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**INFLUENCE OF A BRAND IMAGE IN DEVELOPING
A TOURISM DESTINATION – CASE VUOKATTI**

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<p>Tämän lopputyön aiheena oli tutkia Vuokatin matkailun kehitystä. Tarkoituksena oli selvittää kuinka matkailu on kehittynyt Vuokatin alueella vuosina 2000–2008 ja tehdä lopputuotteena power point -esitys saaduista tuloksista Pohjolan Myllylle. Opinnäytetyön teoreettinen osuus koostuu muutamasta keskeisimmästä matkailun kehitys- ja markkinointiteoriasta mutta pääpaino on Thomas Gadin 4D-brandimallilla.</p> <p>Pohjolan Mylly on tällä hetkellä Suomessa ainoa markkinointiyritys, joka käyttää Thomas Gadin 4D brandimallia pohjana alueen markkinoinnissa. Tulokset ovat positiivisia ja näin ollen todistavat mallin käyttökelpoisuuden.</p> <p>Käytimme toissijaisia lähteitä toteuttaessamme tätä tutkimusta. Luvuista tehtiin kaavioita ja taulukoita, joita on helppo tulkita. Tällaista tutkimusta ei ole aikaisemmin tehty Vuokatista tältä aikaväliltä ja Pohjolan Mylly kaipaa tällaista tietoa voidakseen esittää ne nykyisille ja tuleville asiakkailleen.</p> <p>Vuokatti on tällä hetkellä suosituin ja nopeimmin kasvava matkailukeskus Suomessa. Yksi syy tähän on Vuokatin monipuolisuus sekä kesällä että talvella. Vuokatti on erittäin vahva brandi. Toiminnallisella markkinoinnilla ja verkostoitumisella Sotkamon kunnan kanssa, urheiluseuroilla ja alueen matkailuyrityksillä on ollut suuri vaikutus Vuokatin imagon kehittymiseen. Vuokatin positiivinen imago on houkutelut matkailijoita Suomesta, Venäjältä ja Euroopasta.</p>	
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<p>The purpose of this thesis was to study the development of tourism in Vuokatti. The aim was to find out how tourism has developed in the Vuokatti area in years 2000 – 2008 and make a power point presentation of the findings for Pohjolan Mylly. The theoretical part of the thesis consists of some of the main tourism development and marketing theories, but the main focus is on Thomas Gad's 4D brand model.</p> <p>Pohjolan Mylly is the only advertising agency in Finland which uses Thomas Gad's 4D brand model as a basis for its marketing. The results have been positive and therefore prove the model's usefulness.</p> <p>We used secondary data to carry out our research. The numbers were put into diagrams and graphs which are easy to interpret. There is no earlier research made on this subject during this time period and Pohjolan Mylly really needs this kind of data to show their current and potential customers.</p> <p>Vuokatti is the most popular and fastest growing tourism destination in Finland at the moment. One reason for this is that Vuokatti is so versatile both in winter and also in summertime. Vuokatti is a very strong brand and functional marketing and networking with the municipality of Sotkamo, sport clubs, and local tourism companies have had a big influence on the development of Vuokatti's image. Positive images about Vuokatti have attracted tourists from Finland, Russia and Europe.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

In our thesis we analyse the development of tourism in the Vuokatti area between the years 2000 and 2008. We focus on the history and present, but there will also be some parts where the future prospects are taken into consideration. We will use secondary data to find out the development of tourism as well as single interviews and newspaper articles to analyse the effects that marketing have had on this development.

Vuokatti is one of the most versatile tourism destinations in Finland. This is mainly due to the fact that in addition to great winter and summer sport activities, there is also good accommodation capacity and this is why Vuokatti is so well known as a brand. Vuokatti is a very strong brand and functional marketing and networking with the municipality of Sotkamo, sport clubs, and local tourism companies have had a big influence on the development of Vuokatti's image. Positive images about Vuokatti have attracted tourists from Finland, Russia and Europe.

The central themes in our thesis are the different aspects of tourism development, marketing, and creating, developing, and sustaining the brand. In the theoretical part we use literature related to tourism, marketing, and branding. In the tourism related theories we focus mainly on the life span of tourism destination and sustainable tourism development because these are most closely related to our topic. In the marketing part we focus on different marketing theories, Boston consulting group box, and essentially the SWOT – analysis. The 4D brand model has been the basis for Pohjolan Mylly in building the brand Vuokatti so, therefore, we also take a closer look at this interesting theory. Vuokatti is at the moment the only tourism destination in Finland that uses this particular 4D brand model and we want to find out if there is a connection between this and the fact that Vuokatti is so successful.

As an end product we made a presentation for Pohjolan Mylly that contains the most important figures and facts of the development of tourism in the Vuokatti area in clear graphs and figures. Pohjolan Mylly requested specifically for this kind of end product so it would be something they could use to demonstrate the good situation of Vuokatti for their potential and current customers.

The thesis was commissioned by Pohjolan Mylly which is a marketing and advertising agency, specialising in advertisements, campaigns, concepts, marketing strategies and plans, web pages, company presentations and fairs. In other words, Pohjolan Mylly does versatile

marketing communications. During the years, the company has also created its own know-how to strengthen a professional and efficient collaboration network which helps it to serve their clients quickly, and in a stylish and secure way. These are some of the clients: Kajak, Kainuun Sanomat, Holiday Club Katinkulta, Intotalo, ReadyToGo and Vuokatti.

Pohjolan Mylly's basic principle in regional marketing is based on 3 key factors: honesty about the region and its services, innovative and surprising marketing, and communication that strongly relies on electronic communication. (Pohjolan Mylly)

The company was founded in 2003 and it has over 10 years of experience in the field of marketing communications. Pohjolan Mylly employs 11 people and its turnover in 2007 was approximately 1,8 million euros. The owner and CEO of the company is Mr. Juha Tanskanen.

Pohjolan Mylly is the only agency in Finland that uses Thomas Gad's 4D-brand model in developing the brand image.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Tourism is an international phenomenon comprehended as the use of leisure time to visit different places, destinations and localities which often feature in the holidays and trips people take in. Tourism is a discretionary activity and it is of growing economic significance at the global scale. (Page 2007, 2.)

Marketing has been defined in many ways, and one of the best definitions is preferred by the UK's Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM): *Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating, and satisfying customer requirements profitably (2001)*. Marketing is equally adequate to any other business functions and requires the same amount of managerial skills. Marketing can be carried out successfully or the process can be a total failure. All marketing should be pointed towards giving customers what they want and gain profit while doing it. Marketing offers and exchanges ideas, goods and services, in other words both parties – the company and the customer – value what the other has to offer. (Brassington & Bettitt 2007, 3-5.)

Brand as a term is getting more and more popular all the time. Piha (2008) states, that there is always something concrete behind every brand, such as person, product, or service. Brand is something very emotional and meanings are aspired to aggregate to the product. Maybe, even some meanings, which have previously not been naturally linked to a certain product. It would be profitable to link even more fair working method culture to the brand, because that is what consumers are after. Gad (2001) argues that brands are powerful guns that can totally change the future prospects of an industry.

2.1 4D Brand Model

The 4D brand model aspires to clarify a company's assumption of the differences of its own brand and other brands and also to contribute to build a brand. This is a model for creating a future brand. A brand's influence is seen in all aspects of business-life at this moment. Brand touches all the areas of business activities both inside and outside of the organisation. Relationships are the aptitudes for trade to succeed, and the 4D brand model is closely related to building and sustaining the relationships between people. The problem is that in

many organisations brand is still seen as a one dimensional tool that can be utilised in commercial meanings. (Gad, T. 2001, 10-12)

In the new developing brand culture, brand is seen as a tool for management which is used – in addition to marketing – for the whole organisation and outside the organisation in retailing and with investors, customers, and suppliers. In a referenced way brand tells about the business philosophy, business plan, corporate strategy and culture, image and so on. Before, all of these were dealt with separately. (Gad, T. 2001, 13-14)

Brand and the image of it are more important than the profit in money because it really tells the difference who is successful and who is not. This is the reason for investing in the development of the brand. (Gad, T. 2001, 15)

The 4D brand model aims for clarifying the company's perceptions of the differences between its own brand and other brands and help in building the brand. Brand can be given clear definitions regarding the structure, attitude, daily routines, and functions. Sustainable development of brands is set as a goal for the 4D brand model and it aims for brands to be able to last and develop further for decades. (Gad, T. 2001, 16)

The 4D brand model is a guide to future's managing that is based on brands. Successful companies live with the brand because they are the brand itself. To be able to understand the brand and live with it, a brand code must be created. For this the four dimensional model is needed to clarify the strengths and weaknesses of the brand. The model has four dimensions: the functional, social, mental, and spiritual dimension. (Gad, T. 2001, 21-23)

The goal is to make a clear difference between other brands. Differences can be found in different levels of the organisation; product development, design, communication, and sales for example. A well-known high quality brand gives certain advantages to the company. The first one is the price motive where the company gains bigger profits and more money because the image of a better quality exists and therefore people are willing to pay more. The quantity motive offers bigger markets to the company and the price or quality can be a bit lower but the products are easily available. Brand can also save the company from some minor mistakes and the brand also has financial value. (Gad, T. 2001, 27)

2.1.1 Creation of a 4D-brand model

Today's markets are very see-through and there have been three steps to this point: product marketing, niche marketing, and the marketing aimed for critical consumers. The creation of the see-through markets has had a big influence on creating the brand. There are two main roles in today's markets that a company can choose to represent: production brand and relationship brand. (Gad, T. 2001, 123-125)

The production brand is fully focused on production and the brand's value is based on the technology and expertise, which are seen as patents, special methods, and unique knowhow. The aim for production brand is to be the best at its own class and it could be sold to all the customers. The production brand is not tied to one customer relationship. (Gad, T. 2001, 126)

The relationship brand, on the other hand, is fully focused on the relationship or the situation. The relationship brand should not be tied down to one production chain. Brand's value is based on unique ground solution and the know-how of customer behaviour and customer needs. (Gad, T. 2001, 126-127)

There are four different levels that can come to customers' minds when thinking about the brand as follows:

1. Functional dimension

This is the first dimension that is needed. The need for building a brand comes from manufacturing a unique product or service. The base for the brand is the use/advantage that customer gets. The functional dimension describes the benefit that the customer gets from the product or service. All the things that are related to quality, taste, style, and effectiveness are a part of the functional class. The functional dimension also deepens on what stage of lifespan the brand is at. The earlier stage is in question, the more important are the functional dimensions in defining the brand's role, justification, and sometimes physical advantage. (Gad, T. 2001, 132-134)

2. Social dimension

This is the secondly needed dimension. In all markets, people make the buying decision based on what they feel best supports and reflects their social identity. The brands we

choose represent who we are. We feel as a part of a group when surrounded with people who have chosen the same brand. (Gad, T. 2001, 134-135)

3. Mental dimension

Mental dimension is the thirdly needed of all the dimensions. When the social dimension is all about relationships between other people and what they think of you, the mental dimension is the total opposite, it's how you think of yourself. Brand and its mental dimension serve as role models for people to shape their life and behaviour. This dimension is strongly related to personal pleasure. (Gad, T. 2001, 135-139)

4. Spiritual dimension

This is the last needed of all the four dimensions. Companies and corporations are taking more and more responsibility of developing welfare, infrastructure, culture, and nature. This is more often set as the base for building a new brand. A great example of this is the Body Shop – everyone knows that their products are not tested on animals and that is the reason for people to buy these products. (Gad, T. 2001, 139-141)

There does not exist a single brand with only one of these four dimensions. The hardest part is to link all the four dimensions together. A great example of succeeding in this is Starbucks. (Gad, T. 2001, 141-142)

The key to success is to understand how brand and its heart – the brand code – can be shown up in different scenarios. The future success depends on the company creating a code that is firm but flexible enough to adjust to changing conditions. The brand code is like DNA for the company, product, or service. All the functions come from this code. The brand code is the core of the company and it is the most important tool in all decision making. The code tells what the company or product represents: business idea, positioning, vision, functions, and values. (Gad, T. 2001, 143-144)

The brand code consists of six parts; product/advantage, positioning, style, mission, vision, and values. The brand code can be a few words or a short sentence like Nokia's Connecting People. The first three parts of the code are related to brand's current market situation and the remaining three parts are related to "tomorrow's" situation and turn heads to brand's future. (Gad, T. 2001, 144-146)

1. Product/Advantage

This is a description of the advantages to customers and it defines the core offer. The advantage is closely related to the functional dimension. (Gad, T. 2001, 147)

2. Positioning

This part is all about making a difference to competitors, why we are better? Positioning is also closely related to the functional dimension. (Gad, T. 2001, 147)

3. Style

Style can also be called the personality of the company that is seen from outside. Style is strongly influenced by the social dimension. (Gad, T. 2001, 147)

4. Mission

Mission is all about the company's role in the society. Especially young people think that it is more important to like your job than the amount of money you are paid. The mission is strongly influenced by the spiritual dimension. (Gad, T. 2001, 148)

5. Vision

Vision is the company's position in the future and where the company sees itself. Vision is the most important part of the brand code. (Gad, T. 2001, 149)

6. Values

Values are the rules of the company and they represent reliability. Values can easily be mixed up with style. (Gad, T. 2001, 148-152)

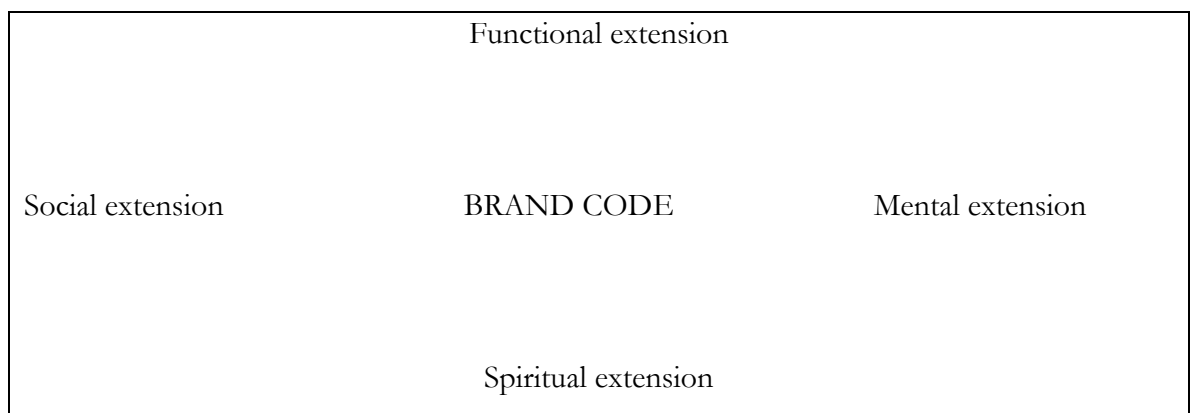
2.1.2 Redefining the organisation

An organisation needs to change in order to create a new brand code. It is very challenging to change an organisation because there is more than one person involved with it. The more people there are, the harder it is to change the organisation. There is also another name for this change, i.e. redefining. A goal of a successful brand is always to lead the organisation to a new end result. Sometimes in the modern world managers are too busy to do the changes

because customers and competitors do not wait things to change at a slow pace and this can lead to mistakes. (Gad, T. 2001, 171-172)

At this point the value of a brand code is obvious. It can be used in redefining the organisation. The power of the brand code is based on the fact that brand represents and reflects the comprehensions of markets, customers, and also commercial comprehensions. (Gad, T. 2001, 172)

In order to redefine and evaluate the business from a new perspective you need to take a step back and use the brand code to remove the frames. Only then it is possible to see how things can be done differently. (Gad, T. 2001, 173)



Picture 1 The activation generator of a brand. (Gad, T. 2001, 175)

Functional extensions can be used, for example, when salespeople determine how they can change their presentations. Receptionists, on the other hand, can use the social extension to figure out how to interact with customers. Personnel administrators use the mental extension while planning the career and developing labour force. Analysis directors can use the spiritual extension to develop more ethical products. These are only some examples of how the brand model, presented in figure 1, can be used correctly. (Gad, T 2001, 171 – 176)

2.1.3 Brand and organisation

Credit is not gained by doing same things over and over again. Credit is gained by inventing new announcements and whole new brands. Organisations need people who are ambitious, creative, and willing to create a new brand. (Gad, T. 2001, 188)

New entrepreneurs need brands to offer frames and to familiarize with their operation. At this point it is crucial to know what you want to do with your brand. The most important organisation rules for creating the brand are as follows: (Gad, T. 2001, 188-189)

First rule

Defining the brand code is a job for a small group of people who decide what the brand represents and then deliver the message to the whole organisation. All the people of the organisation should not be included in creating the brand. (Gad, T. 2001, 189)

Second rule

Space should be given to people in the organisation to interpret the brand code. Give them a chance to bring out their opinions and encourage them to reinterpret the brand code in their own work. (Gad, T. 2001, 189)

Third rule

Control the brand carefully. You might have to do some changes and alternations to some extensions of the brand code. (Gad, T. 2001, 189)

2.1.4 Enlarging the brand

One of the most important reasons for investing in building a brand is to enlarge the power of the brand to new products and services. The commercial ground of brand investment grows alike the profit that company gains. But it needs to be remembered that this does not happen over night. (Gad, T. 2001, 193-194)

Brand enlarging can happen in two ways: broaden the product family and brand enlargement as it shows in figure 2. Expanding the product family means enlarging the brand within the same product- or service category, for example, by developing different variations, new flavours, and new textures. Enlarging the brand itself means using the existing brand in new product or service groups. (Gad, T. 2001, 193-194)

	Enlarging the product family	Brand Enlargement
High	Possible to enlarge within the product family	Excellent possibilities to enlarge outside the product category
Segregation		
Low	Difficult to enlarge	A change to enlarge outside the product category
	Product	Philosophy
	Brand Type	

Picture 2 Enlarging the brand (Gad, T. 2001, 195)

Before you decide which way is better for the brand, the brand needs to be carefully analysed. The basic rule is that the more segregated the brand is and the stronger market position it has, the better chances it has in another product category. When talking about the product type brand which has a weaker and less segregated position in the markets, it is better to go with enlarging the product family, especially if a good distribution network exists. If you or your employees come up with great ideas that do not necessarily fit to your brand as well as they would fit to some other brand, you should definitely sell the idea to someone else and earn extra income instead of weakening the value of your own brand. (Gad, T. 2001, 193 – 197)

The brand is the only constant thing that a company has and can have. Co-operating companies tell as much about the brand as its products. By joining forces with the right kind of companion, the value can be significantly raised. Strategic co-operation companies can be an important tool in building the brand. (Gad, T. 2001, 219-220)

2.2 Sustainable Tourism Development

Basically sustainable tourism development means that tourism needs to be taken forward and developed in a way that there is still going to be tourism possibilities left for the future generations and that the same services can be developed further on. Weaver (2006) states, that in the past 50 years tourism has evolved to be the world's largest industry. "Already, it can be argued that every place in the world is now a tourist destination for which the issue of sustainability is relevant." (Weaver, 2006, 14)

Edgell (2006) reminds us that managing sustainable tourism can effectively enhance and enrich the environment. "Sustainable tourism means achieving growth in a manner that does not deplete the natural and built environment and preserves the culture, history, heritage, and arts of the local community. Key elements of tourism sustainability include meeting the needs of both visitors and host communities and protecting and enhancing the tourism attraction for the future as a part of a national economic resource." (Edgell, D.L., 2006, 15)

The latest idea is to make Vuokatti one of the leading tourist resorts of sustainable tourism development. The goals are to double the amount of foreign tourists, and to increase the amount of domestic tourists. The goals are challenging especially now, that Lapland's' tourism industry is threatened by international regressing economy. The location of Vuokatti in the middle of Finland and its identification as family and sports place may save the area from the worst case scenario. Foreign tourists are being sought actively to come to Vuokatti especially from Russia and Central Europe, not to forget the Baltic countries. (Sotkamo-lehti 24.10.2008)

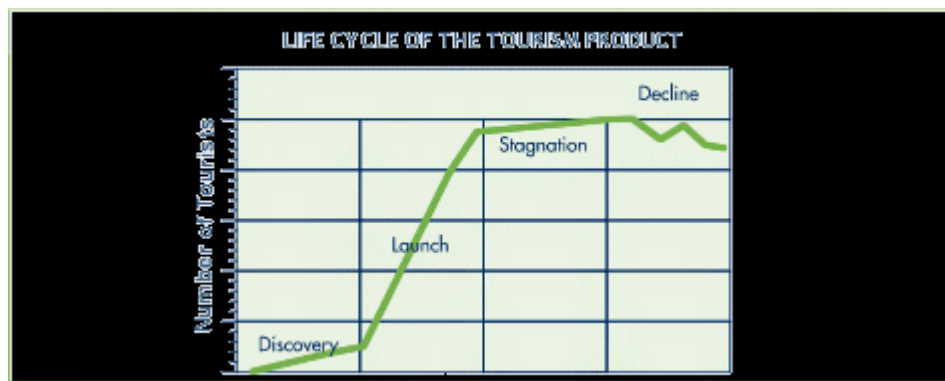
2.2.1 Benefits of Sustainable Tourism

Most benefits that come from sustainable tourism can be seen by the future generations. The most remarkable benefits are the quality of environment and improved living standards which result from carefully designed strategy for sustainable tourism. Economic growth can also be significant for local people if they are involved in the business. Tourism can provide economic benefits to an economy as a whole, provide better employment and living standards for local residents, and maintain or even improve the quality of local environment.

The best results can be gained by co-operating with the local companies because it assists the good reputation and makes the destination even more unique. (Edgell, D.L., 2006, 18)

Unfortunately, pollution, congestion, and degradation of the natural and built environment are found in almost every nation of the world. However, environmentally sustainable tourism practices can help to prevent or rectify undesirable outcomes, supporting economic gains from tourism development and tourist activities while preserving environmental, historic, and cultural resources that residents and tourists can continue to enjoy. (Edgell, D.L. , 2006, 18)

2.3 Life span of a tourism destination



Picture 3: The life-cycle of tourism destination (Barcelona Field Studies Centre)

There are four stages in the life cycle of tourism destination: Discovery, Launch, Stagnation and Decline as can be seen in figure 3. Every tourism product has its own life cycle. The length of the life cycle is affected by the nature of the service, upcoming trends and fashion. Many products or services are appealing at start, but very quickly their attraction comes down. The life cycle of a product is a concept which helps to measure up a products' life cycle in the markets.

Stage 1: Discovery. At the discovery stage, the product is launched to the markets. At this point, the service does not have many buyers, because the product is still unknown. Because of this, competitive weapons are used especially to increase the conspicuousness of the service. Besides pricing, also commercial communication and the use of tools is recommendable. Also, they need to find suitable sales channels and train and motivate sales persons and distributors. The profitability of the service is not good, because the sales are low, but the

expenses to increase the conspicuousness are huge. If the launch of the tourism service is successful, it starts to interest consumers and moves into the growing stage. At this point, the product starts to be familiar and even fashionable amongst the target group, and as a result, the amount of customers will increase. (Albanese P. & Boedeker M. 2002, 147-149)

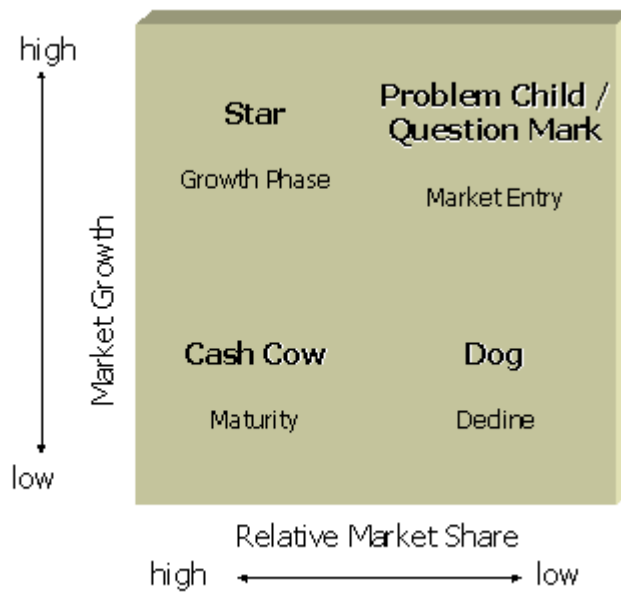
Stage 2: Launch. At this point, the service is widely known and many customers have purchased it. The novelty has passed and competitors have come to the markets. Here it is very important that the product will be separated from other competitors and try to focus marketing on other segments. (Albanese P. & Boedeker M. 2002, 147-149)

Stage 3: Stagnation. At this stage, the customers do not buy the product anymore. The product can be out of fashion or it does not match the customers' needs anymore. At this point, the service can be revived by improving the service, so that it would match the customers' needs again. (Albanese P. & Boedeker M. 2002, 147-149)

Stage 4: Decline. If the service has not revived at this point and the demand is not expected to recover anymore, the tourism service production will be closed, because the expenses exceed the profit. (Albanese P. & Boedeker M. 2002, 147-149)

2.4 Boston consulting group box

In the Boston Consulting Group Box there are four dimensions: Star, Cash cow, Dog and Problem Child. Stars are products which have the most sudden growth and are in the dominant position in the markets. Blythe says that usually, the costs of fighting off the competition and maintaining growth mean that product is actually absorbing more money than it is generating, but eventually it is hoped that it will be the market leader and the profits will begin to come back in. Despite that, there is still a problem with the market and its growth. It is not sure that the market is going to grow or is it possible that it goes down as quickly as it rose up. (Blythe, J. 2001, 104-108)



Picture 4: Boston Consulting Group Box (Dagmar Recklies, 2001)

Cash cows were previously Stars. The product is still the market leader and has continued steadily in the market with high profitability and low investment. So, it means that the product is staying stable in the market and the demand stays the same all the time. (Blythe, J. 2001, 104-8)

Dogs are the weak ones, which do not have a big market share or very bright growth prospects. According to Blythe, the argument is about whether the firm could use its production facilities to make something that would be more profitable, and this is almost always the case. (Blythe, J. 2001, 104-8)

The problem child, or question mark has a very small share of growth in market, and it is the most problematic for the company as it demands the company to figure out how to improve the product. Blythe argues that this means finding out why the share is so low, and developing the strategies to increase the market share rapidly. The problem child needs a lot of money investment and, therefore, it is not profitable for the company to keep the product alive, unless changes are made. (Jobber, D. 1998, 231) (Blythe, J. 2001, 104-8)

In Vuokatti there has been low growth in the market share for many years. Using the Boston Consulting Group Box matrix, we can see that Vuokatti can be seen as the Cash cow. It used to be a Star, but now since it has balanced growth for many years in a row, it has changed. Vuokatti stays as the market leader, because it continues to develop interest to-

wards people's minds, by renewing its services and by changing according to customers' needs. (Blythe, J. 2001, 104-8)

3 VUOKATTI

Vuokatti is widely known all over Finland, in Russia and partly in Central Europe. It has been the market leader in Finland in winter sports for many years in a row, and it still continues to grow. According to a previous study made by Susanna Suutari and Milla Loukusa in 2006, Vuokatti is the best known brand in the Kainuu region. According to Vuokatti News-newspaper (03/08), the popularity of the Vuokatti tourism centre is growing all the time. The amount of tourists grew by 24,3 per cent at the beginning of 2008, compared to the previous year. Also, it was said in an article in Kainuun Sanomat 21st of November 2008 that there is no other area that can compete with Vuokatti in the growth of domestic tourism. In domestic overnight bookings after Vuokatti came Rovaniemi and Kuusamo. Even though it is growing all the time in the international overnight bookings, Vuokatti was at number 7. The most popular tourism destinations in Finland were ski resorts in Lapland: Rovaniemi, Saariselkä, Levi, Ylläs and Ruka as well as Himos in Jämsä. (Loukusa & Suutari, 2006)

Vuokatti is the definite number 1 of the domestic tourist resorts, when measured by the volume of overnights. The main target of improvement is to get foreign tourists to Vuokatti for the summer season. (Sotkamo-lehti 13.6.2003)

According to Jari Tolonen, the accommodation capacity will rise every year by almost a 1000 bed places, when the goal is 12 000 bed places by the year 2012. Some other goals are to increase the amount of tourists in Vuokatti from current 480 000 visitors to 800 000 visitors in the next 5 years and the goals for marketing are to be constantly visible in the media and via that, to stay in peoples' minds and get more conspicuousness. The main points of marketing are activities and events. As for the image, the goal is to be more versatile, active and all-year-round. (VuokattiNews 5/2007)

95 % of all the foreign overnights in Kainuu took place in Vuokatti. (Sotkamo-lehti 27.12.2002)

According to the report published by Tilastokeskus in 2001, Vuokatti wedged to the top spot of all the tourist resorts in Finland. The second was Kittilä and the third was Kuusamo. Versatility and all-year-round activities are considered to be the triumphs of Vuokatti. (Sotkamo-lehti 1.3.2008)

Vuokatti is the most versatile tourism resort throughout the year in Finland. It tells that Vuokatti offers holiday activities for every taste to choose from for example, cross country skiing, downhill skiing, ski tunnel which makes skiing possible in the summer time, spa in Katinkulta, camping, bowling, safaris and husky rides. Holiday Club Katinkulta is the most popular and versatile vacation resort in Northern Europe. (Pohjolan Mylly)

According to tourists, versatility, all-year round activity possibilities and high quality are the things that have made Vuokatti interesting. (Sotkamo-lehti 20.10.2006)

Vuokatti is a unique combination of training facilities which have been developed for competitive sport, but are also in use for a regular traveller (Lehikoinen, H., 2008)

Local culture and traditions are an essential part of strongly developing Vuokatti tourism. (Sotkamo-lehti 20.3.2008)

Vuokatti is a part of the municipality of Sotkamo, which is the best small municipality in Finland according to the image research made by Taloustutkimus Oy in 2005 and in 2007. In 2008 Vuokatti dropped to the 3rd place. Sotkamo is about 40 km from Kajaani and Vuokatti is 7km from Sotkamo. There are about 11 000 people living in the Sotkamo area. (www.sotkamo.fi), (Kainuun maakunta), (Kainuun Sanomat)

Already centuries ago, famous Finnish artists (painters and writers etc.) discovered Sotkamo and Vuokatti because of its beautiful scenery and sand beaches (Hiukka beach). The first significant tourism service was hostel Tikkanen, at the beginning of 20th century. After the athletes got familiar with Vuokatti, Suomen Latu (Finnish free-time ski and hiker association) created a home base there over 60 years ago. Nowadays it is called Vuokatti Sports Institute and it has become a very popular training centre amongst top athletes. In Sotkamo, there are 2 national parks: Hiidenportti and Tiilikanjärvi, which is quite unique even in Finland. (Kinnunen, K.)

Snowpolis is an international Technology Park, specialized in wellness, sports and all-year winter. It is designed for scientific research, testing and development centres. Snowpolis has gathered companies with similar interests who can combine their know-how and help each other in order to develop the area's business activities, top-quality expertise, education and services. (www.snowpolis.fi)

Most of the foreign visitors of Vuokatti come from Russia. Amongst Russians, Vuokatti is at the second place from the travel perspective. Helsinki is at the first place. (Tanskanen, J.)

Tenhunen (2008) points out that the economic growth in the Baltic counties has been strong in the past few years. Now the growth of economy and trade has faded, especially in Estonia and Latvia. Economy has started to decline and this is probably going to show in the amount of Baltic tourists in Vuokatti. (Ässä)

Vuokatti has 6 hotels and 800 holiday cottages in the area. It makes over 7000 bed places for the visitors. The busiest and the most popular months are March, July and October. Vuokatti is in the 6th place among the ski resorts. Vuokatti also has the 4th best usage rate in Finland (Helsinki, Oulu, Tampere, and Vuokatti). (Pohjolan Mylly)

Every year many music events are arranged in Vuokatti. There is music for every taste: Finnish Rock, PipeFest (hip hop), WinterOpen (many artists), PopMarathon, Rockin 70's, Swinging 60's and many more. Those events attract different kind of target groups, media, new customers and that creates the image that Vuokatti is the place to come to. These events have stabilized their positions in Vuokatti tourism and they happen every year, so they do not create any peaks to the statistics. Also there are different kind of Sport camps, such as the ice hockey camp by Teemu Selänne, the football school by Sami Hyypiä and many kinds of sport competitions. (Pohjolan Mylly)

Vuokatti is not the only ski resort in Finland. Its biggest competitors are Rovaniemi, Ruka in Kuusamo, Levi in Kittilä and Ylläs in Kolari. They are known as ski resorts but Vuokatti wants to be better known as the place you can choose throughout the year. Vuokatti is strong because of its versatility and its location; it is located in the middle of Finland so it is close whether you come from Helsinki or from northern Finland. (Pohjolan Mylly)

The world's leading cross-country skiing training centre VuokattiSport can also be found in Vuokatti. (Pohjolan Mylly)

Vuokatti plans to become even more popular and a bigger place throughout the year, so it has different kinds of new activities in store for the future. (Pohjolan Mylly)

4 THESIS PROCESS

4.1 The goal of the thesis

The goal of the thesis was to find out how tourism has developed in Vuokatti in 21st century. Thesis studies the development of tourism in 2000-2008 in Vuokatti using already existing data. The numbers were provided by Pohjolan Mylly. The aim was to find out the possible influences that the 4D-model has had towards the positive development of tourism. The central idea in carrying out our thesis has been the 4D-model and its influences on tourism in Vuokatti. The thesis was commissioned by Pohjolan Mylly. The reason they wanted to have this kind of information gathered together was because they wanted to have something concrete to show for their customers. On the other hand, it generally clarifies the situation. Pohjolan Mylly asked for a clear and concise power point presentation including the main points of the tourism development in the form of graphs. Power point presentation will be the end product and it can be evaluated based on how well it can be utilized. The feedback from Pohjolan Mylly and its customers are also an essential part when evaluating the end product.

4.2 Thesis methodology

The basic material for this research is based on secondary data. It means that the research is not carried out, but the data from previous researches is used. Already existing research results and facts are being used in the thesis. The figures are analysed and utilized for new meanings and aspects. The study is qualitative. Qualitative study is functional in carrying out the research when the aim is to understand the whole big picture.

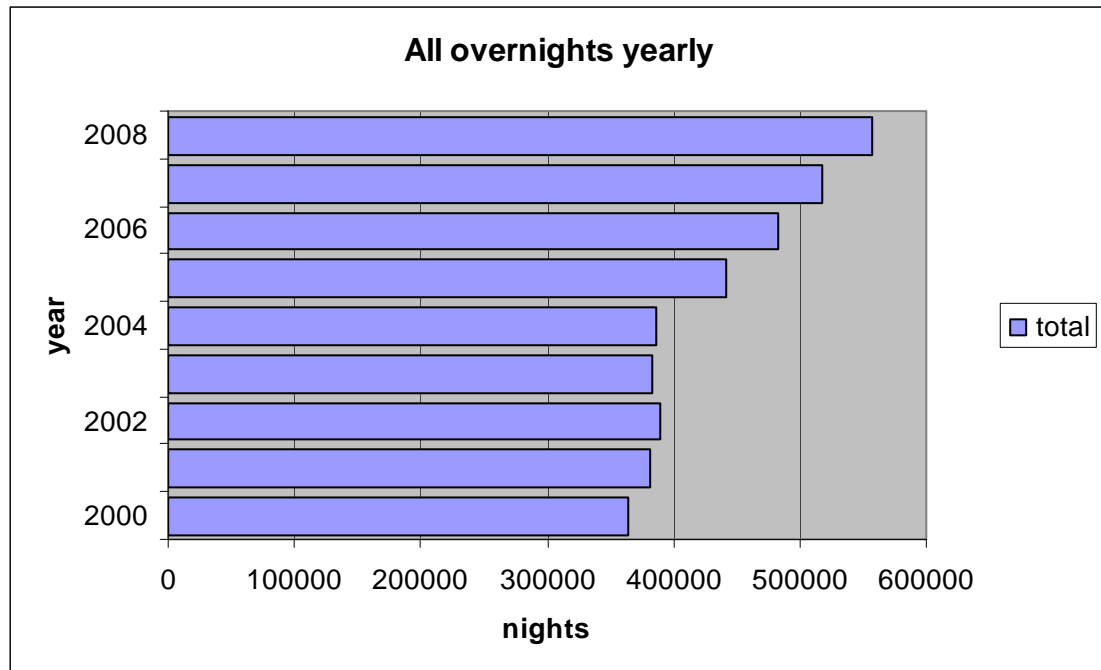
In this thesis, knowledge and facts are combined. The pieces must be gathered together and their meaning must be evaluated, in order for the whole picture to be all inclusive. This knowledge can not be combined mechanically; it must be done by hand. This process can also be called as synthesis.

4.3 Results

Vuokatti is only the 6th biggest ski resort in Finland but despite of that, in recent years it has always been one of the top 3-destinations. This is because of the high usage rate and all-year-roundness. This is the core of the 4D model and how it has been utilized in Vuokatti. As mentioned earlier; the brand code of Vuokatti is being the most versatile in summer and winter. The 4D model itself does not affect the numbers; it is only a tool that brings up strengths. It clarifies where a brand already is good and where it wants to be better. Even though the model does not affect the numbers, the influences can clearly be seen in the statistics. The 4D model is a tool that clarifies the thoughts. It is an image and a brand in nutshell. The benefits of the tool are easy to create, easy to proceed and easy to clarify and explain to customers. This model has not been used anywhere else in Finland, as far as known.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Results



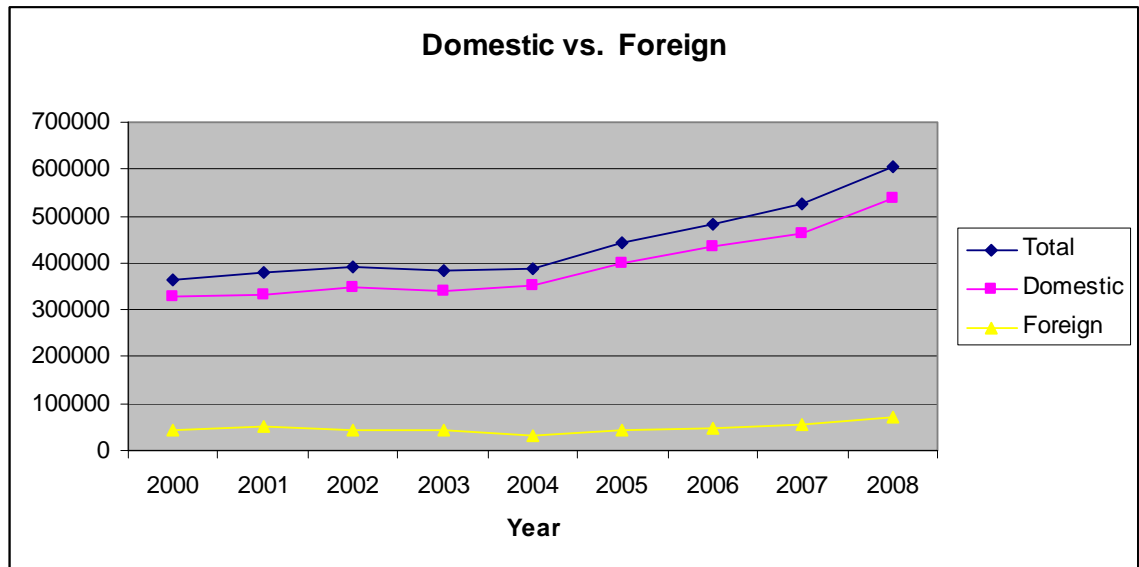
Graph 1.

From graph 1 it can be seen that in year 2007 Vuokatti made its new record with over 500 000 overnights. Numbers have stayed pretty much the same from year 2000 to year 2004. The only exception is in 2003, which is the only year when there has not been growth compared to the previous year.

In 2005, the total amount of overnights in Vuokatti started to increase steadily. Some of the reasons for this are the Talvivaara-project and increased accommodation capacity. Big investments in marketing and international projects have taken place in the last few years and the results can also be seen from the graph 1. The results from recent years' investments and marketing campaigns can now be seen and will also have an effect on future. Accommodation capacity will grow in upcoming years and that is the reason to expect even bigger growth in the amount of overnights.

The marketing of Vuokatti was intensified at the beginning of 21st century. The accommodation capacity took a big leap in 2007-2008 when the new Sokos Hotel Vuokatti was launched

and weekly share accommodation increased. The best usage rate in accommodation is gained from the weekly shares.



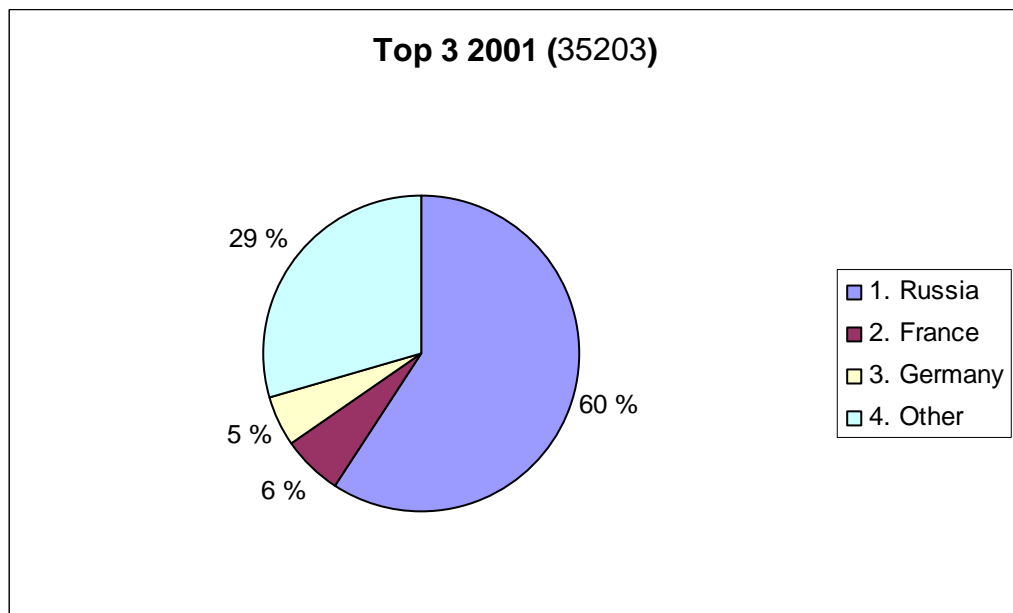
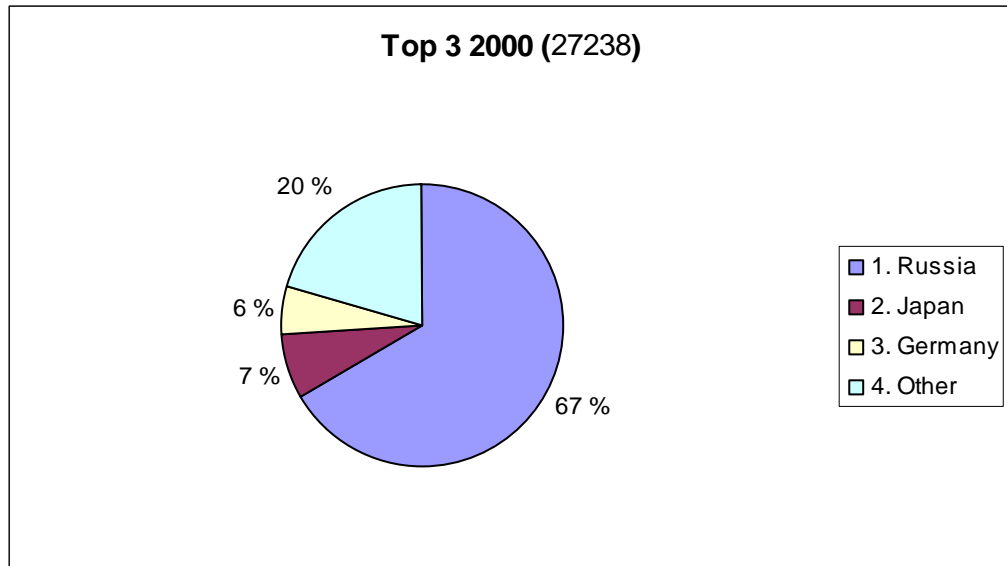
Graph 2.

From graph 2 it can be seen that the amount of domestic tourists is clearly bigger than the amount of foreign tourists. The number of foreign tourists has not managed to increase as fast as the amount of domestic tourists when comparing to the total amount.

This is one of the most significant challenges to Vuokatti. Vuokatti needs to be more known as an international destination, and most of the international tourists are known to be in Vuokatti for a free-time holiday.

The actual growth of foreign tourists in 2008 was 26 per cent from previous year. One of the reasons for this is the big amount of media representatives who came to Vuokatti subsequent to Internationalization project for Kainuu's tourism marketing. The difference between foreign and domestic tourists is still very significant and the bigger numbers of domestic tourists can easily leave the progress of foreign tourism with less attention.

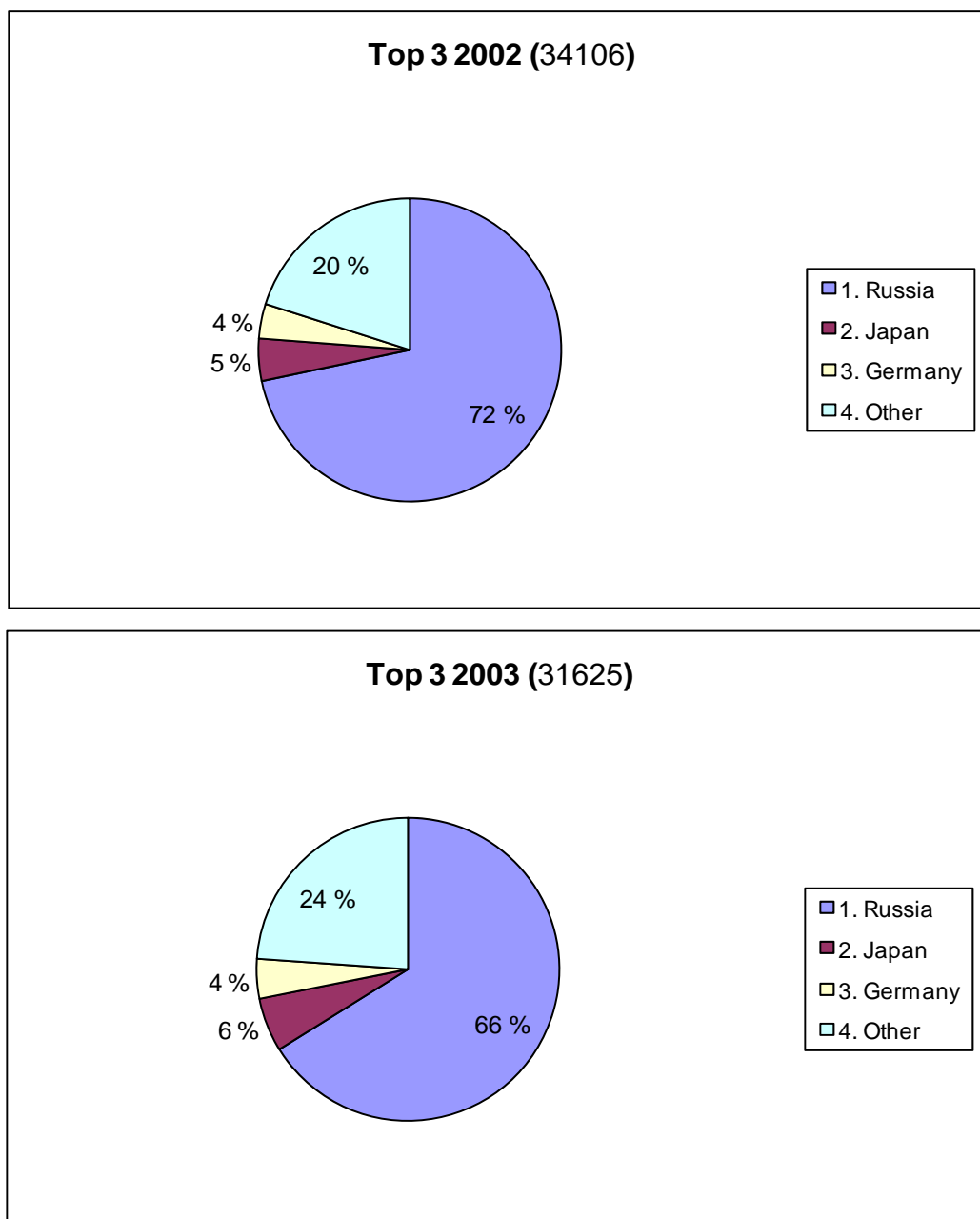
Top 3 foreign tourists by nationalities in Vuokatti in 2000-2008 can be seen from these graphs 3-11. Here it can clearly be seen that Russians are the number one foreign nation visiting Vuokatti. Every year Russia has taken a 55 -80% slice of the pie's total, which can be seen in the brackets. The goal is to focus on 5 countries to stay in the top 5 constantly. These countries are: Russia, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany and the Ukraine.



Graph 3 and 4.

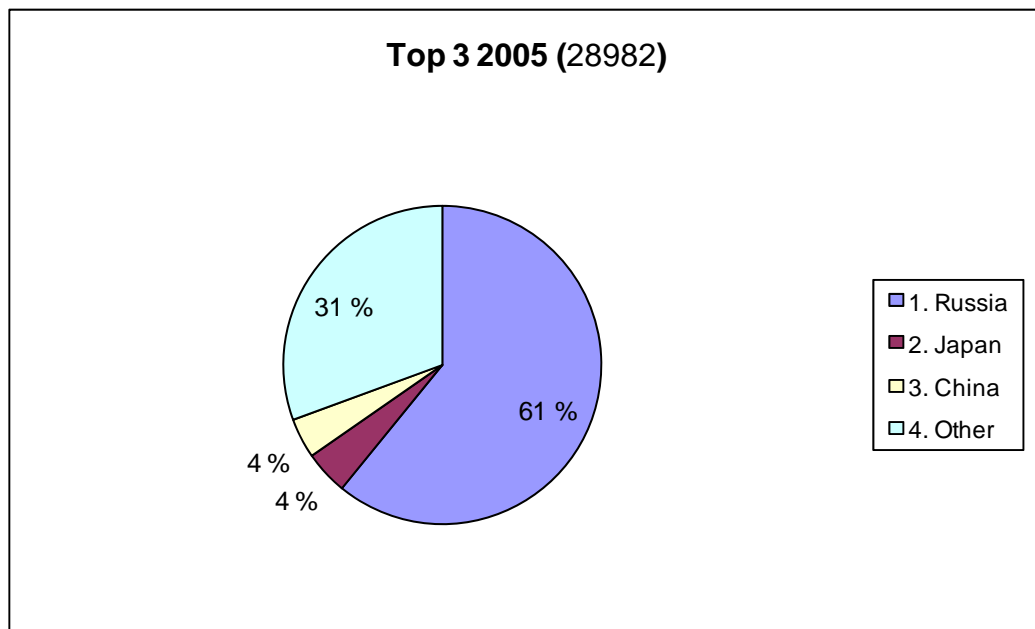
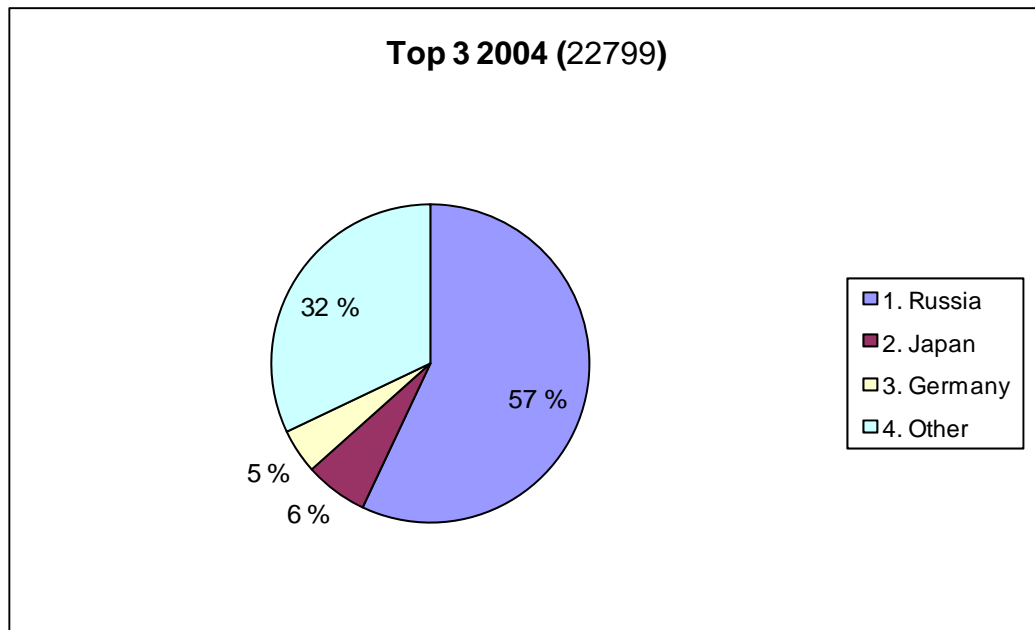
Year 2000 is one of the four years (2000 – 2008) where the order of the top three countries is the same. Other years where the order is Russia – Japan – Germany are 2002, 2003, and 2004. Russians hold the top spot because the country is near and it is easy to come to Finland. Russia is a big country with a lot of people and they are willing to spend money on holidays and getting new experiences. There is a lot of co-operation with Russian travel agencies and it has really paid off. Japan is at second place because of the top athletes that came to training camps and competitions in the Sports Academy. Germany is one the countries that is continuously fighting for a place in top 3. Reasons for this are long term marketing to the area and tourism operators have adapted Vuokatti as one their leading destination.

Year 2001 is the only year where France has managed to find its way to top three. This is because of the 700 peoples' conference group, which was accommodated in Vuokatti. In the year 2001 there were agents from WellNess -project who worked hard to gain interest towards Vuokatti in France and that is the reason why the conference group adopted Vuokatti as a destination. (Penttinen, L. & Tahvanainen, T.)



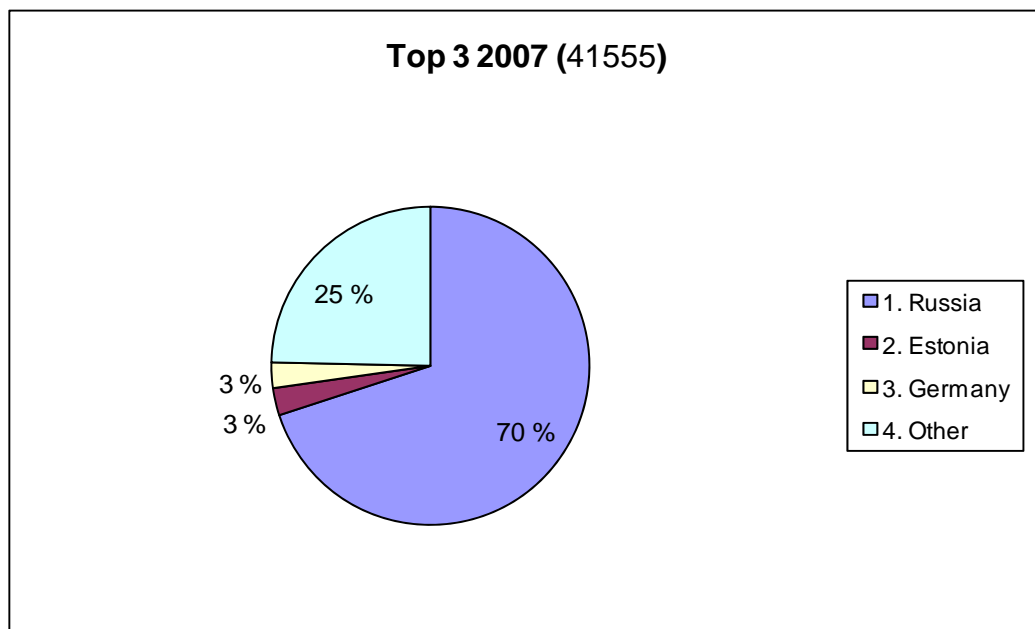
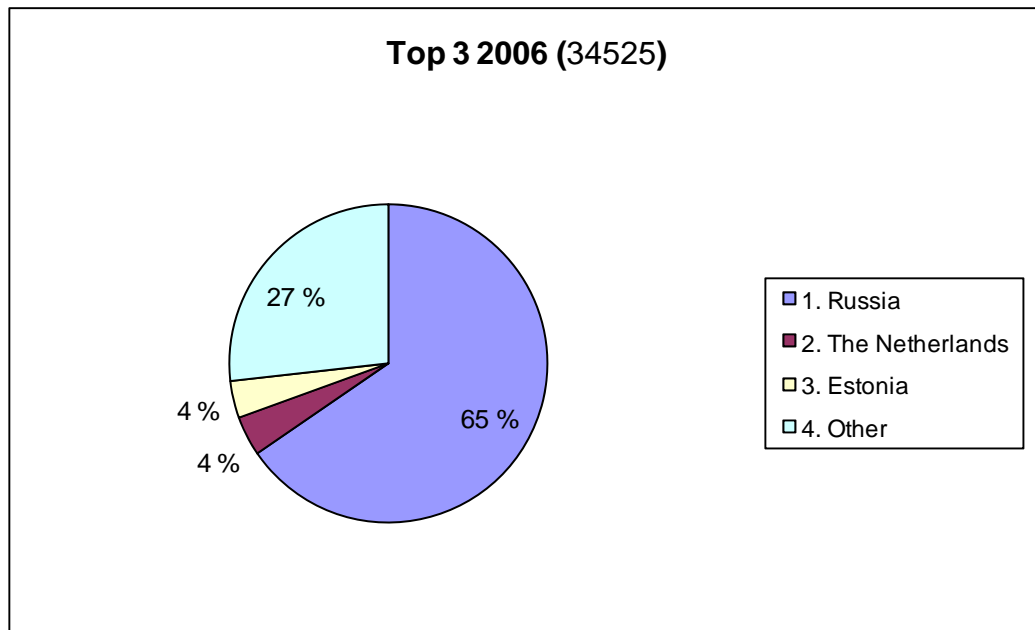
Graph 5 and 6.

The only notable change in years 2002 and 2003 is that Russia's share of the total has decreased a bit and the share of other countries has grown a bit instead. Other countries have gained a bigger share of the pie because of successful marketing. Tourists from Japan are professional athletes and Germany is at the 3rd place because of the good relations with the local tourism operators as well as successful marketing. (Penttinen, L. & Tahvanainen, T.)



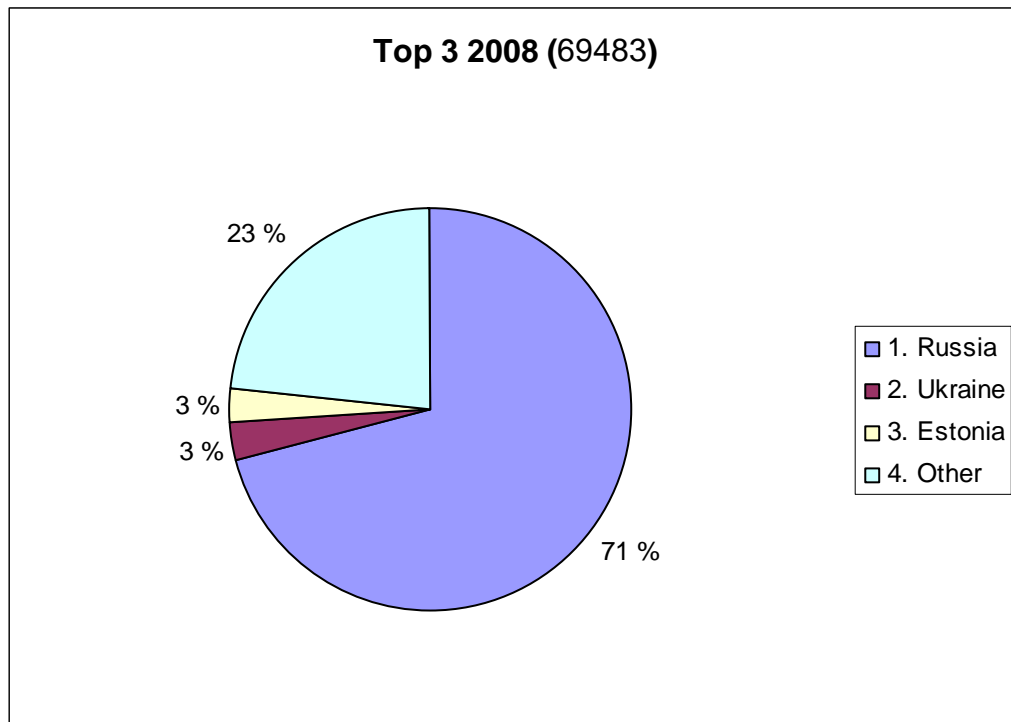
Graph 7 and 8.

In 2005 China wedged to number three position replacing Germany. This is because of the big groups of professional athletes to training camps in Vuokatti. In years 2004 and 2005 the number of foreign overnights stayed under 30 000. This has not happened in 21st century except in year 2000. (Penttinen, L. & Tahvanainen, T.)



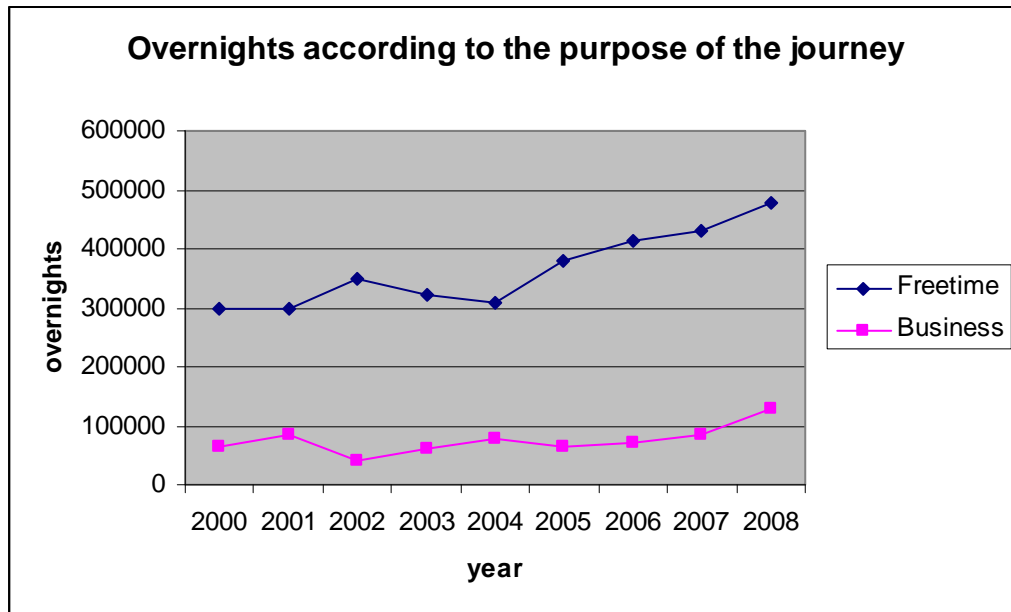
Graph 9 and 10.

In 2006 and 2007 Estonia became a significant country in Vuokatti tourism. It is a newcomer and it is because of the long term marketing finally starts to pay off. It is easy to come to Finland from Estonia and the main target destinations are Vuokatti and Tahko in Nilsia. In 2006 the Netherlands also made its first appearance in the combat of top three countries. The reason for the Netherlands appearing in top 3 is a very well carried out marketing campaign. Due to this campaign Vuokatti was very well represented in the tourism markets of the Netherlands. This created a boom of charter flights to the Kainuu region. (Penttinen, L. & Tahvanainen, T.)



Graph 11.

Year 2008 seems to become the strongest year for Russian visitors so far. Surprisingly, Ukrainian visitors are at the second position and Estonia still manages to keep its position in top 3. Ukraine is at the second place because of the charter flights, which has not taken place in previous years. Some of the Ukrainian visitors were in Vuokatti to take part in athletes training camps. (Penttinen, L. & Tahvanainen, T.)



Graph 12

For the whole ongoing 21st century, the amount of leisure tourists has been significantly bigger than the amount of business tourists.

The amount of business tourists has stayed pretty much the same during the beginning of the 21st century. The amount has ranged approximately from 50 000 to 100 000 overnights. But in the year 2008 the amount of overnights exceeded the limit of 100 000.

The amount of leisure tourists was between 300 000 and 350 000 for the first five years of the 21st century but has grown strongly ever since.

5.2 Discussion

The goal image for Vuokatti is to be versatile, active, premium, and safe. This is the base for the brand code and the 4D brand model. As stated earlier, the four dimensions for this 4D brand model are functional, social, mental, and spiritual dimensions.

The functional dimension for Vuokatti is to make people think that when they come to Vuokatti, either in summer or in winter, they know that they always have something to do in any possible weather. Vuokatti is planned based on all-year-roundness and there are activities for all seasons. Appendix 1 (All overnights monthly 2000-2008) shows that there are no longer periods of time where the amount of tourists is low.

The social part of this picture is people thinking that one is sporty and aware of quality when they spend their holidays in Vuokatti. As can be seen from the appendix 1 (Overnights according to the purpose of the journey) the amount of freetime tourists is much higher than the amount of business tourists. Vuokatti is also known for its various possibilities for different sports activities.

The mental dimension is all about making people feel that in Vuokatti they can relax and recharge themselves either just by being or by spending time with their favorite hobbies. The most popular sport activities in winter time are cross country skiing and downhill skiing. In summertime the most popular activities are hiking and different kind of safaris. Other things affecting this sporty image are sports high school and Sports Academy, which are well known all over Finland and amongst some other countries.

The fourth part of the 4D model is spiritual dimension. This part of the 4D brand model for Vuokatti is that the services and activities in Vuokatti are safe, domestic and environmentally friendly. Vuokatti is marketed being a safe destination for all the tourists as well as the services and products are mainly domestic. Environmentally friendliness is also part of the Vuokatti's values in the brand code.

The brand code of Vuokatti is "The most versatile for summer and winter." The brand code is the core of the 4D brand model (picture 5) and it is based on six parts: product, positioning, style, mission, vision, and values.

The first part, product, is that Vuokatti is the most diverse and also a combination of holiday and conference, which creates active trips. Vuokatti brand is built to serve both holiday and conference visitors. Vuokatti offers versatile free-time activity opportunities, such as sports, music-, and other events. For conference visitors, Vuokatti offers excellent circumstances. Sokos Hotel Vuokatti and Holiday Club Katinkulta are the most popular places for conferences due to the fact of high-technology equipments and effortless in organizing a conference. All the conference services including food, accommodation and technical support can be found in one place. Holiday and conference are easy to combine in Vuokatti. This fact is the base for Vuokatti being the most versatile destination in Finland.

The positioning of Vuokatti is to have something for everyone and also to be all-year round. Vuokatti is a destination for all age groups from juniors to seniors. Vuokatti suits for single tourists as well as big groups and families because of the fact that there are multiple opportunities to do what they wish. All-year- roundness occurs via activities. At summer time one can do for example hiking, horse back riding, off-road vehicle safaris, skateboarding, swimming, fishing, forest golfing, golfing, RIB boating, roller skating, playing Finnish baseball, berry picking, dancing, cycling, canoeing, boating, downhill carting, and many more activities. At winter time the most popular activities are cross country skiing, down-hill skiing, skating, husky safaris, snowmobile rides, tour skating, ice fishing as well as horse back riding.

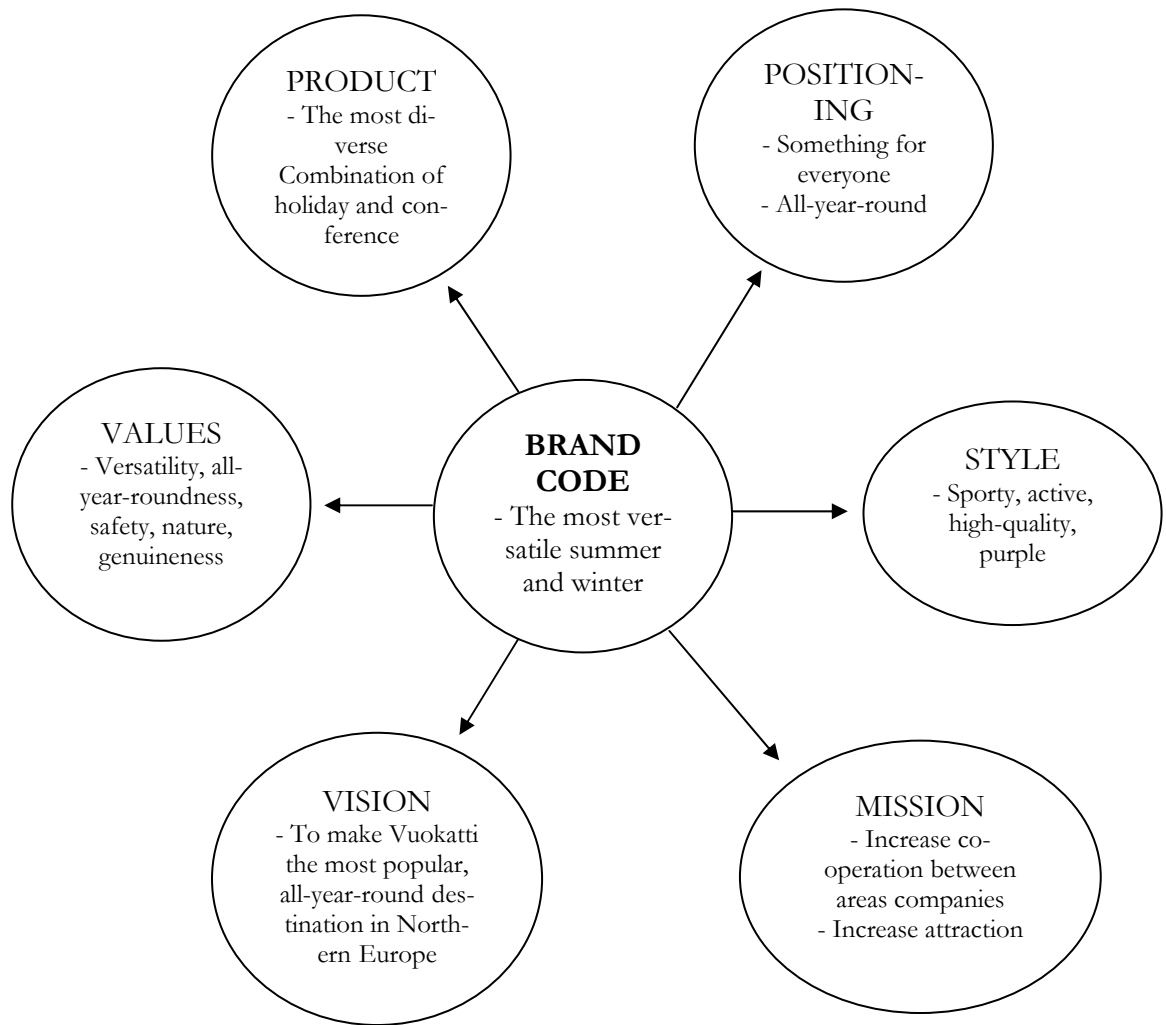
The style of Vuokatti is sporty, active, high-quality, and purple. Sporty represent all the different sports possibilities and Vuokatti is also known for sports high school, skiing training camps and the baseball club of Sotkamo called Sotkamon Jymy. Activity occurs from different events in sports and music, sports competitions in national and international level and in addition to Vuokatti being up to date all the time. High-quality is represented in all of the latest hi-tech equipments and services. Vuokatti also puts a lot of effort in good service and this shows that it really cares about its customers. The color purple is unique and it pops out and captures people's attention. The main competitors use mainly red and blue as their colors. Vuokatti has combined these two popular shades and the purple result is one of a kind. Purple is also a color of royalty and it represents power, valuable and difference.

The mission of the brand code is to increase the co-operation between the area's companies and also to increase the attraction of Vuokatti. By co-operation between the areas companies and municipality, Vuokatti can achieve even more cohesive entity. This could lead to people's perceptions becoming even more positive because it gives an image of functional

ensemble where everything works and people collaborate to individualize a person. By favoring local companies and entrepreneurs the capital and money will stay in the region and it is also good for the society's welfare as well as it influences the good reputation of Vuokatti.

The vision is to make Vuokatti the most popular and most versatile all-year round destination in the Northern-Europe. This is an achievable goal within the few upcoming years by focusing on all the six aspects of Vuokatti's brand code. Vuokatti is already a very strong brand and able to compete. There is always something to improve and Vuokatti must stay up to date or even be ahead of time. To achieve this goal, hard work, ambition, and knowledge of your competitors is needed.

The values for Vuokatti are versatility, all-year roundness, safety, nature, and genuineness. Safety is a very important aspect to achieve and maintain good reputation. The municipality of Sotkamo is a relatively small and safe place and people like to feel safe on their holidays. All the activities in Vuokatti are introduced and supervised by professionals. This kind of taking responsibility attracts people, especially families. The nature in Vuokatti has not been polluted by either people or industry. People take good care of the surrounding nature and by doing that they help to improve the image of Vuokatti and also to sustain the circumstances for activities. Genuineness refers to Vuokatti being true to itself and stands for its image. Basically what you see is what you get.



Picture 5.

The analyzed numbers show that the 4D brand model is well carried out in the case of Vuokatti marketing. The 4D brand model does not have a direct influence on the numbers even though the numbers have all increased throughout the decade and it shows that Vuokatti continues strong development in coming years. The 4D brand model is a useful tool in strengthening the image of a brand. The indirect influences occur later on after a successful use of the 4D brand model. The brand code has clarified the marketing strategy of Vuokatti. Vuokatti has become the most popular all-year round tourist destination in Finland and the reason for this is systematic marketing. Pohjolan Mylly is a pioneer when it comes to using this model and it was a very brave decision. Vuokatti is the only tourist destination in Finland where this 4D model is applied and it has given strong evidence of its functionality.

Vuokatti is still at the stage of launch of its life span which is the second of four stages of tourism destination's life span. Vuokatti is well known and numerous people have purchased

the services. There are a lot of competitors and it is crucial for Vuokatti to continue to differentiate itself from others.

Vuokatti used to be a star of Boston Consulting Group Box but has nowadays turned into a cash cow. Star stage for Vuokatti was when it started to grow and gained a dominative position in the markets. Now Vuokatti has turned into a cash cow still being the market leader with steady profit. Vuokatti is stable in the markets and the volume of demand is still high.

Sustainable tourism is an essential part of developing Vuokatti. Vuokatti wants to lead by an example and continue to be the number one destination for the future generations. Vuokatti and Sotkamo are quite a small places and sustainable tourism brings many new job opportunities for local people.

For the future we think that Vuokatti will continue its growth and stay in the top position of domestic holiday resorts. Because of all the attraction factors (Snowpolis, VuokattiSport, Katinkulta and many more), we believe that Vuokatti will become even more international and gain bigger market share amongst European tourist destinations. Continuing investments in marketing will help to get this result. The future projects, i.e. increasing the accommodation capacity and the launch of the new shopping centre, have also a positive influence on the growth of the area.

Strengths of Vuokatti are its location because it has all the four seasons: lots of snow and warm summer as well as its versatility, professional knowhow and excellent reputation. On the other hand, there are also some weaknesses in Vuokatti. Location is one weakness because Vuokatti is far from all the big centers. Vuokatti has also many opportunities to develop its services. The area can be developed because there are good possibilities to expand even more and be even bigger. Foreign tourists are also a good opportunity for Vuokatti to get more international reputation and more customers. One of the threats for Vuokatti tourism is the possible future economic crisis. It affects both the leisure- and business tourism. People do not have as much money to spend as they used to have and the first expense they will give up is holiday travelers. The Talvivaara mine is almost finished with the construction work and it solely reduces the amount of business travelers. The possible economic crisis also eats up the share of business tourism. This phenomenon has already started to affect Lapland's tourist destinations because a big part of tourists there were huge business groups. Companies no longer offer so many business trips to their customers and associates. Vuo-

katti has managed to spare itself from this phenomenon because their focus is on freetime travelers more than in business travelers. This big threat needs to be taken seriously and new options for increasing the tourism in Vuokatti must be created.

Despite the recession, the growth of tourism in Vuokatti is still strong. The investments in Vuokatti has not stopped, over €100 million has been invested in a short period of time. Another €100 million will be invested by the year 2012. The goal of increasing the number of foreign and domestic overnights was gained in 2008. Juha Tanskanen from Pohjolan Mylly is happy to say that the development has remained positive through the whole year and all the months in 2008 have been better than in 2007. According to Mr. Tanskanen there are three reasons for last year's increase in overnights: increase in international tourism, investments in 2007, and Talvivaara mine's contractors. The investments of 2007 were mainly to increase the accommodation capacity and the results were not seen until 2008. The mine of Talvivaara was developing strongly in 2008 and that increased the need of accommodation, especially in the summertime. The challenges in the future for the growth of Vuokatti are the international recession, lack of accommodation capacity as a result from the latest investments, and the decrease in subcontractors in Talvivaara mine. Despite of all the challenges, Tanskanen reminds that Vuokatti still has good opportunities to continue the growth also in 2009. (Kainuun Sanomat 16.1.2009)

Pohjolan Mylly started to use the 4D brand model in 2004-2005 as a tool for marketing of Vuokatti. Marketing of Vuokatti has been in the hands of Pohjolan Mylly since 1999.

6. CONCLUSION

The 4D brand model aspires to clarify the brand image for the company. It is a relatively new model, created and established at the beginning of the 21st century and there is no previous experience on the use of this model in Finland. Vuokatti brand has been analyzed thoroughly with the help of the 4D model. The result of the analysis clarifies the products' strengths and development targets. It gives a clear picture of the brands' potential and helps you to plan an effective marketing strategy.

Vuokatti's brand code is "The most versatile for summer and winter". This represents the fact that Vuokatti is a versatile tourist destination for all the 4 seasons of the year. Vuokatti is only the 6th biggest ski resort in Finland but it has managed to stay at the top position for many years. Tourism in Vuokatti has developed throughout the 21st century. The amount of both domestic and foreign tourists increases every year. The area of Vuokatti is developing all the time and the increasing amount of tourists creates a need for more accommodation capacity and for new services.

The reasons for the strong development of Vuokatti are a good basis for developing tourism and sufficient and continuous marketing. Many projects and campaigns have also supported the growth of the area. The development of Vuokatti is a mutual goal for the whole community and the area's sustainable development creates new possibilities for the future generations. Development has a positive effect on the employment situation of the area. Employment rates increase despite the current financial recession. Tourists bring a lot of money to the area and due to the development; the need for service possibilities increases and locality is the keyword for ethical values of Vuokatti. This enables hiring the workforce from the area itself. The positive image has gained interest amongst national and international media and experts. The conspicuousness of the area brings many positive effects for Vuokatti, Kainuu region and for the whole Finland.

The results show that the 4D model has a positive influence for the development of a tourism destination. The 4D brand model is just a tool, it does not have a direct influence on the numbers itself. The use of the model clarifies the products' different aspects and therefore, it is easier for the company to plan and carry out an effective marketing strategy. This can be seen as an indirect influence on the products' development. The 4D brand model has been

discovered to be a very efficient, user friendly and understandable to use. The 4D model is a useful tool for continuously develop the brand even further.

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OTHER

Kari Kinnunen

Leena Penttinen

Pohjolan Mylly

Tilastokeskus

Tuomo Tahvanainen

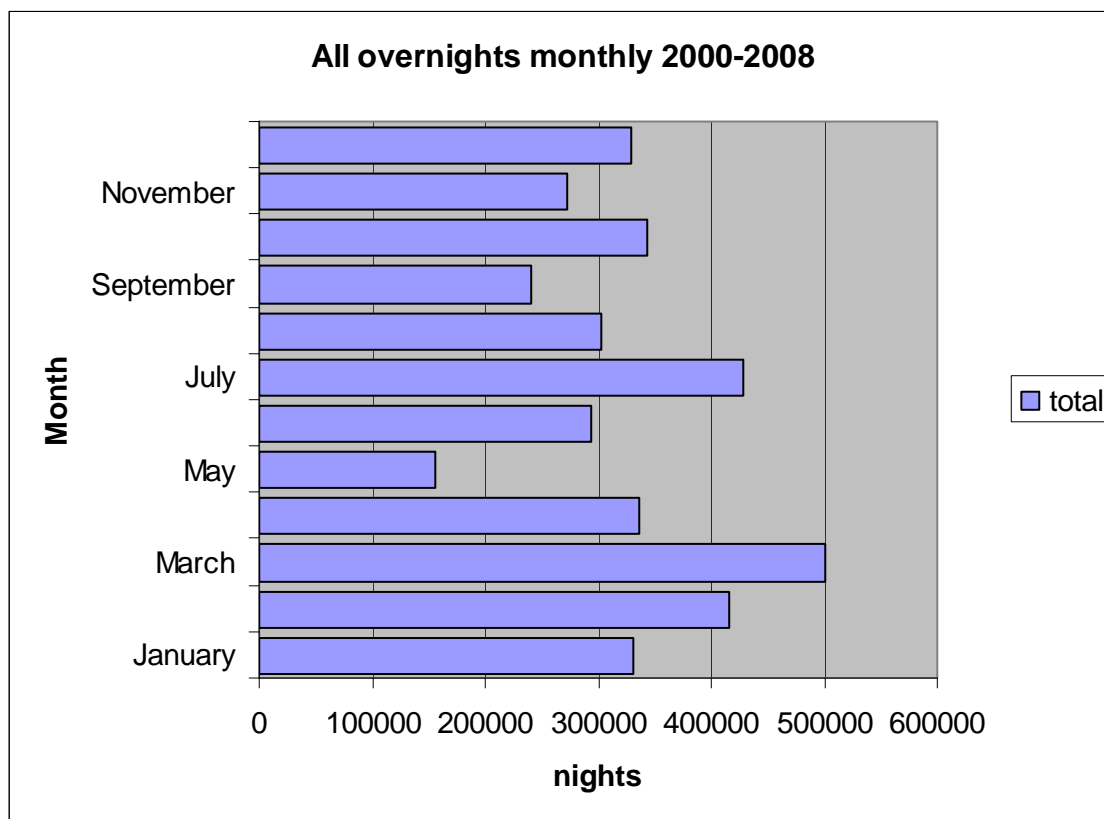
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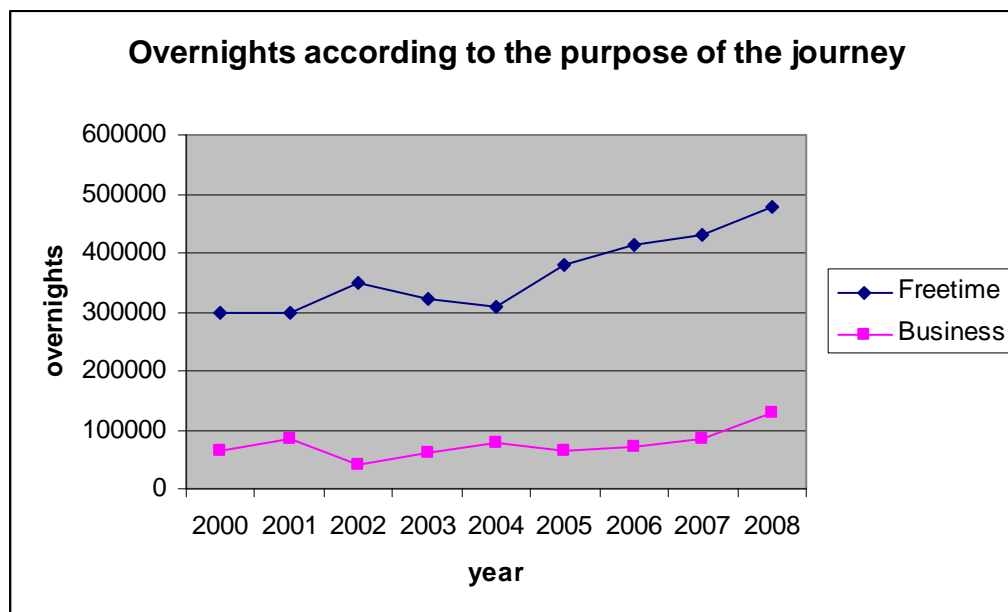
APPENDIX 3/3 CHANGES ANNUALLY

ALL OVERNIGHTS MONTHLY 2000-2008



From this graph it can be seen that March is obviously the busiest month of the year and May weakest month in overnights. March is the busiest because of school holidays and circumstances are exceptionally good because of the weather conditions. May is a quiet month between winter and summer season. There are not so many business tourists in May because companies are preparing for the summer season and upcoming summer holidays also have influence to these numbers.

OVERNIGHTS ACCORDING TO A PURPOSE OF THE JOURNEY

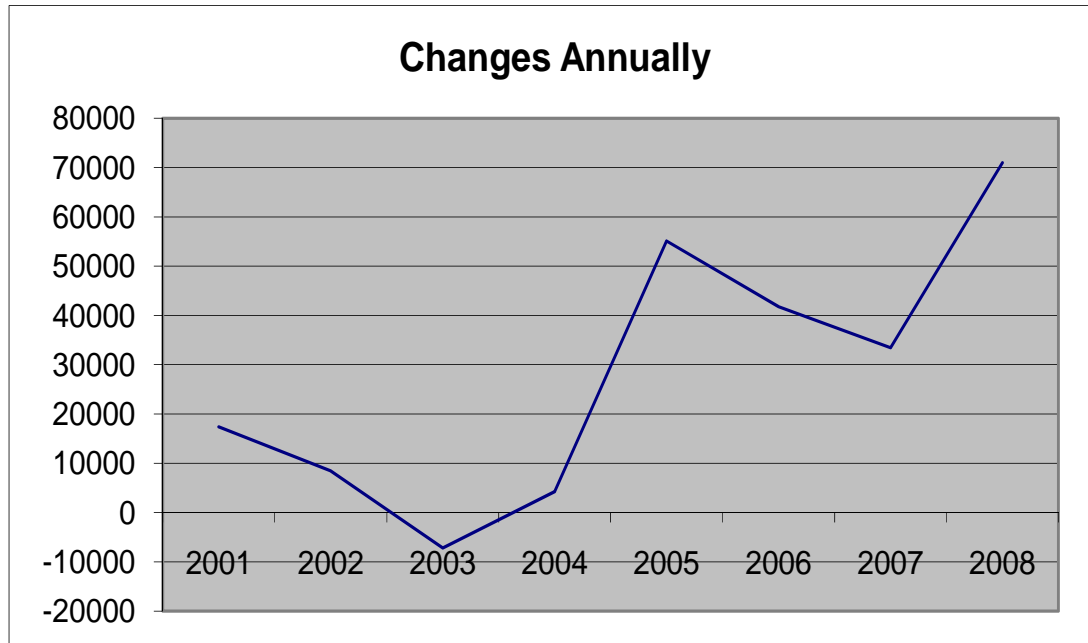


For the whole ongoing 21st century, the amount of leisure tourists has been significantly bigger than the amount of business tourists.

The amount of business tourists has stayed pretty much the same during the beginning of the 21st century. The amount has ranged approximately from 50 000 to 100 000 overnights. But in the year 2008 the amount of overnights exceeded the limit of 100 000.

The amount of leisure tourists was between 300 000 and 350 000 for the first five years of the 21st century but has grown strongly ever since.

CHANGES ANNUALLY



The change of all overnights annually has been positive - compared to previous year - in each year but in 2003 when the change was negative. Year 2005 has been the year of biggest change so far.