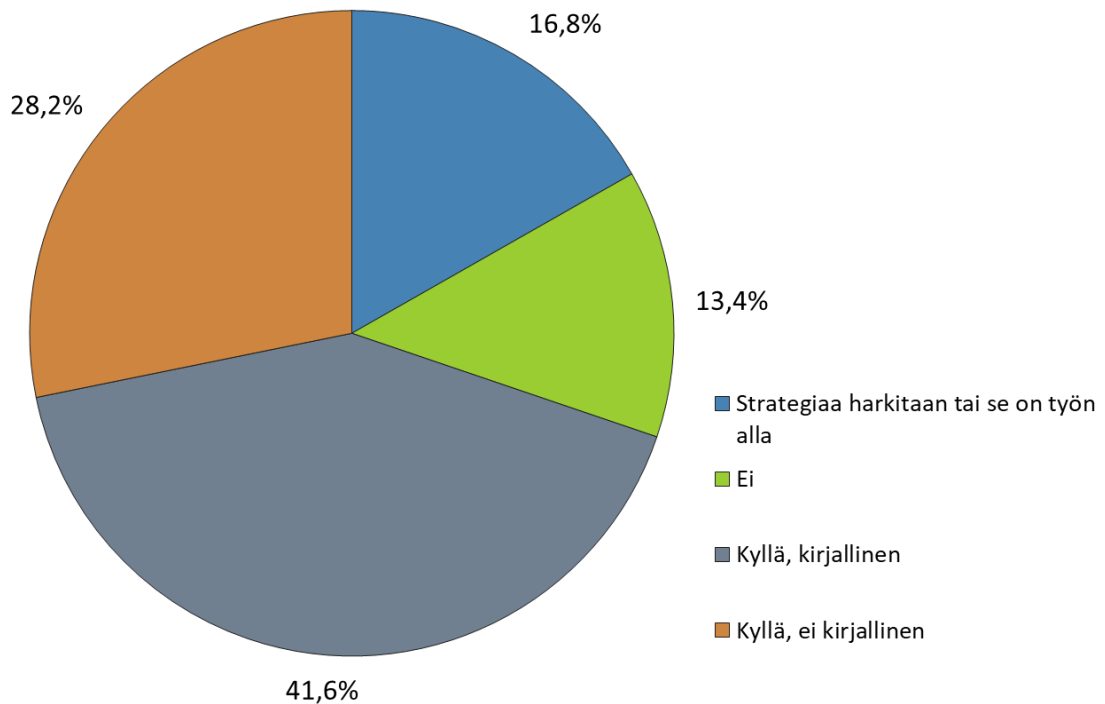
4. Yrityksen päätoimiala



As this graph indicates, the main industry seems to be manufacturing with 64,6% of the respondent companies. Services, information, and communication are the second largest, counting up to 20.8%. Wholesale and retail is 10,4%. Something else 4,2%.

3. Does the company have an internationalization strategy?

5. Onko yrityksellä vienti- tai kansainvälistymisstrategia?



Grey: Company has a written internationalization strategy.

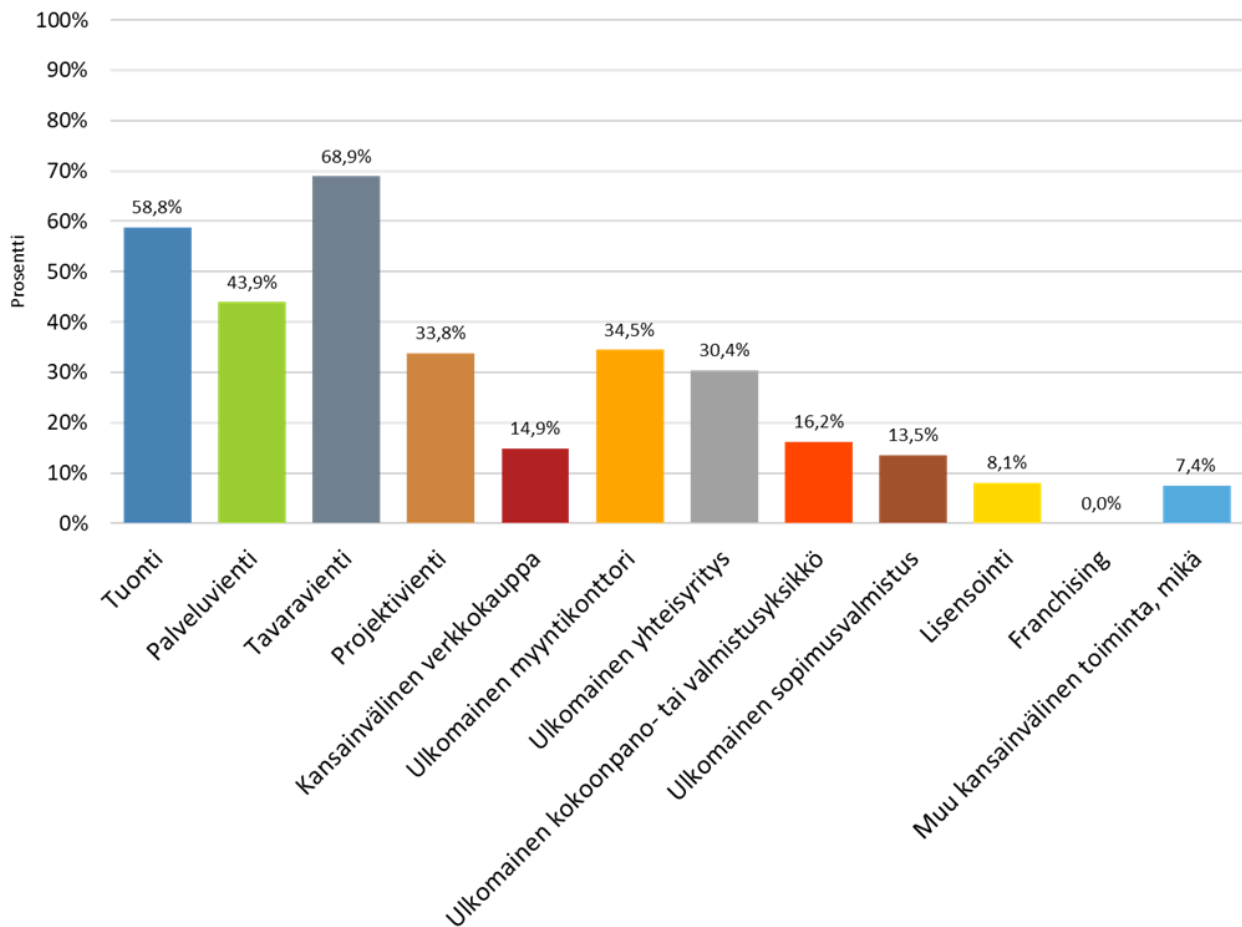
Orange: Company has an international strategy, but it is not written.

Blue: Strategy is being considered or is in progress.

Green: Company does not have an internationalization strategy.

The graph shows that a major part of the companies responding has a written internationalization strategy. Only 13,4% have no strategy for internationalization in progress. This includes only the companies that are however, already doing international trade or planning to do it. Thus, 13,4% have internationalized without a strategy.

4. Other international functions of the company as of today (choose multiple)



The answer options for this question were crafted considering all the options possible for ways to practice business internationally.

Answer options from left to right: Import, Service export, Project export, International E-commerce, Foreign sales office, Joint venture, Foreign manufacturing unit, Foreign contract manufacturing, Licensing, Franchising, Other.

The three most common functions are exporting, importing, and service exports. These terms are explained in the theoretical section of the thesis.

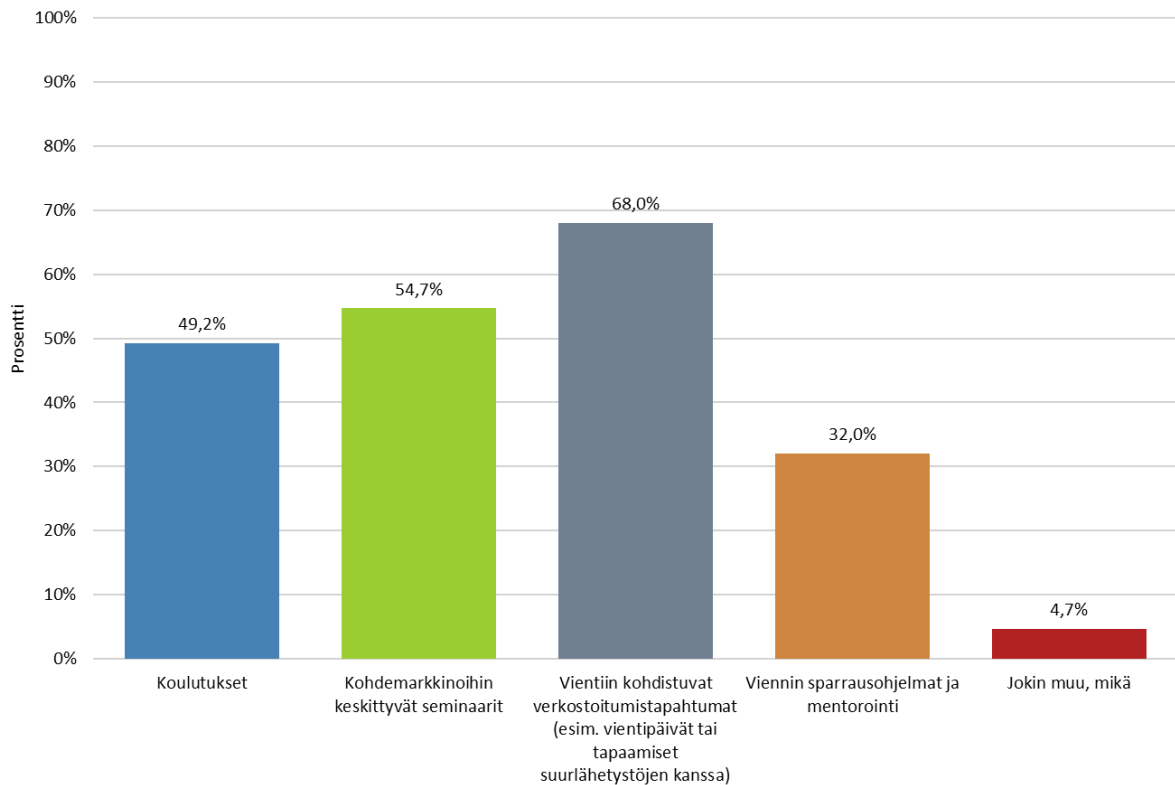
5. Describe the challenges experienced in different phases of the internationalization process. (1point = not challenging, 5points = extremely challenging)



The options from up to down: Finding or building of subcontracting- or partner network in the target market, recruiting of qualified staff in the target market, pricing of products and services, risk management (staff, contracts, market, politics, cash flow), target market's legislation and contract rights, organizing of sales in the target market, scaling of the business operations internationally.

The graph shows that recruiting qualified staff is the most challenging part of the internationalization process with 2,46 points out of 5 points (being the most challenging). However, no area seems extremely challenging, but the challenges are rather evenly spread.

6. Choose the most interesting event type



Answer options from left to right: Trainings, seminars focused on target markets, networking events focused on exporting (e.g. Export days or embassy meetings), sparring programs or mentoring for exporting, something else, what.

It seems that the most popular training type would be networking events focused on exporting. The second and third places belong to seminars and trainings.

7. Target countries for sales growth (Name four, open)

The results show that the four most desired countries for sales growth are Germany, USA, Sweden and Russia.

8. What actions should be taken in the region of Pirkanmaa to further exports and support internationalization? (Open)

The survey ended with an open question that allowed the respondent to suggest actions that should be taken in the region to further exports and to support

the internationalization of companies. The answers were naturally miscellaneous. Some points presented similar findings with this research and shall be taken into consideration. A reoccurring theme was training and other related events. A respondent said that there should be more training for small companies to develop their abilities to start exporting. For already experienced companies, events where they are connected to other companies. Industry-specific seminars were also suggested. Improving the flight connections from the region of Pirkanmaa was mentioned several times in this open field.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The survey answered coherently to the research questions set to the thesis initially.

The commissioner will be able to optimize their services in terms of internationalization, when taking the results into consideration. The survey clearly shows what areas of the internationalization process the companies need the most support in.

As shown in graph 1, the leading international operation within the Pirkanmaa-based companies is exporting. The graph shows that over 80% of the companies in that region do exporting. The remaining percentage of companies that stated that they are not planning to export, were then asked why. The majority answered that they just simply did not see the need to internationalize. The second biggest reasons were described openly. These included several different answers, that cannot be used to draw generalizing conclusions.

The survey ended if one answered that they are not considering internationalizing. Due to this, it can be deduced that the companies that answered they do not have an internationalization strategy, are companies that are already doing international trade, or are planning to. This is an important piece of information, so that Tampere Chamber of Commerce can consider if there is a need to start providing support for creating efficient internationalization strategies.

As extracted from the survey results, the main industry of the Pirkanmaa region companies is manufacturing. This is generally associated with Tampere, being referred to as the “factory city” of Finland. Services are the second largest industry in the area.

It was also found that the companies in the area of Pirkanmaa find it challenging to recruit qualified staff for their international activities. Scaling the business operation in the target market seems to be almost as challenging. Finding or building of subcontracting- or partner network in the target market, legislation and risk management are also on top of the list. The two latter can also be seen in

the interview with Tuomo Hammar, which touched on the topics that can be found challenging when starting international trade. One key takeaway from the interview is, that cross-culture knowledge is essential when involved in international trade.

According to the survey results, pricing the products for the target market was the least challenging to the respondents.

The reason for asking the question of challenges in certain, selected topics is to get a true picture of what areas in internationalization are truly the most difficult in. This was however, to find out what the respondents would like to learn about, or what would likely be the most beneficial for them.

It was important to gain a coherent understanding of what the companies do, other than exporting. This is useful information in order to already start predicting the future trends in today's world that is constantly changing. The services that Tampere Chamber of Commerce can provide in the future to help companies with all their internationalization endeavors can and shall reach past just exporting, that for now remains the most common form of international business operations.

According to the survey results, the most desired target countries for boosting sales in for the responding companies are (in the correct order) Germany, USA, Sweden, and Russia. Based on these findings, specific informational events regarding these countries are recommended for Tampere Chamber of Commerce.

To choose the optimal facilitation approach for the future training services, the survey included a question regarding the most interesting type of an event. The answers show that the respondents prefer a networking event over other types of events. This enables the communication between representatives from different companies, from different industries. This allows them to share their knowledge experience and opinions. That is why it is a learning style that may be the most versatile of all of these, and therefore is pleasant for all. Being able to discuss and ask questions is the preferred learning method of many people.

6 DISCUSSION

In this chapter a new training concept for the commissioner is presented. A self-reflection is made, as well as an overall evaluation of the research process.

6.1 Suggestion: Internationalization Round Table - A new training concept

In light of the results gained from the internationalization survey, a new training concept is presented as an opportunity for Tampere Chamber of Commerce to further optimize its services for internationalization. The model was crafted based on the answers derived from the survey, and by thinking of Tampere Chamber of Commerce as a facilitator. This particular implementation style was chosen based on the survey results on the type of events the companies are interested in. The majority answered networking events and seminars for target markets. The most challenging things in internalization were recruiting qualified staff, scaling the business operations internationally, and finding and building networks and partners in a target country. Therefore at least these should be considered as discussion topics for the round table discussion.

6.1.1 Facilitation in a nutshell

Facilitation is hosting, directing, and providing tools. In the new training concept Tampere Chamber of Commerce will play the role of a facilitator; an outsider expert, who is neutral and unbiased. It will provide the frames and the atmosphere for rewarding conversations and workshops. The key steps in facilitation are clarification, solution and implementation. Efficient facilitation creates a way of working that keeps the focus on the relevant issues, and leads the conversation towards its goal. Facilitation enables everyone to be heard, not just the ones with the most courage and speed. (Grape People. 2020.)

6.1.2 Round table discussion as a concept

A round table discussion is a concept, that allows equal participation for all attendees. This will allow the attendees to create connections and to network with others with similar interests and challenges. In order to get the most out of this

concept's potential, the organizer must know how to facilitate a round table discussion. The most important thing is to determine the discussion topics well and ahead of time. The source for these topics should be mostly the attendees themselves. In this case, the topics have already been given by the survey answers. These can then be modified later, when the initial challenges are tackled. The topic suggestions can also be asked from the attendees upon their registration. It is also an efficient option to have a list of topics that they can choose from. This creates a frame so that the topics cannot be anything between Heaven and Earth.

All discussions of this sort need a moderator. As a moderator of the discussion, it is important to keep a strict direction, so that the focus stays on the topics. In the beginning of the event, a clear structure, schedule and goals shall be stated to the attendees. (Kelly. 2018.)

6.1.3 Implementation of the Internationalization Round Table Discussion

There are several ways to facilitate a round table discussion for Tampere Chamber of Commerce. Two options are going to be presented in this chapter.

Option 1: A round table discussion, that Tampere Chamber of Commerce facilitates. This would mean hosting and organizing of the event, choosing of the topics, and designing the physical environment and the structure of the event. Additionally an expert would be hired to be the moderator in the event, if the Chamber does not have the resources to be that involved.

Option 2: A round table discussion, where an employee from Tampere Chamber of Commerce is involved also as a moderator. This is possibly a more cost-efficient option. The facilitation and organizing will be implemented as in option 1.

Additionally a suggestion is made to consider whether or not an outsourced training part would be included in the day. This could be an expert speaking about one of the relevant topics. This would bring extra value, knowledge and content into the event. This could be a shorter lecture, after which there would be time for the attendees to ask questions. The schedule could then resume to the table,

allowing the attendees to discuss the information they just learned with each other. This part could be combined with either of the ideas above.

The moderator, outsourced or not, should however be someone with a thorough understanding of internationalization. If not, the expert talker is necessary in order for the event to have an expert present to answer to the attendees' expectations.

6.2 The validity and ethicality of the research

The survey that was conducted makes the research valid. It collected 169 answers, which is an amount that can be used to draw conclusions. The survey was anonymous, which means that the respondent cannot be recognized. This allowed the respondent to answer honestly, and without holding back anything. The conclusions based on the survey answers and written on this thesis were correct and not misleading, or biased. The methods used in this research were highly concentrated on the numerical data derived from the survey service, Questback. The service allows a download of result graphs. Additionally, in order to add an experience-based, personal twist, Tuomo Hammar was interviewed.

6.3 Self-evaluation: The research process and key takeaways

When looking back to the beginning of this process, I had not yet gained the capability to put together a coherent, research-based study.

The process started with asking Tampere Chamber of Commerce whether they had a topic that needed investigating. They told me about the survey they wanted done, and I felt like it was a great opportunity for me to immerse myself in the timely topic of international trade. This also enabled me to work with clear frames, and towards a goal that aims to eventually help people. This felt inspiring to me, even though I was not sure how to go about it.

The commissioner provided me with a set survey including things they definitely needed to have in it. I was given the liberty to edit it, and to add the questions that I needed for this thesis. I received help crafting the survey and suggestions for some source material and other ideas, upon asking. Aside of that the

commissioner was relatively lightly involved in the process itself. I had the opportunity to ask for opinions on things if needed. I of course could have used more participation, but getting a clear topic was a great contribution, to begin with.

The thesis instructor that I was assigned was extremely helpful in terms of coaching and directing. I was always given answers to my questions and therefore felt that I got the most out of this experience, having understood what a project like this requires and the ways to execute it. I was not left alone to guess, but was provided with the right kind of answers that directed me towards the right path.

The research itself; Finding sources and suitable material online was challenging. Having a clear goal from the very beginning was helpful in order to plan my next move. The writing approach I took was somewhat relaxed, in terms of writing what I felt I was inspired by. I kept adding additional bits and pieces to my theoretical framework as I went ahead in the other sections, and felt like something else had to be mentioned.

The key lesson I learned from this process was that I should just start right away. Even if I am not sure of what to do exactly, writing something is better than a blank page. If something is written, it can be evaluated and then fixed. If nothing is written, it can not be fixed. To get started one should not wait for the moment when they feel like they know perfectly what they are about to do. That moment may never arrive.

This process has taught me how to do research, conduct surveys, analyze the results, and to find credible material online and on various databases. It has taught me critical thinking in terms of different sources. I believe this project as a mental process has made me more confident academically, and despite the occasional confusion, it turned out to be a successful learning experience that has left me with a concrete skill set that can be applied in my future endeavors.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview with Tuomo Hammar

Tuomo Hammar is the CEO of Diesel Power Finland Ltd. He was interviewed on the phone 10.4.2020. The interview questions were as follows:

1. What parts of internationalization did you find the most challenging upon starting?
2. Have cultural differences affected your business negotiations? How?
3. Did you go to any informative events about internationalization for advice?
4. Did you ever wish for a platform, where you could discuss the challenges with other entrepreneurs in your field?
5. What tip would you give someone considering internationalizing?

Appendix 2. Interview with Susanna Keskinen

Susanna Keskinen is the Training Manager at Tampere Chamber of Commerce. She is mainly responsible for the planning and implementation of the trainings. In this interview she was asked to further explain her planning process. The interview was done on the phone on 11.5.2020.

Interview question: How do you plan the trainings and decide the topics?

Appendix 3. Survey

The survey was conducted on Questback. It included a total of 11 questions and got 169 answers. The answers reviewed in this thesis were only the relevant questions to the thesis. The complete list of survey questions:

9. The company's exporting status as of today
10. (To the ones that answered that they do not export) Why is your company not exporting or planning to export?
11. Number of staff in your company
12. The main industry the company operates in
13. Does the company have an internationalization strategy?
14. The company's other international functions as of today (options given)
15. Describe the challenge you experience in each area of the exporting process (options given)
16. Does the company have employees that do not speak Finnish as their native language?
17. Target countries for sales growth (Name four, open)
18. Choose the most interesting event type (Options given)
19. What actions should be taken in Pirkanmaa to further the exports and to support the internationalization of the companies in the area? (Open)