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**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF RUSSIAN AND UKRAINIAN NEW YEAR
AND CHRISTMAS CHARTER TRAVELLERS IN KUUSAMO AND RUKA**

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<p>This thesis is commissioned by the company called Nordic Holidays which is located in Kuusamo, Finland and is organising charter tours for the clients from Russia and Ukraine. The aim of the thesis is to identify customer satisfaction from the vacations supplied by the company.</p> <p>In the first part there will explained theoretical background which will further help to understand the research. The research is based on the surveys which have been collected during the season 2012-2013. The analyze of the research will show how successful the business is, what is the target market, what are the top products the company supply and customer satisfaction level about all the services presented.</p> <p>In conclusion, there will be the results of the research and further possibilities for development presented.</p>	
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PREFACE

This is accomplished in spring 2013 and is fulfilling the requirements for the Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality Management at the Kajaani University of Applied Sciences. I would like to thank some people for support. First of all I would like to thank my parents for all the trust in my abilities and strong support in all my beginnings, without them I would not have as much as I do now.

Special thanks belong to my teachers who have been with us for all four years of studying, great thanks to my supervisor Pertuu Huusko who always gave an inspiration and great ideas. Furthermore I would like to thank my teachers Mikko Keranen, Peter Stricker, Ruey Komulainen, Anneli Karppinen, Sami Malm and Abdelazim Hannoura for their interesting teaching during the studies.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays tourism is one of the strongest industries in the economy of many countries. According to the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO 2011.) tourism is considered to be one of the world industries which are growing more rapidly. Consequently it is very important to understand and develop various items for tourism and its industry in general.

In Finland tourism is developing rapidly as well. More and more tourists from all over the world are visiting the country. One of the most popular places in Finland is Lapland what is mainly because of the real winter image and Santa Clause residence. Nordic Holidays is one of the tourism service providers in the area based mostly for Russian and Ukrainian customers.

The market of the company is growing and in order to develop the marketing system and identify the target customers the customer opinion research is needed to be done. It will allow company to modify their customer service, improve the strength of the marketing system and indicate core products.

The following thesis will include theoretical chapters and the research part. The first chapter will introduce customer satisfaction specification, which then leads to the possible levels of it and ends with the dissatisfaction which customer can also have. Here especially the importance of understanding the reasons and consequences of the emotional and physical experience of the customer plays a major role in the further derivation.

The next chapter outlines the marketing process. The model of marketing mix will be applied to introduce the strategy of advertising the company. The customer thinking figure is the significant structure for the identification of the company customers in presently and in the future. Moreover, it shows the power of satisfied customers which is the company's main goal.

The incoming chapter introduce the company's background, environment, marketing system, product and services. Afterwards there explained the way of the completing and getting the data which is necessary for the research.

The last chapter consist with the research which have been done according to the collected data and modified in order to understand customer opinion about their experience. The main aspects are whether customers' expectations were completed and needs fulfilled. Furthermore, there is an opinion for the Nordic Holidays personnel which are one of the core questions since changes of development can be done easily.

The thesis will conclude with the summary of the customer satisfaction and the prospect for the further marketing system. Moreover, the conclusion will include the target customer group and most attracting products.

2 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Hospitality businesses are always looking for success, however, success would not be possible without the customers and, furthermore, without the feeling of satisfaction which customer can achieve. Without customers business will not exist. (McAuley 2001, 3)

According to the Oxford Business Dictionary, customer satisfaction is the degree of satisfaction provided by the goods or services of a company as measured by the number of repeat customers. (www.businessdictionary.com) However, to make customers repeat or come back can be caused only by making customer purchase for the first time. Dissatisfaction of the basic needs is usually a reason for a failure to return. Satisfied customer is a customer who would like to make a long-term contract in order to use the service or product again, would accept price differences in the company and will recommended products and services to his friends, relatives and other companies.

According to Dahlhoff (1999) there are several elements which create a happy and satisfied customer. First of all, customer should receive more than the basic service. Supplying extra gratification to the customer can create extra satisfaction. (McAuley 2001, 195) Secondly, the fact that there are competitors and service or product can be replaced with another for the more affordable price or with better quality should be taken into consideration. Finally, to recognize all the strength and weaknesses of the company surveys can be used. It will help to identify what are the strongest sides of the business and where there should be more improving work done.

To make clients achieve satisfaction must be included tangible and also intangible aspects of the tourism experience. Some believe that customer satisfaction can be reached after successful accomplishment of the function needs. Nevertheless, several scientists believe that customer satisfaction can be reached only with emotional elements. To reach it can help six categories: material povision, thechnical povision, staff adaptability, stuff to customer relations, image and value (Hassanien 2010, 94-95). However, it should be taken into account that the importance of different categories will vary across the target groups. It depends where they come from, age, family status, previous experience in travelling.

Furthermore, the term “quality” defines the measure of excellence in the providing tourism services. Terms ‘quality’ and ‘satisfaction’ are quite often used in the similar ways. The relationship of them was explained by Cronin and Taylor (1992): “the distinction between quality and satisfaction is important to both managers and researchers alike, because service providers need to know whether their objective should be to have consumers who are satisfied with their performance or to deliver the maximum level of perceived service quality” (Palmer 2011, 288). Many scientists believe that quality leads to a customer satisfaction, however, many agree with the fact that it is other way round, that satisfaction is a reason of service or product quality. Lacobucci concluded that the key difference between the two constructs is that quality relates to managerial delivery of the service while satisfaction reflects customers experiences with that service (Palmer 2011, 288). In other words customer will of course enjoy if the service is done with a good quality and according to all the standards but satisfaction shows what customers think and feel about the product and whether they would like to repeat it.

2.1 Levels of satisfaction

Customer who is using the service for the first time will definitely get a specific impression out of it. After experiencing the service customer might get five types of impression: highly satisfies, satisfied, indifferent, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied. If customer will come back and use the service again it will mean that he or she got an expected satisfaction. However, satisfied customer can switch to a competitor company in order to see and try something new when very satisfied customer would prefer to come back to the first one where he satisfied his own expectations, wishes and needs.

In order to see if customers are willing to come back company more likely has to organize surveys. In this case company will measure Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI). The aim of the surveys is not just to analyze how many customers are satisfied or dissatisfied; the most important knowledge which can be gets from the surveys is the reasons why they are satisfied or dissatisfied in order to make some changes and to develop the business of the company.

The importance of calculating dissatisfied customers is significant for the company because it will give an opportunity to identify the number of profit decreasing. Company can get a benefit out of it by developing the quality of the customer service. Moreover, dissatisfied clients can affect company marketing system by spreading their information it leads to the loss of many potential customers. In other hand, satisfied customers spread positive information which helps to bring more fresh clients. In case that customer did not get satisfaction and his expectations were not fulfilled, there is still a way to compensate bad impression by sending for example a gift loss or giving a discount for the next purchase (Kotler 1999, 130).

According to Laurie J Mullins “feedback is the extent to which work activities result in direct and clear information on the effectiveness of job performance”.

2.2 Dissatisfaction

When customer did not meet their needs or did not accomplish the expectations it leads to dissatisfaction. If the client is dissatisfied the results can be no action or total ignorance of the emotions or react on it.

The actions can be public. First of all, ask for a refund or any other way of compensation straight from the company which have supplied the product or service. Secondly, complain to the authorities and governance of the company. Thirdly, if the dissatisfaction is caused by the damage or serious risk client can take legal actions in order to seek a redress.

The second possible way of the action is a private reaction. Dissatisfied clients can be make anti commercial for the company with spreading the information about their negative experience to their relatives and friends. This way is the most powerful way of advertising and it can play positive role with promoting the good emotions and experience, however, it is also spreading fast when the client is negative and dissatisfied. Moreover, the most obvious and common way of the client behavior is to stop using the product or service and never come back to that certain company. (Grigoroudis, Siskos 2010, 2)

3 MARKETING PROCESS

“Marketing is the management process for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitability” – A.V.Seaton.

Marketing is connecting three main concepts: demand, product and exchange. To identify the demand it is important to identify the motivations of target group; the term product connected to the reaction of the producer on market expectations; exchange stands for the connection between supply and demand.

The short definition of marketing is satisfaction of client needs which brings a profit. The main aim of marketing is to attract new clients and retention of old ones. All the marketing actions can be divided into three groups: consumer marketing, business to business and social marketing. Aside from the short-term contracts many companies are trying to arrange long term relations with key customers, intermediaries and suppliers.

The key idea of marketing is to make a trustful relationship with all the interested sides and get an income. The process of creating, supporting and strengthening with clients and other sides which are connected to the creation of the customer value is called marketing relations (Gronroos et al. 2001, 232-242).

3.1 Marketing mix

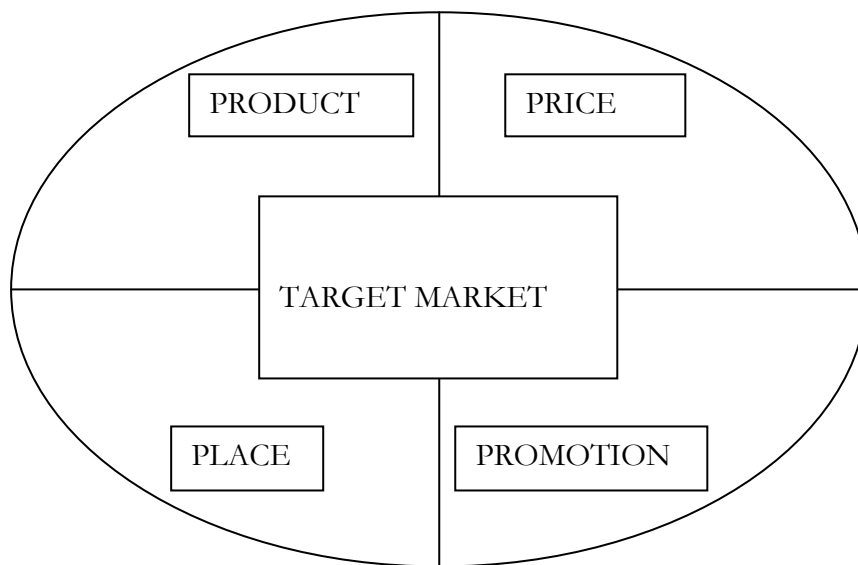
Philip Kotler (Kotler, 2010: 73) defined marketing mix as the trend of controllable tactical marketing tools – product, price, place and promotion.

One of the most important complexes of the marketing is a Product. It is depends on a cash flow, its assessment and prediction. Price as one of the most significant tool of marketing and it influence the character of the income to the company or organization. For the success of the marketing the price should be affordable and winning with a comparison to the competitive companies. To make the promotion felicitously advertising, public relations, direct marketing and internet marketing can be used. All the strategies are aimed on the furtherance of the product on the market with the goal to increase customer market, creating prod-

uct image and brand development. The place is the location of the distribution of the product or services; it is depending on the owner decision.

The content of the marketing mix usually depends on many aspects. First of all on the market specifications and product, capabilities of the company such as budget, personnel experience, etc.

Figure 1. Marketing mix (Kotler et al. 2006, 234.)



Marketing mix is a list of strategically development for the company which helps to indicate the future working plan.

3.2 Customer thinking

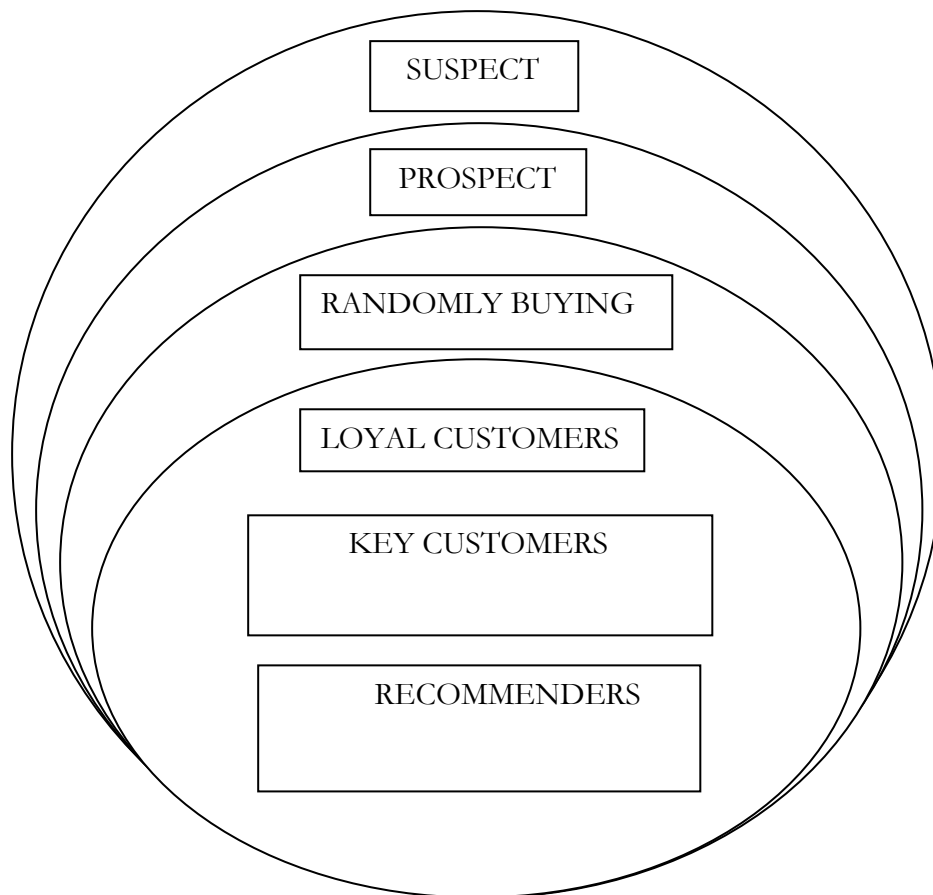
John Frain believed that the product usually is not bought but everyone but by some certain specific groups. Such process of directing the product or service to a target market group is called segmentation.

According to Durovich there are several criteria of segmentation. First of all is quantity which includes the number of the product and the difference between the cash inflow and outflow. Second is availability, the way for making the product easily accessed for the target client group. A third criterion is materiality, it explains whether the product has a potential for the further development and can attracts customers to the market. The next one is how much the company can make an income from that product or in other words profitability. Moreover, the compatibility with the segment of competitor market which is explains if the companies with a similar product are able to compete. The next criterion is efficiency which shows if the company has an experience of working in that specific area. The last criterion is the protection from the competitors, whether the company can be on a good level to compete and turn it into a success (Durovich, 2008:160-162).

Harker has divided marketing segmentation into four groups. The first one is geographic; it explains the product delivery to a different geographic location. For example nowadays many companies are locating their services origin closer to the customers. Moreover, some marketing actions are targeted only to specific cities, regions, countries. The second segmentation group is demographic. It includes such factors as age, gender, occupation, income, family size and etc. It can be explain with the fact that customer needs are always depend on their variables. The third one is psychological; it is the background of the client and their morals and believes. The fourth segmentation is behavioral. It is based on a customer attitude, beliefs, knowledge and reaction on a product (Harker, 2009:192-200).

According to Lahtinen and Isoviita customers can be divided into six groups. While making a marketing strategy each of the groups must be included.

Figure 2. Customer Thinking (Lahtinen, Isoviita, 2009:209)



One of the most important works which should be done in order to complete a successful marketing system is to identify the target market and to divide them into certain categories. On the figure above there is a division of the customers into six groups which must be treated differently.

The first group is suspect clients. It can be anyone whose aim is somehow connected to the product or service of the company. Suspect clients are those who contacted or had a discussion about the product or service. The difference between the second group which is prospect customer who have the budget to buy, authority to make decision, need of the offer and time for participation.

The third group are randomly buying customers who are able to pay and making decision according to the wants and needs, however, it can vary and especially between competitor

companies. In this case strong marketing system is helping to increase the customer market and attract more random clients.

The fourth and very important group are loyal customers. The communication with them is done on a regular basis and they are influencing the market. In order to satisfy such type of client it is necessary to show them the important for the company to have them and keep as a client. Commonly they are able to pay, have the need, get satisfaction from the service or product and have time.

Loyal customers are consisting of two other groups: key customers and recommenders. Key customers are not only having ability to bring the income and benefit to the company but they also repeat the service. They are very satisfied and are virtually addicted to it. Recommenders are customers who are participating in the marketing with telling about their experience to their relatives and friends. Such way of advertising is working with the highest results.

Taking everything into account, it is necessary for the company to bring the customers from the suspect level to the loyal level. Moreover, in order to succeed in the marketing the company and increase the amount of customers it is needful to own customers who will turn into recommenders since it is the best way to attract to new clients to the market.

4 COMPANY ENVIRONMENT

Nordic Holidays Service is a company located in Kuusamo, Finland. It is a tourism company which is cooperating with other businesses in the area, for example Ruka Ski Resort, Sokos Hotel Kuusamo, Kuusamon Tropikki, etc. The company was established in 1999 and first charter organized by the company arrived to Kuusamo in 2000. Nowadays they organize charter travels from Russia, Ukraine, Great Britain, Spain and Australia. Furthermore, Nordic Holidays Services is working with private groups for short programs, for charter travelers, for holiday's camps.

4.1 Business idea

With the co-operation with other companies in the region Nordic Holidays organize a big variety of attractions and trips: day trip to Rovaniemi Santa Claus Village, Ranua Zoo, Reindeer and Husky Safari, Ice Carting, etc. There are different trips for different target groups and for different time amount. They are also organizing accommodation and restaurants. Moreover, they have their own Santa Claus Village which is a very good competitor for Santa Claus Residence in Rovaniemi among tourists who are coming to Kuusamo area. This destination is organized and owned by Nordic Holidays.

Tourists are coming mostly during the winter holidays: Catholic Christmas, New Year's Eve and Orthodox Christmas (7th of January). Season starts on 27th of December and ends on 10th of January for clients from Russia and Ukraine. During that period of time there are charter planes coming from Kiev and Moscow with tourists from all over two countries. For example, this season 2012-2013 there were only 5 planes which is less than last year. Normally clients stay is from 7 to 10 days. During that time they can experience certain excursions provided by Nordic Holidays.

4.2 Marketing system

The marketing system for Russia and Ukraine is huge and developing. Company have started market their business 1999 since during the first year of company existence there were only two small groups which during their holiday's time have experienced all the possible attractions and excursions, the number of which was very low. However, the clients have been satisfied and they turned into the recommenders and the majority have returned to the destination.

4.2.1 Marketing mix in the company

The target markets have been specified during the company establishing. Since the location of the company is near Santa Clause Village and Ruka ski resort, in Lapland which is an image of a real perfect winter, the target market were families with kids and people who have skiing as a hobby. With the further research it will be shown whether the target market stated by the company is the same nowadays.

The place is the northern country which is a unique destination for some clients. The image of a winter wonderland is attracting the majority to Finnish Lapland. Furthermore, the fact of Santa Clause Village location is playing one of the core roles in the place marketing.

The short explanation of the product is a charter tour. It includes the transportation, accommodation in Kuusamo area and if only the customer have decided so, it includes the excursions to the destinations which company is supplying. However, they are also able to buy the excursions upon arrival to the destination since it will be promoted during all their stay. As it was mentioned earlier company has relationship with many businesses which are producing attraction destinations in the area. Most of them are typical Finnish destinations, such as husky farms, reindeer farms, snowmobiling and etc. All the possibilities will be mentioned further.

The price for the products depends on the accommodation, excursions and extra items if the client is hoping so, for example private transportation from the airport to the place of stay. The prices for excursions are fixed.

The promotion system of the company is very strong. After the season is over general managers are starting is immediately and travelling to all the countries where their customers are

coming from to advertise the tours. This process is done not only in the capitals and big cities such as Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Kiev and Odessa, but also in Siberia for example. It benefit with the rapid spread of the information and attracting more customers every season. Moreover, company has made a relationship with many tour agencies in the countries and making a strong communication with them. Agencies are also marketing the tours and it is increase the marketing system. Nowadays in the century of technologies both Russia and Ukraine would rather trust to the agencies when they are booking the tours than Internet. Moreover, company general managers are participating in all the possible tourism exhibitions with the aim to attract customers and in addition make new connections to other tour agencies.

Taking everything into account, company is using the same strategy and just working on its development and increase. Further in the research part it will be shown if the strategy is successful or not.

5 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

During the season 2012-2013 there have been 5 planes from Russia and Ukraine. In order to analyse customer satisfaction level and get the feedback about the company and its business, customer surveys have been created. Upon departure to their home countries the leaders of every tourist group (family, friends, and couples) were asked to fill the survey forms and after they have been collected and analysed. In total there are 73 surveys. Unfortunately, due to the misunderstanding customers from Russia got a wrong survey form because of the mistake of one company member. This is the reason why a significant majority of the respondents are from Ukraine. However, both markets are very similar and it does not affect the final results. The approximate number of clients who have arrived to the destination with charters is 750 tourists. Since the surveys were answered by 73 tourism groups it can be suspected that the feedback received from almost 50% of all charter travellers. The form of the survey is attached to appendixes one and two, the original version and translation into English.

The research will help to analyze the level of customer satisfaction, identify the core products on which company should bring future customers attention. Moreover, the questions which were asked will show which impression customers have about the Nordic Holidays personnel. One of the most important aspects which will be seen after the data analyse is the customer thinking group. As it have been stated before the aim of the company is to increase the number of key customers and especially recommenders as it is the most significant way of successful marketing.

According to Gronroos (2000: 80-81) customers believe that the provider of services can be trusted and that they make a reasonable value of money. All the customers in Nordic Holidays were asked to answer the feedback after they had experienced all the possible services and visited attractions.

Reputation and credibility is very important feature for the company since it allows owning the trust from the customers and making them come back and recommended the services. When feeling the feedback forms customers rely on the company that after it there will be certain changes and improvements will be done in order to increase the service.

After all the surveys have been collected by the general manager they were separated into valuable and not and after that they have been sent for analyse. Eventually they have been analysed in the SPSS system and all the tables which are used in the results part were obtained from it.

5.1 Quantitative method

Qualitative research method it owned by the numerical information received from the investigation gained from the customers. The aim of it is to get the grade of the study topic. Such method is used when there is a need to receive statistical trustful data.

Such method is statistical valid and can be used for the further development. It is used mostly to analyse customer feedbacks about certain products or services. It allows receiving customer opinion in a present number (Lucey, 2002.)

Quantitative methods include statistical analysis which is divided into certain number of data, number of possible answers, standard deviation, and mean number (Hara, 2008:27-34). In order to receive such information SPSS program can be used. It is used in the research part.

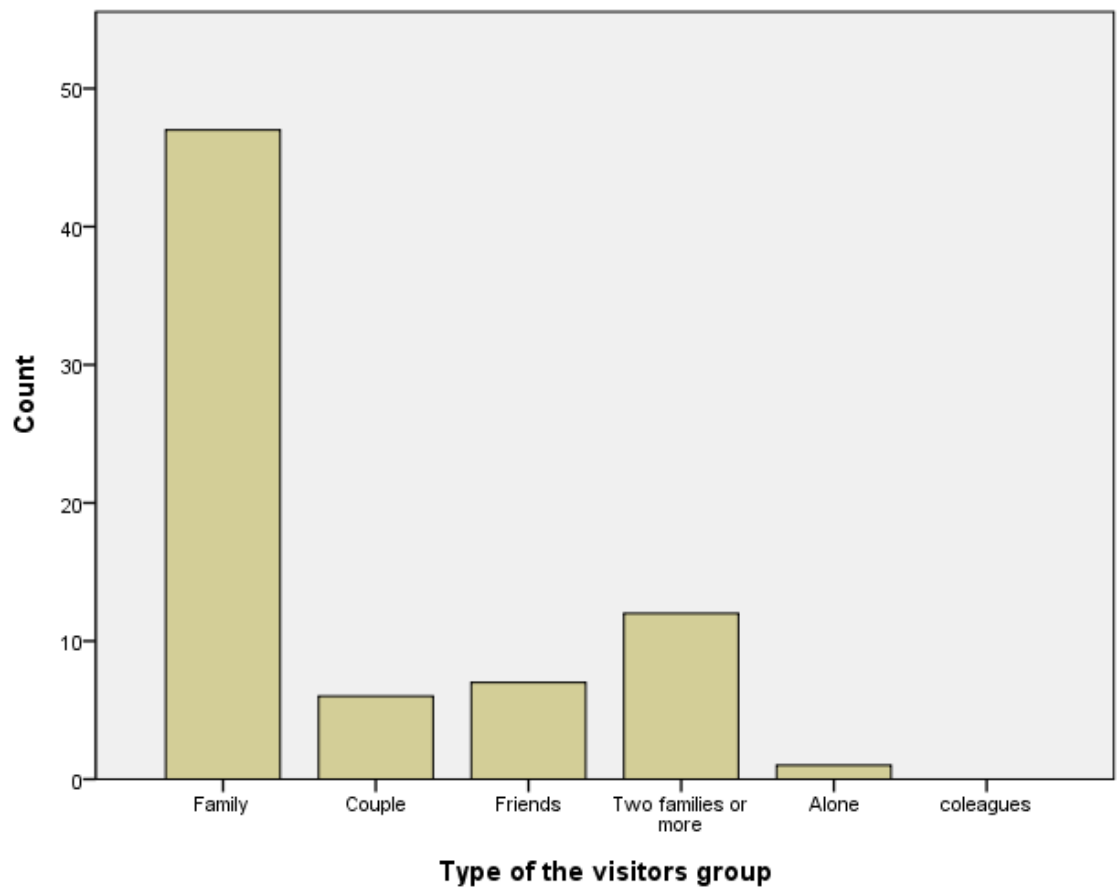
According to Robert Yin there are three objectives for the credibility in the quantitative research. The credibility is shown in the possibility to access to all the surveys which have been used in the research. Moreover, all the surveys are easy to understand as well as the questions which are answered there. In other words the research must be transparent. Secondly, the research should be methodical. The research is connected to the business of the company. The third objective is the adherence to evidence which means that the analyse should be done fairly and honest (Yin, 2011:19-21).

While collecting data for the research all the questions which are used have the answers positive, negative or with a five grade system. After the data was modified into the tables and graphs which can be found further in the text. The research was done in order to answering all the stated questions and analyze is done fairly and adequate.

6 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RESULTS

The research of all the surveys was done for each of the questions which were valuable for the further company development anatomization.

Figure 3. Type of the visitors group



As a result of the analysis it is seen that the majority of the clients are travelling in families. The reasons why most of the group types are families can be explained because of the certain attractions. Clients have answered what have attracted them the most while choosing the destination.

6.1 Reasons to choose Finnish Lapland

Table 1. Reasons to visit Lapland

		Statistics							
		Location of the destination	Interactions in the destination	Nature	Hobbies	Shopping possibilities	Santa Claus	Safety	Advice of friends or relatives
N	Valid	68	62	67	60	57	68	62	50
	Missing	5	11	6	13	16	5	11	23
	Mean	4,66	4,21	4,76	4,17	2,70	4,76	4,39	3,02
	Std. Deviation	,563	1,042	,525	1,122	1,546	,492	,912	1,708
	Minimum	3	1	3	1	1	3	1	1
	Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

According to the table above the most popular attraction is Santa Claus, the possibility to show kids legendary Joulu Pukki is appealing to the parents. Moreover, as it was mentioned before Nordic Holidays has their own Santa Claus village which is located in half an hour from most of the accommodations and more reachable than Rovaniemi. At the same time, nature and location of the destination is attracting customers. Basically the image of Finland as clean, safe and “winter wonderland” played the role. However, each of the eight particular features of the country is appealing the clients. Besides because of the close location of Ruka ski resort is attracting people who are fond of winter sports and enjoy good service.

Table 2. Advice of friends and relatives

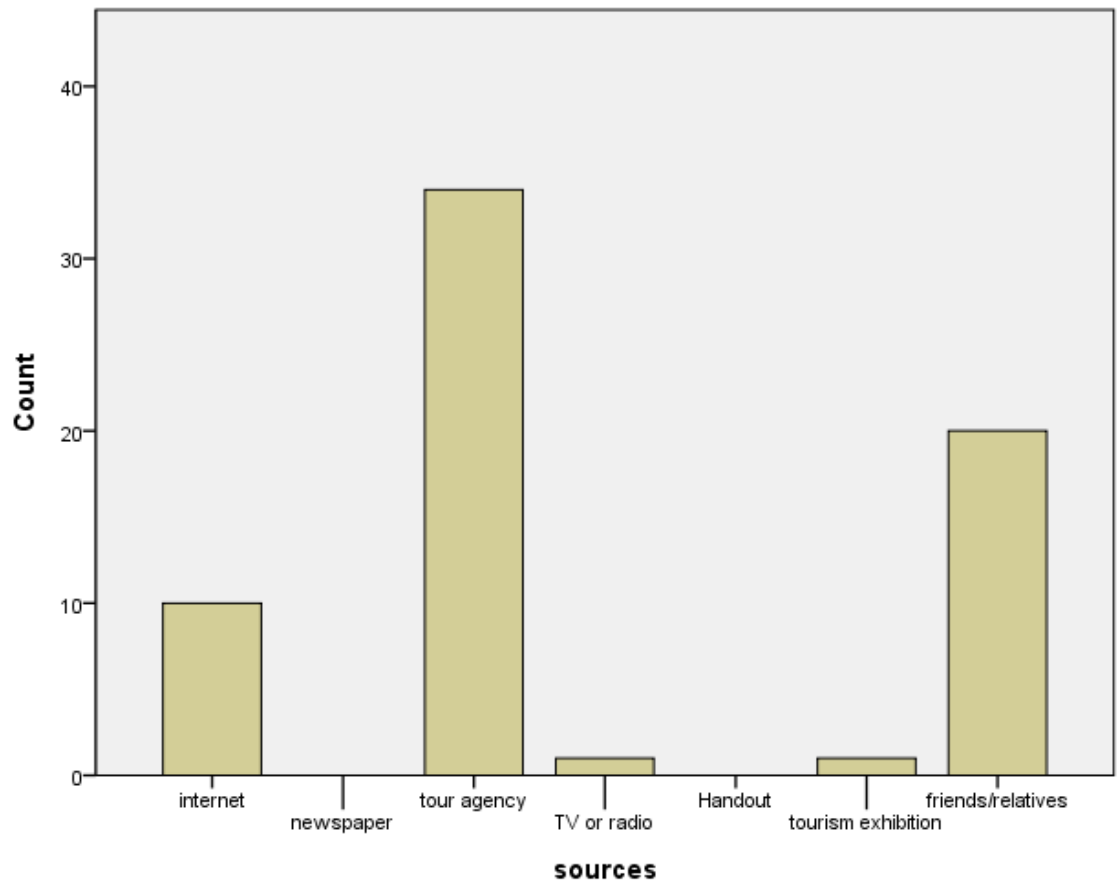
		Advice of friends or relatives			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	18	24,7	36,0	36,0
	2	3	4,1	6,0	42,0
	3	3	4,1	6,0	48,0
	4	12	16,4	24,0	72,0
	5	14	19,2	28,0	100,0
	Total	50	68,5	100,0	
Missing	System	23	31,5		
Total		73	100,0		

In addition, one of the features is “advice of friends or relatives” which is the most important for identifying customer satisfaction. The table above shows that for most of the clients the advice was not the main feature. For the further marketing development it is important to have loyal customers which turn into the recommenders. At the same time almost fifth of the respondents have answered that opinion of their friends and relatives have reflected the decision. In other words company have earned recommenders customers which are already successfully playing their role. That is a good target for the future marketing. To increase the number of such customers because they play a significant role for attracting new customer who can also become loyal key customers.

6.2 Marketing Strategy

During the establishment of the marketing strategy it is important to identify the source which will be the core one and which will cover all the possible target clients for the market.

Figure 4. Sources from where customers got information about the company



However, for the target market of the Nordic Holidays, where most of the customers comes from Russia and Ukraine, where people still prefer to by package tours than travel on their own. Moreover, they still have a high trust level to their relatives and friends.

On the table above it is shown that the most common source of the information about the destination customers have found in the tourism agencies. That is easy to understand since company has a really wide and good connection to the agencies from both countries for already many years. It is must be mentioned that for clients from Ukraine in most of the cases visit to Finland is a first time.

Fortunately, the second source customers have used is their friends and relatives advice. For the marketing program it is one of the most important results from the research because it shows that company already has loyal customers. That means that there is already exists a certain number of key customers and also recommenders. This research is showing that previous marketing system was successfully done and, moreover, that the number of future customers will increase due to the fact that recommenders do their 'job' of promotion quit productive.

6.3 Analysis of excursions

Company Nordic Holidays is communicating to the activities providers companies in Kuusamo area. In order to summarize what are the most popular excursions and what customers like best. Below there is a list of all the activities and the number of replies about it which shows how many people clients have chosen it from all the list; the average grade of their satisfaction. According to the results it can be decided what are the most popular products. It is important to know what attract specific target group in order to possible future usage in the marketing process.

Table 3. Feedback about the excursions

		Trip to Rovaniemi	Trip to Ranua Zoo	Trip to Santa Claus Village in Kuusamo	Raindeer Farm	Husky Farm	Ice Carting
N	Valid	38	19	55	46	46	7
	Missing	35	54	18	27	27	66
	Mean	4,37	4,32	4,85	4,35	4,61	3,57
	Std. Deviation	,883	1,057	,405	,900	,649	1,134
	Minimum	1	1	3	1	2	2
	Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5

Statistics

Ice Carting	Sauna Santa Claus	Salonki Sauna	2 hours Safari	Sledging with snow mobile	Safari to the reindeer farm	Ice fishing	Different kinds of safaris
7	3	1	13	1	10	3	8
66	70	72	60	72	63	70	65
3,57	3,00	3,00	4,54	5,00	4,80	4,00	4,50
1,134	1,000		,660		,422	,000	1,069
2	2	3	3	5	4	4	2
5	4	3	5	5	5	4	5

Winter fishing with a snowmobile	Safari to the western boarder	Santa Claus Dinner	Hunter's Dinner	Fishermen's buffe	Kalakeidas Restaurant	Horseriding
0	1	4	1	5	15	2
73	72	69	72	68	58	71
	4,00	3,25	5,00	4,20	3,93	5,00
		1,258		1,789	1,223	,000
	4	2	5	1	2	5
	4	5	5	5	5	5

In order to combine best and most attractive products, the top five rates can be done. As it is clearly seen from the tables above excursion to Santa Claus Village in Kussamo is a leader, the reason of it can be wide applying of its image in the marketing of the company. Secondly, both safaris, reindeer and husky, are attracting customer attention. In addition, trips to Rovaniemi and Ranua are also popular among tourists.

It is important to mention that all the most popular products were marked with a grade close to the highest which is “5”. That leads to the statement that the company offers not only high demanding excursions but also high satisfactory quality.

Picture 1. Excursion to the Santa Clause Village in Kuusamo (Tarnovskaya, A. 2011)



Picture 2. Nordic Holidays personnel. (Tarnovskaya, A. 2013.)



6.4 Feedback about the service provided by Nordic Holidays

The aim of the surveys was to analyze and to get a feedback about the impression of the trip in general. However, for the company further personnel development it is important to get a review about the services and actions done by the Nordic Holidays principal staff.

Feedback has been given about all the actions where customers could have a communication with Nordic Holidays personnel. First of all it is the review about all the way of transportation since it is company's responsibility. Secondly, it is meeting in the airport; tourists are usually getting divided into the groups according to their accommodation and proceed to the busses with one of the guides who are responsible for the successful settlement to the hotels or cottages, depending on where customers have chosen to live. However, several tourist groups preferred private way of transportation where they did not have a contact to the company workers. Thirdly, tourists had to review their impression of the service in general, in this case that had to summarize all their experience and feelings about all the situations where they had communications with any of the Nordic Holidays workers. Last but not the least question was a feedback about the help in emergency cases, it was answered only by the customers who had an experience of such situation.

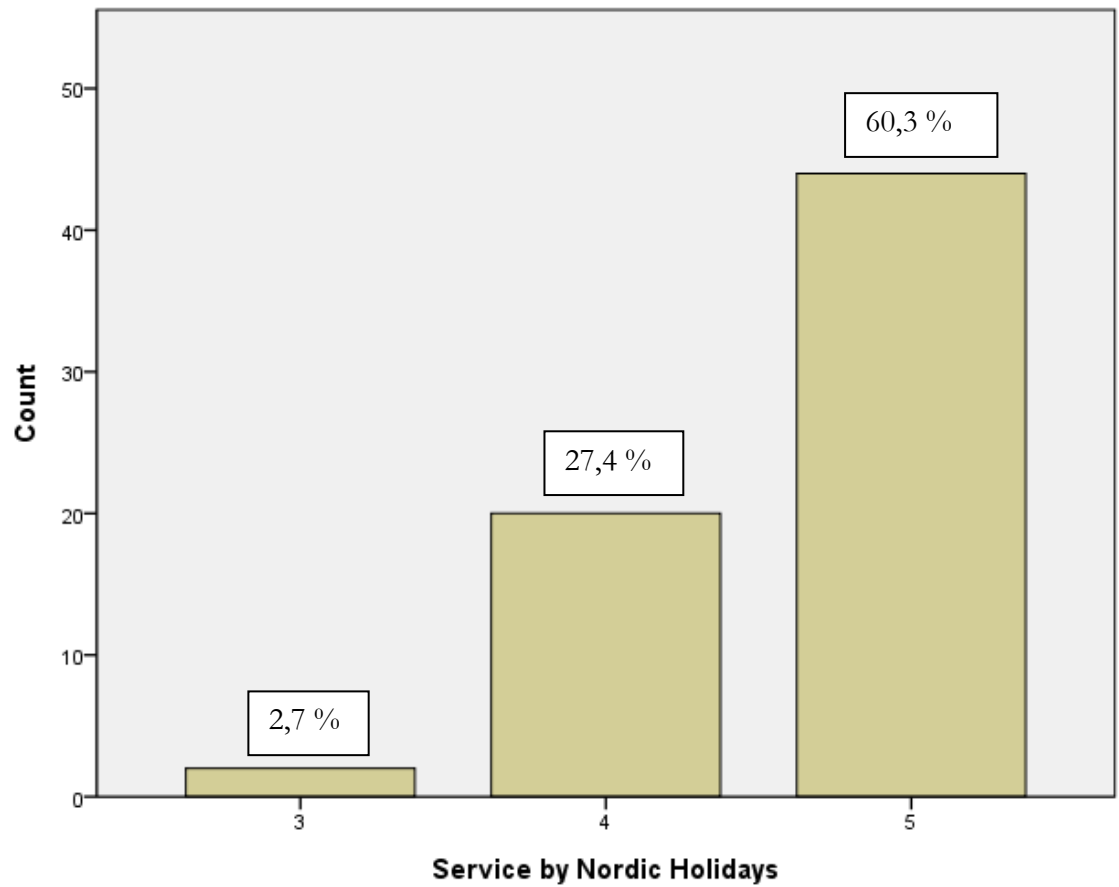
On the table below it can be seen that quite many customers gave their feedback about these specific question. The mean of all the services is higher than four. It shows that clients are satisfied. It must be taken into account, that for all the services the most common grade was five which is the highest. Although, the result can seem to be successful there is still a reason to the customer service development. Certain customers have mentioned that the personnel they have contacted have been rude and impolite to them. On other side, there are customers who have written majority of pleasant comments about certain guides.

Table 4. Feedback about the service done by Nordic Holidays

Service				
	Transportation organized by Nordic Holidays	Meeting in the airport	Service in general	Help in emergency cases

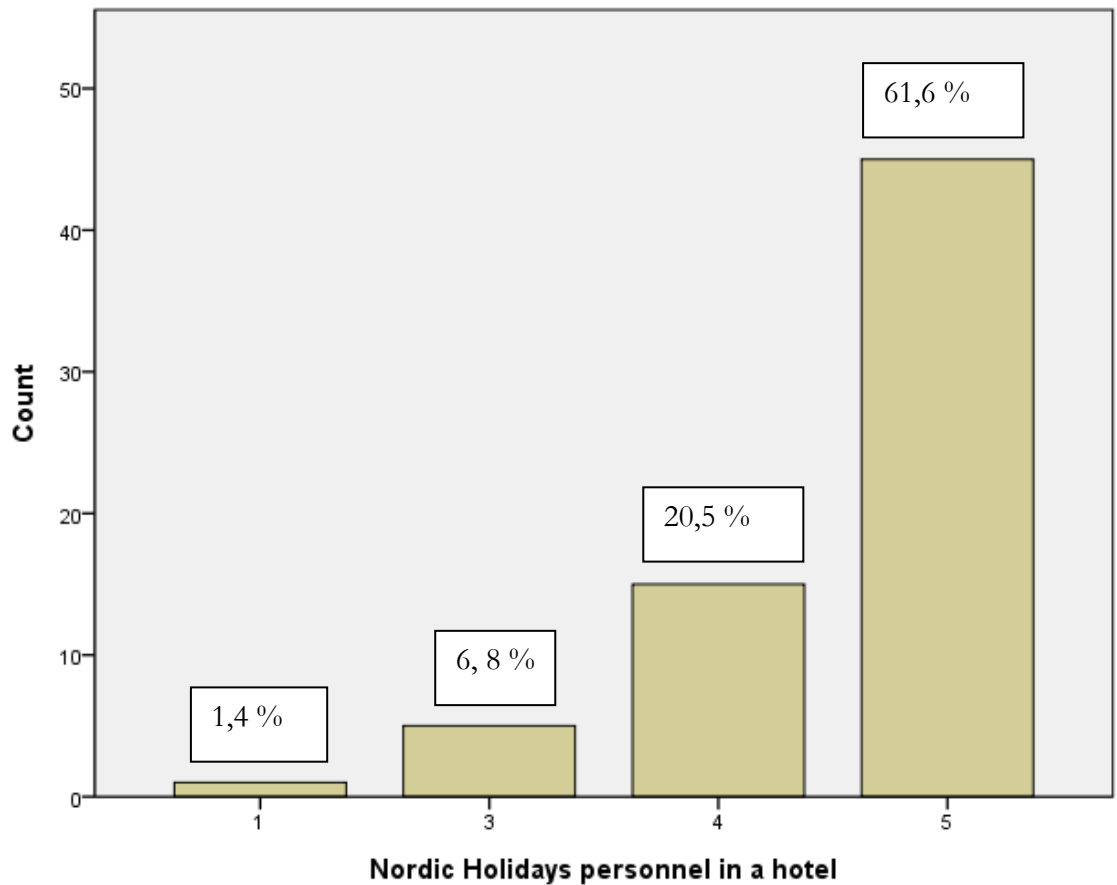
N	Valid	67	70	54	34
	Missing	6	3	19	39
Mean		4,63	4,76	4,31	4,12
Std. Deviation		,714	,494	,748	1,122
Minimum		2	3	2	1
Maximum		5	5	5	5

Moreover, clients have been asked to give their feedback about the service during their entire trip in Finland. All the guides had two duties: firstly, they were responsible for the guiding during different excursions, secondly, there always had to be someone from the company in every possible accommodation where Nordic Holidays have been staying, and were responsible to help, sell vouchers for the excursions and give all the necessary information.

Figure 5. Feedback about the service of the Nordic Holidays

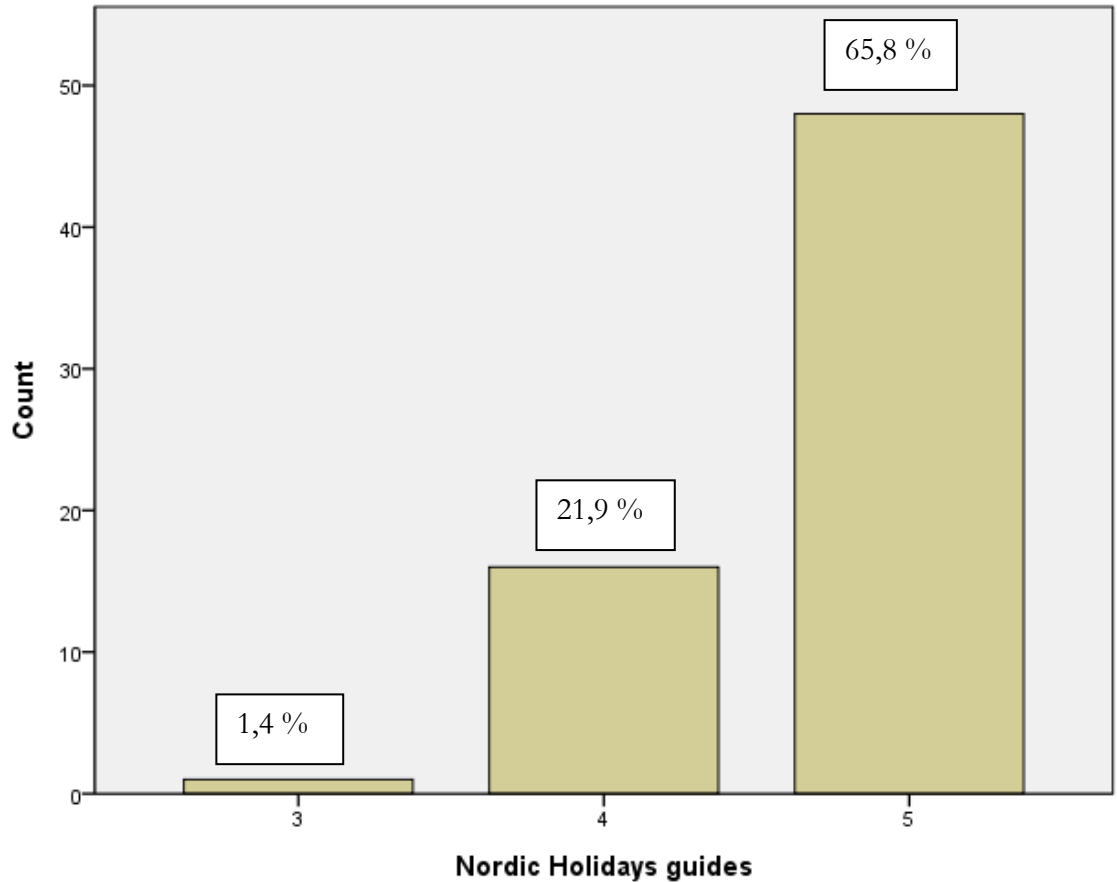
The table above shows how many percent of customers gave grades. Fortunately, the significant number of tourists grades the service with the highest possible. It shows that the customers were very satisfied and they are key customers and recommenders. Moreover, there is a chance that they can come back to the destination due to the total satisfaction. However, customers who graded with second highest are also able to be recommenders but unfortunately the possibility of their comeback is very low because such customers usually choose new destinations where they have not been before.

Figure 6. Feedback about the service of Nordic Holidays personnel in the hotel



As it has been mentioned before, company personnel were divided into two groups and one was responsible for the service in the hotel. The table above shows that generality was very satisfied with it. There is not a big matter that there is 1,4 % gave the lowest possible grade because it is one tourism group and it is impossible to satisfy every single tourist who is coming. The importance is to satisfy and fulfill the expectations of majority customers. The chart shows that there are twice more people who are very satisfied with their trip than those, who have other impression out of the trip.

Figure 7. Feedback about the service of the Nordic Holidays guides



The table above shows the opinion of customers on the Nordic Holidays during the excursions they have taken, in other words what do they think about the quality of guiding services.

Taking everything into account it must be agreed that company is doing well with choosing their personnel since a significant number of customers was very satisfied and found them helpful, informative and useful. Including the fact that it is impossible to satisfy every customer it can be concluded that hospitality management in the company is located on a good level. However, some changes and development can be done. According to the customers answers sometimes they did not get enough information or emotions from the guide and personnel was rude. Due to the decrease of such opinion personnel should be trained how to properly behave with customers.

6.5 The amount of money customers spend during holidays

It is substantial to calculate how much money customers spend during their vacation. It shows their income and the average target group for who company should use promotion. During the survey customers have answered how much they have spent during their holidays for their tourist group for attractions, excursions, shopping, etc.

Table 5. The amount of spending during vacation

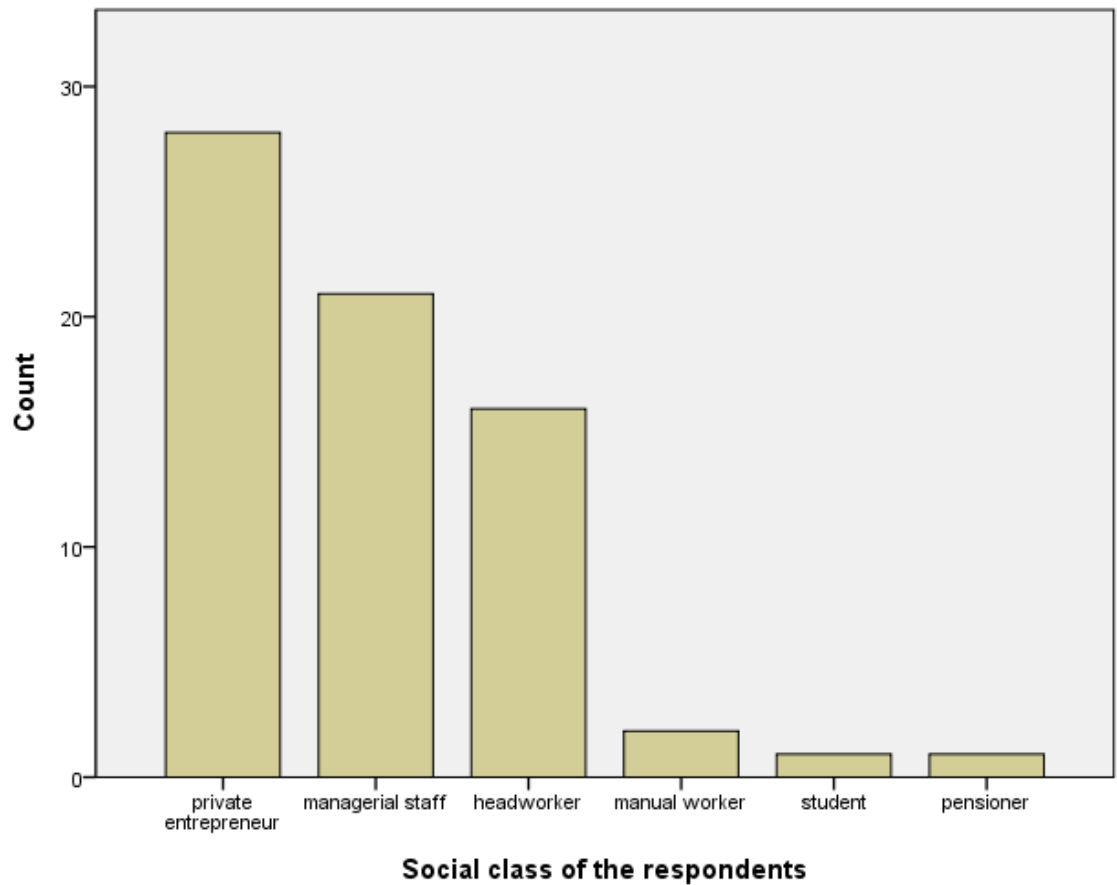
Statistics		
How much money they have spent		
N	Valid	48
	Missing	25
Mean		2164,58
Std. Deviation		1178,259
Minimum		300
Maximum		7000

The table above shows that the average amount customers spend is a bit more than 2000 Euros. According to the statistics of Russian and Ukrainian spending during vacations is usually high and including the fact that Finland is relatively expensive country and target clients must have and ability to afford all the expenses.

Moreover, on the survey it has been asked what is the leader's working place of the tourism group. The chart above shows where target customers are working. It can be concluded that the majority of the clients are working as a private entrepreneurs, managerial stuff and headworkers. In other words their jobs are the most profitable in both countries.

To sum up, all the significant majority of the clients who are using Nordic Holidays services have a good profit background which allows them to spend impressive sums of money during vacation.

Figure 8. Social class of the respondents



6.6 Key results

Taking everything into account the aim of the research was accomplished and certain conclusions have been done. In general the research has showed that the level of customer satisfaction is high and company is located on a good level.

First of all the target group was identified. Since one of the most important reasons for tourists to visit Finnish Lapland was nature, location and Santa Claus the majority of client groups are families. However, there are also couples without kids and friends who are interested in doing their hobbies in the target location. It leads to the decision that those characteristics of the destination are important to be noticed in the marketing system.

The company Nordic Holidays is intended to own key customers which will turn into the recommenders. The research has shown that almost 75% of the respondents have got the

information about the destination from their relatives and friends. It means that the company already owns such clients and the marketing recommendation system is already working in the company advertisement.

Furthermore, the sources which significant majority customers have used while searching for a holiday destination are tour agencies. It can be explained which a low trust level of citizens from target countries to the Internet, online purchasing and booklets. It leads to the logical explanation why tourists are making decisions about the destination according to their friends and relative's advice, recommendation and opinion. As a result it proves that company already has a large number of recommender's customers.

At the same time the core products have been identified. From the collected data it can be seen which excursions have been chosen the most during the season. It allows understanding what are the top trips attracting customers the most and it can be seen what they like and choose. It can make the marketing system stronger if top products will be promoted the most, it will cause an increase in customer's number.

Eventually customers gave a feedback about their opinion from the service made by the Nordic Holidays personnel directly. From the charts it can be seen that they are highly satisfied with the services. However, there are still several replies with the low grade and it gives an opportunity for the development.

7 CONCLUSION

The main intention of this thesis is getting the result of customer satisfaction after using services and products provided by Nordic Holidays. The research has been done according the analyzed customers surveys collected during the winter season 2012-2013. In addition, company will see their main customers what will allow making the development for the future marketing system.

In order to identify company's target clients certain question have been asked. As a result, we can see that most of the clients are families with kids whose head of the group is working in the three main profitable areas in the both countries. Moreover, they have been attracting to Finland mostly because of the Santa Clause image and real winter atmosphere. The great nature, safety and hobbies, for example downhill skiing, have also played its role while choosing the destination.

In addition, one of the most important reasons to choose Finland was the advice of friends or relatives who already have experienced the location and probably the company's service. It leads to the fact that Nordic Holidays have already a significant amount of loyal customers who turn into recommenders. And as it was already explained in one of the chapter customers who recommend their friends and relatives certain service or product are the most productive way of marketing.

One of the most important results for the company's marketing was a fact that the majority of the interviewed customers agreed that they were satisfied with their trip and their expectations were fulfilled. Furthermore, they would like to recommend Nordic Holidays to their friends and relatives what turns them into the key customers and recommenders. Such high positive reply is promising more customers in the future seasons.

At the same time customers gave their opinion about the excursions they have been. The result shows that company has five core products which must be used in the marketing system. Fortunately, the most popular trip is to Santa Clause Village in Kuusamo which is provided only by Nordic Holidays since it is owned by the company. Santa is the image of the company and during the marketing process he was travelling to different exhibitions, performing on the radio and TV shows and his image was used in all the booklets and handouts.

In conclusion company got the feedback about the work done by the Nordic Holidays personnel. The result is great since the huge majority of the customers have graded the service with the highest possible mark. All the personnel work such as service in the hotel, guiding, transportation and helping in emergency situations was estimated with very high grade.

Considering all the research it can be recommended to the company to develop marketing system for the target group which have been specified. Moreover, bring attention to the excursions which do not bring customer attention and are not popular as well as leave marketing for the core products on a high level. The company personnel is working well according to the respondents opinion, however, there are still cases where workers of Nordic Holidays did not satisfy customers with their behavior and services. It should be improved with certain customer training and informing about the solution for several problems which can be caused.

Taking everything into account, company is providing not only popular holiday destination and attractions but also quality of it is high. For the future success company should keep their personnel level on the same stage and also base marketing system on the families with kids with use of the core products.

Making the research of customer satisfaction for the company provided me with the great opportunity to control my personal achievements of the studies. The thesis enabled me to apply many previous studies, skills and knowledge in the real case situation. From the personal perspective I am very satisfied with the outcomes of this thesis and as a one of the Nordic Holidays workers I am glad that the company is successful in their business.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 Survey form original version

APPENDIX 2 Survey form, translation into English

APPENDIX 1

Туристическая анкета 2012-2013

Дорогие гости,

Данный опрос проводится с целью получения Ваших отзывов о данном месте отдыха и для дальнейшего развития сферы обслуживания, а также для составления статистических данных о финансовом доходе в области туризма. В опросе участвуют туристы, прибывшие в период смены 2012-2013. Ответы будут внесены в статистическую программу, и данные каждого ответчика останутся конфиденциальными.

Ваши ответы очень важны для нас.

Заранее спасибо за Ваш ответ!

Nordic Holidays Services Ltd Oy

С уважением, Матти Похьела, генеральный директор

1. Место опроса _____ и дата _____

2. Место отдыха 1) Куусамо 4) Рованиеми
2) Рука 5) Салла
3) Исо- Суёте

3. Ваш пол 1) Мужской 2) Женский

4. Год рождения _____

5. Страна постоянного проживания 1) Россия 2) Украина 3) _____
6. Постоянное место жительства (город, населенный пункт) _____
7. Количество человек в Вашей путешествующей группе: взрослые _____ дети (младше 15 лет) _____
8. Тип группы 1) семья
- 2) семейная пара
- 3) друзья и знакомые
- 4) две семьи вместе (или больше)
- 5) один (-а)
- 6) коллеги по работе
9. Социальное положение главы семьи: 1) частный предприниматель
- 2) в управленческом аппарате
- 3) работник умственного труда
- 4) работник физического труда
- 5) студент (-ка)
- 6) пенсионер (-ка)
- 7) другое, что? _____

10. Размещение (ночлег)
- 1) Сокок отель Куусамо
 - 2) Куусамон Тропиикки
 - 3) Рантасии Рукахови
 - 4) коттедж

11. Определите ,пожалуйста, уровень сервиса размещения (1-очень низкий, 2-низкий, 3-средний, 4-выше среднего, 5-высокий)

Номер в отеле	1	2	3	4	5
Питание	1	2	3	4	5
Обслуживание в ресторане	1	2	3	4	5
Обслуживание в регистратуре	1	2	3	4	5
Новый Год/Рождество в отеле	1	2	3	4	5
Уборка	1	2	3	4	5

Отзывы о питании и пожелания (завтрак, обед, ужин)

Отзывы о Новогоднем/Рождественском ужине (программа, еда, обслуживание)

Отзывы о других видах сервиса в отеле

12. Как ниже перечисленные особенности повлияли на Вас при выборе именно этого места отдыха (1-никак, 2-совсем немного, 3-немного, 4-сильно повлияли, 5-очень сильно повлияли)

Расположение места отдыха (север, зима)	1	2	3	4	5
Развлечения	1	2	3	4	5
Природа	1	2	3	4	5
Хобби (активный отдых)	1	2	3	4	5
Возможности хорошего шоппинга	1	2	3	4	5
Санта Клаус	1	2	3	4	5
Безопасность места отдыха	1	2	3	4	5
Совет друзей	1	2	3	4	5

Что еще повлияло на Ваш выбор места? _____

13. Когда вы планировали именно эту поездку за границу, из каких источников получили информацию? Обведите, пожалуйста, кружком источник или источники информации:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) интернет | 5) рекламный проспект |
| 2) газета | 6) туристическая ярмарка |
| 3) турбюро | 7) друзья, знакомые, родственники |
| 4) ТВ или радио | |

8) другое, что? _____

14. Определите, пожалуйста, уровень сервиса, используемого Вами во время отдыха (1-очень низкий, 2-низкий, 3-средний, 4-выше среднего, 5-высокий). Если Вам не пришлось испытать какого-либо сервиса, то оставьте графу пустой.

Транспорт	1	2	3	4	5
Встреча в аэропорту	1	2	3	4	5
Экскурсия в Рованиеми	1	2	3	4	5
Зоопарк Рануа	1	2	3	4	5
День на даче Санта Клауса в Куусамо	1	2	3	4	5
Посещение оленеводческой фермы	1	2	3	4	5
Посещение Хаски фермы	1	2	3	4	5
Картинг на льду	1	2	3	4	5
Сауны Санта Клауса	1	2	3	4	5
Салонки сауна	1	2	3	4	5
2-часовой сафари	1	2	3	4	5
В больших санях под звездным небом	1	2	3	4	5
Сафари на оленеводческую ферму	1	2	3	4	5
Подледная рыбалка	1	2	3	4	5
Сафари по живописным местам	1	2	3	4	5

Сафари под звездами	1	2	3	4	5
Сафари на оленеводческую ферму	1	2	3	4	5
Сафари на ферму хаски	1	2	3	4	5
Сафари на оленеводческую ферму и ферму хаски	1	2	3	4	5
Зимняя рыбалка на снегоходе с санями	1	2	3	4	5
Сафари на восточную границу	1	2	3	4	5
Ужин с Санта Клаусом	1	2	3	4	5
Ужин охотника – любителям лосятины	1	2	3	4	5
Шведский стол с лакомствами рыбаков	1	2	3	4	5
Ресторан Kalakeidas RUKA	1	2	3	4	5
Прогулка на лошади верхом или в санях	1	2	3	4	5
Горнолыжные склоны	1	2	3	4	5
Подъемники	1	2	3	4	5
Прокат горнолыжного снаряжения	1	2	3	4	5
Обслуживание в общем	1	2	3	4	5
Помощь в сложных ситуациях	1	2	3	4	5

Отзывы об экскурсионных услугах _____

Отзывы об обслуживании в ресторанах _____

Отзывы об обслуживании непосредственно персонала Nordic Holidays

15. Какие другие экскурсии Вам понравились, и какие другие экскурсии Вы бы хотели дополнить?
но? _____

16. Было ли достаточно детских программ в возможных экскурсиях? (1-очень мало, 2-мало, 3-удовлетворительно, 4-достаточно, 5-много) 1 2 3 4 5

Какие другие программы Вы бы хотели?

17. Как эта поездка ответила вашим ожиданиям? (1-очень плохо, 2-плохо, 3-удовлетворительно, 4-хорошо, 5-очень хорошо) 1 2 3 4 5

18. Были ли Вы раньше в Финляндии? 1) Да, сколько раз? _____ 2) Нет

Почему? _____

19. посоветовали бы Вы это место отдыха друзьям? 1) Да 2)Нет

Почему?

20. В какое другое время года вы бы хотели поехать в Финляндию?

1) зима (декабрь-февраль)

3) весна (март-май)

2) лето (июль-август)

4) осень (сентябрь-ноябрь)

21. Какую сумму денег приблизительно Вы (вся Ваша семья) потратили во время отдыха здесь (не включая транспорт и размещение)? Укажите количество человек в Вашей группе _____ EUR

22. Что Вам больше всего запомнилось из этой поездки? А также что по Вашему мнению _____ нуждается _____ в _____ доработке? _____

23. Определите, пожалуйста, уровень обслуживания представителей Нордик Холидейс (1-очень низкий, 2-низкий, 3-средний, 4-выше среднего, 5-высокий)

1 2 3 4 5

Услуги представителей Nordic Holidays в отеле 1 2 3 4 5

Услуги Nordic Holidays гида на экскурсиях 1 2 3 4 5

БЛАГОДАРИМ ВАС ЗА ОТВЕТЫ!

APPENDIX 2

Tourism survey 2012-2013

Dear guests,

This survey is organized with an aim to get your feedbacks about the destination and quality of service and also for making statistical report. In this survey are taking part tourists who have arrived during the season 2012-2013. Your answers will be in statistical program and will stay confidential.

Your answers are very important for us.

Thank you beforehand!

Nordic Holidays Services Ltd Oy

Sincerely, Matti Pohjola, general director.

1. Location _____ and date _____

2. Place of holidays 1) Kuusamo 4) Rovaniemi
2) Ruka 5) Salla

3. Your gender 1) Male 2) Female

4. Date of birth _____

5. Your home country 1) Russia 2) Ukraine 3) _____

6. Your home city/town/village _____
7. Number of people in your travel group _____ kids (under 15 years old) _____
8. Type of a group
- 1) Family
 - 2) Couple
 - 3) Friends and familiar
 - 4) Two families or more
 - 5) Alone
 - 6) Colleges
9. Social statement of householder
- 1) Private entrepreneur
 - 2) Managerial staff
 - 3) Headworker
 - 4) Manual worker
 - 5) Student
 - 6) pensioner
 - 7) else, what? _____
10. Accommodation
- 1) Sokos Hotel Kuusamo
 - 2) Kuusamon Tropikki
 - 3) Rantasipi Rukahovi

4) Cottage

11. Identify the quality of the service in accommodation (1-very low, 2-low, 3-average, 4-good, 5-very good)

Room in a hotel	1	2	3	4	5
Food	1	2	3	4	5
Service in a restaurant	1	2	3	4	5
Service in a reception	1	2	3	4	5
New Year Eve/Christmas in a hotel	1	2	3	4	5
Cleaning	1	2	3	4	5

Feedback and wishes about the food in a hotel (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Feedback about New Year Eve/Christmas service (program, service, food)

Feedback about other services in a hotel

12. Which specialties influenced you while choosing this holiday location (1-anyhow, 2-a little bit, 3-slightly, 4-strongly influenced, 5-influenced very much)

Location (Winter, snow)	1	2	3	4	5
Attractions	1	2	3	4	5
Nature	1	2	3	4	5
Hobby	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping possibilities	1	2	3	4	5
Santa Claus	1	2	3	4	5
Safety of a resort	1	2	3	4	5
Friend advice	1	2	3	4	5

What else affected your choice?

13. While planning this trip where were you searching for information?

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Internet | 5) Handout |
| 2) newspaper | 6) Tourism exhibition |
| 3) tour agency | 7) Friends,relatives |
| 4) TV or Radio | |

8) something else, what? _____

14. Identify please the level of the service (1-very low, 2-low, 3-average, 4-good, 5-very good). If you did not experience any of the service leave the graph empty.

Transportation	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting in the airport	1	2	3	4	5
Trip to Rovaniemi	1	2	3	4	5
Ranua Zoo	1	2	3	4	5
Day in Santa Claus Village in Kuusamo	1	2	3	4	5
Reindeer farm	1	2	3	4	5
Husky farm	1	2	3	4	5
Carting on ice	1	2	3	4	5
Saunas Santa Claus	1	2	3	4	5
Salonki Sauna	1	2	3	4	5
Two hours safari	1	2	3	4	5
Trip on a sledges under the starry sky	1	2	3	4	5
Safari on reindeer farm	1	2	3	4	5
Ice fishing	1	2	3	4	5
Safari through the scenic	1	2	3	4	5
Safari under the stars	1	2	3	4	5
Safari to the reindeer farm	1	2	3	4	5
Safari to the husky farm	1	2	3	4	5
Safari to the reindeer and husky farms	1	2	3	4	5

Ice fishing on the snowmobile	1	2	3	4	5
Safari to the eastern boarder	1	2	3	4	5
Dinner with Santa Claus	1	2	3	4	5
Dinner of a hunter – reindeer meet	1	2	3	4	5
Buffet – Treat of fishermen	1	2	3	4	5
Restaurant Kalakeidas RUKA	1	2	3	4	5
Horseback riding	1	2	3	4	5
Ski slopes	1	2	3	4	5
Ski Lifts	1	2	3	4	5
Ski equipment rent	1	2	3	4	5
Service in general	1	2	3	4	5
Help in emergency situations	1	2	3	4	5

Feedback about the excursions service

Feedback about the service in restaurants

Feedback about the service of Nordic holidays personnel

15. Which excursions did you like and which would you like to add to our list?
?_____

16. Was there enough of excursions for kids? (1-very few, 2-few, 3-satisfactorily, 4-enough, 5-a lot) 1 2 3 4 5

Which other programs would you like to add?_____

17. Was these trip what you have expected? (1-very bad, 2-bad, 3-satisfactorily, 4-good, 5-very good) 1 2 3 4 5

18. Have you been in Finland before? 1) Yes, How many times?_____ 2) No

Why?_____

19. Would you recommend this place to your friends? 1) Yes 2) No

Why?_____

20. During which season would you like to visit Finland?

1) Winter (December-February)

3) Spring (March-May)

2) Summer (July-August)

4) Autumn (September-November)

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21. Which amount of money your family have spent during this holidays (excluding transportation and accommodation) _____EUR

22. What was the most memorable episode of the trip? And what is needed to be more developed? _____

23. Please give a feedback about service given by Nordic Holidays Personnel (1-very low, 2-low, 3-average, 4-good, 5-very good)

	1	2	3	4	5
Nordic Holidays Service in a Hotel	1	2	3	4	5
Nordic Holidays Service during excursions (guides)	1	2	3	4	5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ANSWERS!

APPENDIX 3