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Supervisor: Kiflemariam Hamde

Authors: Ahmed Hersi
         Magnus Carlsson

Road’s end – the beginning?
- A study of the marketing practices of small tourism firms in Sweden
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Ahmed Hersi                                   Magnus Carlsson
ABSTRACT

International travelling is moving full steam ahead and Sweden as an international tourist destination plays an increasingly important role for Swedish industry. This is arguably even more so for peripheral areas where the word *lay off* has become an unpleasantly well-worn phrase. A cause of rejoicing is that these regions, at road’s end, show a sprouting business activity utilizing what Sweden has in abundance – pristine nature. To say that what cannot be seen does not exist is to go to the extremes but marketing matters. It is paramount for successful business. The focus of this thesis is small companies whose marketing budget, alas, is corresponding to the size of their business necessitating a careful selection when deciding on marketing.

Against this background we settled on the purpose of this thesis; to look at how small tourism firms situated in the upper northern half of Sweden are marketing themselves today and to explore their knowledge of causal relationships in their marketing. This described research aim was pursued by conducting a quantitative study by using semi-structured interviews, the latter formed in a deductive spirit.

The study indicates a widespread acceptance to cooperation but a somewhat worrying unawareness of the causal relationship for different marketing tools. There was a general belief in the benefit of undertaking marketing research but fewer that actually had conducted an analysis of the market. Strikingly many respondents stated better surrounding nature and level of service to be the distinguishing factors that put their company ahead of the competition. Can that many companies be better than the others? Someone is either telling lies or terribly wrong.
# Table of contents

1. **Introduction** ......................................................................................... 1
   1.1 Background .......................................................................................... 1
   1.2 Research questions and purpose ............................................................ 3
   1.3 Delimitations ......................................................................................... 3
   1.4 Definitions .......................................................................................... 3
      1.4.1 Causal relationship ........................................................................ 4
      1.4.2 Destination marketing .................................................................... 4
      1.4.3 Ecological labelling ......................................................................... 4
      1.4.4 Ecotourism ...................................................................................... 4
      1.4.5 Nature’s Best ............................................................................... 4
      1.4.6 Segmentation ............................................................................... 4
      1.4.7 The Swedish Ecotourism Society .................................................. 5
      1.4.8 The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation ................................. 5
      1.4.9 Visit Sweden .............................................................................. 5
   1.5 Thesis outline ....................................................................................... 5

2. **Methodology** ...................................................................................... 7
   2.1 Choice of subject ................................................................................... 7
   2.2 Ontology ............................................................................................... 8
   2.3 Epistemology ....................................................................................... 8
   2.4 Preconceptions ..................................................................................... 8
   2.5 Empirical method ................................................................................ 9
      2.5.1 Definition of the study ................................................................... 9
      2.5.2 Advantages and disadvantages with phone interviews .................. 9
      2.5.3 Sampling .................................................................................... 10
      2.5.4 Non-response ............................................................................ 11
      2.5.5 Generalization .......................................................................... 12
   2.6 Practical method .................................................................................. 12
      2.6.1 Pilot study .................................................................................. 12
   2.7 Source criticism .................................................................................. 13

3. **Theoretical Framework** ..................................................................... 14
   3.1 Marketing Research ............................................................................ 14
      3.1.1 Analysis of the market .................................................................. 14
      3.1.2 Consumer research .................................................................... 14
      3.1.3 Price and product studies ............................................................ 15
      3.1.4 Sales and promotion research ..................................................... 15
      3.1.5 Distribution research .................................................................. 15
      3.1.6 Evaluation of performance ......................................................... 16
# Table of contents

3.1.7 Marketing research: why bother? ................................................................. 16

3.2 Segmentation .................................................................................................................. 17
  3.2.1 Niche marketing .................................................................................................................. 17

3.3 Market communication ................................................................................................. 17
  3.3.1 Destination marketing .......................................................................................................... 17
  3.3.2 Cooperation vs. competition .................................................................................................. 18
  3.3.3 Destinations and visitors ....................................................................................................... 19
  3.3.4 Word of mouth ....................................................................................................................... 19
  3.3.5 The Internet as a marketing tool ............................................................................................ 20
  3.3.6 Relationship Marketing ......................................................................................................... 20
  3.3.7 Portfolio Analysis .................................................................................................................. 21
  3.3.8 Affinity marketing ................................................................................................................ 21

3.4 To sum up ......................................................................................................................... 23

4. EMPIRICAL DATA ............................................................................................................. 25
  4.1 Presentation of empirical data ............................................................................................... 25

5. ANALYSIS .......................................................................................................................... 34
  5.1 Data analysis ......................................................................................................................... 34

6. CONCLUSIONS ..................................................................................................................... 40
  6.1 Conclusions ........................................................................................................................ 40

7. DISCUSSION ....................................................................................................................... 42
  7.1 Discussion of conclusions ..................................................................................................... 42
  7.2 Quality criteria ...................................................................................................................... 43
    7.2.1 Reliability ........................................................................................................................... 44
    7.2.2 Validity ............................................................................................................................... 44
  7.3 Suggestions for future research ............................................................................................ 44

List of references .................................................................................................................. 46
  Printed sources ......................................................................................................................... 46
  Electronic sources ..................................................................................................................... 47

APPENDIX .............................................................................................................................. 1
  Interview guide (Swedish) ......................................................................................................... 1
  Interview guide (English) .......................................................................................................... IV
  Contacted companies ............................................................................................................... VII
  Empirical data .......................................................................................................................... IX
List of figures

Figure 1. Stanley Plog’s allocentricty and psychocentricty model .......................................................... 19
Figure 2. Affinity marketing process ..................................................................................................... 22
Figure 3. Length of season ...................................................................................................................... 26
Figure 4. Number of persons employed during season .......................................................................... 26
Figure 5. Years in the tourism industry .................................................................................................. 27
Figure 6. Customers country of origin ................................................................................................... 29
Figure 7. Marketing channels employed today ........................................................................................ 30
Figure 8. Non-satisfying marketing channels .......................................................................................... 31
Figure 9. Reasons for venturing into the tourism business ................................................................. 33
1. INTRODUCTION

"A lot of times, people don’t know what they want until you show it to them." – Steve Jobs

This opening chapter provides a background to our field of research. The introduction is followed by a presentation of the purpose and the research questions for this study. We thereafter present delimitations and a list of definitions that are used in this paper. As a final point, in order to provide the reader with an easy to grasp overview of this work, the chapter is rounded off with an overall outline of the study.

1.1 Background

International travelling is moving full steam ahead today constituting the world’s largest industry. Tourism is today the branch of trade that is increasing the most rapidly in Sweden but despite this represent less than three percent of Sweden’s gross domestic product\(^1\). The importance of tourism is increasing for Sweden in large but is arguably growing even more significant in many of Sweden’s peripheral areas, regions where lay offs and depopulation has become everyday. Everything shouldn’t be painted in black though, there are rays of hope among which the sprouting tourism business, a branch of trade characterised by small firms, is one.

Ecotourism has experienced a significant increase in popularity in recent times. There are also studies that indicate that ecotourists undertake longer trips and spend more while travelling than do others, adding up to an interesting market segment to target\(^2\). Sweden is moreover blessed to be free from the red tape that is so typical for many other European countries when it comes to nature and, in addition to this, can parade with unspoiled, pristine nature. Eyes are, slowly, opening to this fact and firms are starting to pop up in peripheral areas.

\(^1\) http://www.nutek.se/content/1/c4/90/41/TSARap2007.pdf [080918]
The nature of tourism is changing rapidly and while ecotourism has become the industry segment that is growing the fastest, competition for clients is also growing fiercer by the day. Excellence in marketing communication is pivotal for the success of any a company the tourism business not being an exception. Whereas opinions differ when it comes to how Sweden should be promoted as a tourist destination there appears to be consensus to the fact that there exists great potential for attracting far more visitors than what is done today. Not only does about half of the tourists’ total spending return to the Swedish state in form of taxes but the increased consumption also provides the necessary basis for rising employment. Increased tourism can, besides augmenting tax revenues and employment, also help improve the service level for the local population. With this in mind Sweden’s per capita investment in tourism marketing, 11 SEK compared to Norway’s 47 SEK, isn’t very impressive³.

Marketing matters but the problem is that a majority of the firms operating in the tourism industry are small and their marketing budget is often in parity, strictly limiting their options when it comes to advertising⁴. The Internet today constitute an important source of information for prospective tourists but research shows that a majority of the small firms operating in the tourism industry have limited knowledge or motivation to make use of the new technology⁵. Another option is of course to hire someone to do the marketing for you. Sweden was the first country on the northern hemisphere to introduce a labelling system for ecotravelling - Nature’s Best. Nature’s Best is an organisation whose goal is to help promote the described firms to an international audience⁶. There exist an abundance of options when it comes to marketing. Each comes at a cost alas for a small firm the price of bad decision making can be very concrete. How do small firms approach this problem and to what extent are the decisions well considered? This was the hotbed for this study which emanated in the below research purpose and questions.

³ http://svenskturism.se/asm/default.asp?ID=247&cat [080918]
⁵ Applebee et al. (2000).
⁶ http://www.naturensbasta.com/nb/kvala.asp [080919]
1.2 Research questions and purpose

The purpose of this study is to look at how small tourism firms situated in the upper northern half of Sweden are marketing themselves today and to explore their knowledge of causal relationships in their marketing.

In order to tackle our purpose we will address the below research questions:

- What are the marketing practices of small tourism firms that offer hunting or fishing as activities?
- To what extent are these small firms informed of the causal relationships in their marketing?

1.3 Delimitations

The focus of this study is small firms in the tourism industry in the following contiguous geographical areas; Lapland, Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Jämtland, Ångermanland, Härjedalen, Medelpad, Hälsingland and the county of Dalarna, Sweden.

In order to maintain focus on small firms we excluded companies that offered accommodation as a main attraction since these companies’, among other campgrounds and hotels, marketing budget is likely to far exceed that of those that only offer activity based attractions.

To further narrow our field of research we set out to study companies that offer hunting and fishing services. The snag is that there is no “yellow pages” listing all companies that fulfil the described criteria and we therefore had to rely on search engines and non comprehensive online registers.

1.4 Definitions

In order to facilitate understanding we below present a short list with explanations to a selection of concepts that we have used in this thesis.
1.4.1 Causal relationship

By cause-effect relationship we, in this research paper, think of the understanding of the likely outcome of a marketing activity.

1.4.2 Destination marketing

One of the fundaments in the corpus of theories and denotes the process of marketing a country, region or a city rather than a product.

1.4.3 Ecological labelling

Ecolabels were created in order to help consumers determine the quality of a certain product or service offering. There are today more than a hundred different labels and trade marks worldwide that signal environmental friendliness to prospective tourists.

1.4.4 Ecotourism

Environmentally friendly travelling that also supports the well-being of the local population is defined as ecotourism.

1.4.5 Nature’s Best

A label that, according to the organisations’ website, holds proof of an environmentally sustainable activity as well as a high quality arrangement. The organisation is a result from cooperation between the institutions listed below and today catalogue 78 approved tour operators on their website.

1.4.6 Segmentation

Segmentation is defined as the division of a heterogeneous market into more homogenous groups of individuals that share similar interests.

1.4.7 The Swedish Ecotourism Society

An organisation that was founded in 1996 by a group of enthusiasts and that today works for increased and sustainable ecotourism in Sweden and abroad.

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9 http://www.naturensbasta.com/arrangorer/index.asp [081204]
10 Kotler et al. (2003), p.262.
11 http://www.ekoturism.org/ekoturismforeningen/dettavill/index.asp [080919]
1.4.8 The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation

A Swedish non-profit organisation working for increased consumer awareness of environmental issues.\footnote{http://www.naturskyddsforeningen.se/om-oss/kort-om-oss/ [080920]}

1.4.9 Visit Sweden

Visit Sweden was created to help increase the number of international tourists visiting Sweden. The organisation is, to one half, owned by the Swedish government while the other half belongs to the Swedish tourism organisation.\footnote{http://www.visitsweden.com/sweden/Regions--Cities/Northern-Sweden/ [080928]}

1.5 Thesis outline

We below present a brief overview of the content of each chapter in order to present you with a concise outline of this thesis.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The opening chapter presents the background and the purpose for this study; to look at how small tourism firms are marketing themselves today and to explore their awareness to causal relationships in their marketing. This is followed by our research questions, the study’s delimitations and explanations of definitions.

Chapter 2. Methodology

This chapter explains the theoretical framework for this study. Light is shed on epistemology and ontology as well as the practical method for our data collection. This section also presents our preconceptions.

Chapter 3. Theoretical framework

Theories for marketing research, segmentation and communication are presented, in respective order, in this chapter. Current research in this field is introduced as are problems and possibilities with different approaches. The chapter is rounded off with a summary.

Chapter 4. Empirical data
Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to put forward a factual summarise of the data recorded in our interviews. Selections of facts are supported by graphs in order to facilitate understanding and spontaneous comments that the respondents surfaced during the actual interview are also presented.

Chapter 5. Analysis

This chapter scrutinizes the data presented in the previous chapter in the light of our theoretical framework. Particularly striking facts are highlighted and some room is also given to subjective thinking.

Chapter 6. Conclusions

The characteristic for this chapter is elbowroom for our own thoughts while trying to tie everything together. The reader will be reminded of the purpose of this study and answers accompanied by concluding thoughts will be presented.

Chapter 7. Discussion

Recommendations for the investigated firms’ marketing endeavour will be presented with the starting point in what the study has presented to view. This is in turn followed by a discussion about the study’s reliability and validity.
2. METHODOLOGY

"Method is like packing things in a box; a good packer will get in half as much again as a bad one." - Lord David Cecil

When the approach to research into consider one should not forget what is being studied nor the research purpose. Knowing this will help to trickle out the most efficient methodology for the investigation at hand. Please find below the methodology employed in this paper and the reasons for choosing this approach.

2.1 Choice of subject

The reasons to why we chose to research this specific topic are many. It was possibly not as much the fact that both the authors have studied marketing in the past, and that both have studied economy in Sweden as well as internationally that was the decisive point, nor the fact that friends to us are running firms in the tourism industry asking for advice or the rapidly rising number of tourists visiting Sweden but all of it together that sparked our interest in this topic.

As stated somewhat further down we take a re inclined towards positivism and we therefore consider it to be of particular importance to give account for and show awareness of our respective backgrounds in order to, to the highest extent possible, stay clear from interpreting the gathered data subjectively.
2.2 Ontology

Ontology is the science of the social entities species and nature. It is often divided into two different mindsets, objectivism and constructivism.\textsuperscript{14}

We believe that the business owners makes their own reality, in other words their business is not self-maintained. The social actors in the organization make the business go round. Constructivism you might say. This point of view challenges the belief that an organization is an objective social entity that affects the individuals in it. It rather promotes that people are active in their creating of a reality.\textsuperscript{15}

2.3 Epistemology

Epistemology is the knowledge of whether something should be considered as “real knowledge” or not. It is divided into two different attitudes, positivism and hermeneutic. The difference between the two can roughly be explained with the statement, positivistitic attitude promotes that “real knowledge” is only what one can experience with the five senses. A hermeneutical attitude on the other hand promotes an interpretive approach were the human aspect should be considered. To clarify it further, positivism claims that the methods that’s used in natural science is applicable to social science too whilst hermeneutics claims the opposite.\textsuperscript{16} This stated we are more predisposed towards positivism than interpretivism.

2.4 Preconceptions

A researcher’s social background, education and practical experience are of great importance to acknowledge in research. Since we are a duo writing this thesis our preconceptions origins from two different backgrounds and knowledge areas.

But our combined experience in the research field come of marketing studies both nationally and internationally, experience of running a business in the tourism industry and extensive travelling across the globe. Having visited a good number of the small tourism firms in Scandinavia, seeing the increasing popularity in ecological products along with the rising number of lay offs in many important industries we decided to team up to put small firms operating in the tourism industry under loupe.

\textsuperscript{14} Bryman and Bell, p.29.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. p.36.
\textsuperscript{16} Bryman and Bell, p.27.
Naturally our study will be influenced by our preconceptions. But what we will try to do is be aware of when it is getting to subjective and try to see things from the other parts perspective. It is quite obvious that it’s impossible to be completely objective when executing a study. Therefore the stress of awareness, because that enables us to step out of our own shoes and see it from the counterpart or respondents point of view. Positivism speaks about the importance of awareness regarding ones preconceptions. It also states the importance of being able to put those preconceptions a side to fully be able to understand the other parts perspective.

We are not trying to interpret answers, rather numbers and strategies stated to us.

2.5 Empirical method

The way we have chosen to execute our project is to use an interview guide with both preset and open answer options, depending on the question given. We will do this over phone.

2.5.1 Definition of the study

One can argue for how this type of study should be categorized, and it would still be room for a discussion about why one did not choose the opposite category. Our definition goes, a quantitative study with a deductive approach to our questions. Meaning that we will have a deductive view on the relation between theory and research. Quantitative studies are characterized by the use of survey, more respondents (in relation to a qualitative study), deductive research approach and the use of measurable concepts.\(^\text{17}\) Of curse these are not the only characteristics of the method, but the most distinguishing ones.

2.5.2 Advantages and disadvantages with phone interviews

\textit{Advantages:}

Time, since we have a limited timetable for the research.

It’s physically impossible, because of their often distant location, for us to visit each company within our timeframe. This leads us to the next advantage, the cost benefit. It would be too expensive for us to visit each firm since we would have to pay for the trips ourselves.

A phone interview is easier to handle compared to a face to face interview, especially when it’s conducted by more then one person. It’s favorable regarding the control of disparities

\(^{17}\text{Bryman and Bell, p.86-88.}\)
between the interviewers’ different, or sometimes, incorrect approaches. With incorrect we mean, rephrasing a question or asking additional ones that’s not agreed on. And last but definitely not least phone interviews deals with another source of error, the interviewers influence on the respondent. There’s many attributes of the interviewer as a person that could affect the respondent, such as age, gender and ethnicity. This can be excluded in a survey done over phone.

Disadvantages:
The downsides of a study conducted this way are all related to the lack of live interaction between the interviewer and the respondent. Like the absence of interpretation of facial-expressions. During a face-to-face interview, with an inch of instinctive feel an interviewer could notice that a respondent is understanding a question wrong or something of that nature. With a phone interview on the other hand this would be impossible because of obvious reasons.
The fact that we will not be able to ensure to one hundred percent that we’re talking to the right person when performing the actual interview is yet another factor we took in consideration. Knowing this helped us to take action and do even more to guarantee an active search for the right person at the company in question for our survey.\(^\text{18}\)

2.5.3 Sampling

The information used in this study is gathered through a non-probability sample, more specific, a subjective sample.\(^\text{19}\) A non-probability sample is a sample where the probability is not measurable. In other words a sample were all information units do not have equal chance of getting selected. When using a subjective sample the originators of a study choose respondents on the bases of their own assessment of the population. The assessment we made was that only firms with a webpage is relevant for our study. We believe that if a company that is in the tourism industry today does not have a webpage they might also not aim for gaining market shares. Therefore they are excluded from the study.

A study made this way comes with disadvantages like everything else. The main disadvantages for this specific sampling method is; limitation of generalizing, the generalization will be based on the researchers assessments.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^\text{18}\) Bryman and Bell, p.140-141.
\(^\text{20}\) Ibid. p.97.
2.5.4 Non-response

A non-response error is when an error occurs in the empirical population one intended to study. It’s separated from sampling errors. These non-response errors are divided into two subcategories, individual non-response and partial non-response. The difference between the two is that during an individual non-response a person has chosen not to participate at all and when partial non-response the person has skipped a question or parts of a question, for example because of a sensitive topic.21

There are many reasons to why non-response errors occur; some of these reasons are;

- The respondent is not available because of various reasons.
- The interview object is not interested in participating.
- Difficulties understanding the questions.
- Technical reasons

If the non-response rate is relatively big, there might be reasons to perform a non-response analysis to figure out if it could have affected the outcome of the study. In order to perform such analysis the researcher needs background information from both the ones that did response and the ones that did not.

Our study has a non-response rate of 37 % or 26/70, which is quite high. But as will be discussed later, the firms at hand are so similar in their way of doing business that we believe that it won’t affect our study to the extent that it loses its purpose. One might ask how such a bold statement can be made, our explanation goes with the empirics as backup; most of the interviewed firms had similar thoughts and practices regarding marketing so why would the ones that weren’t available for various reasons be any different? Also, this is an exploratory study therefore we believe that it won’t affect us as it would have if for example our purpose was to generalize. The forty-four firms that did participate give close to as good of a picture as if they all participated because of previously named reasons.

2.5.5 Generalization

Since this is an explorative study we hope that it can add to existing knowledge in the field and constitute a fundament to build on for continued studies. Given our chosen sampling method generalization of our findings won’t be possible but instead we hope to be able to distinguish the broad outlines for the questions at hand. In order for research to be generalizable every individual in a population need to have as high a chance of being selected as the other for which random sampling is often used\(^{22}\).

2.6 Practical method

Our empirics were gathered during three days. The respondents were contacted in alphabetic order and the ones that could not answer on that occasion got contacted again during these three days. And the ones that did not pick up the phone, have time for the interview or not interested in participating were excluded in the study and declared in the nonresponse analysis.

We used the same interviewer for all the respondents to leave out, or at least try to, variation in the way the questions are being asked.

We’ve had a discussion amongst the two of us about whether or not we should transcribe our audio recordings of the interviews. After a while we came up with following justifications for our choice of method, not to transcribe.

- The interviews were conducted and answered in Swedish.
- This paper is intended for an English speaking audience.
- Our audio files will be available for any scrutinizer.
- Each interview took approximately 10 minutes and we conducted 44 of them. Hence, the choice not to transcribe.

2.6.1 Pilot study

Before we started conducting our interviews we executed a pilot study. The way we did it was through performing and recording two test interviews each with firms operating in the same market as our respondents to be. The reason for that is that we wanted our pilot interviews to be as close to the reality as possible. We also made sure that we both gave it a try to ensure that the most eligible for the task was chosen in order to add validity and reliability to the

\(^{22}\) Bryman and Bell, p.100.
study. The pilot interview took as long as the real ones time wise. Afterwards we found that the fact that we had done a pilot study helped us to refine and reformulate any unclear questions.

2.7 Source criticism

Our study is based on both primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources have been the people we interviewed and primary, the literature we read and used. This literature is found both printed and online.

Primary sources
These can be divided in to printed and online sources. The printed sources we’ve used are books and articles. The books that have been used are the ones that are recommended for business classes here at the university such as, Bryman & Bell and Kotler amongst others. But we have also used books and articles that are aimed towards this type of study.

One can argue for the objectivity of these sources but we’ll leave it at saying, at least when it comes to books, the broader a books field of study is increases the objectivity of the same.

Online sources are more difficult to analyse we believe, since these can vary completely depending on the viewpoint of the author. For example, the information we took from Visit Sweden, the Swedish Ecotourism Society and Nature's Best's homepage can be seen as slightly or completely bias since they are describing themselves. To weigh this up we have also searched and used info about these organisations from independent sources.

Secondary Sources
Without having absolute numbers, some of our respondents were more “involved” and “aware” of their marketing then others. These respondents gave more input to the study then their “non-aware” counterparts. With more input we mean, that they had additional information about the market and competition.

Thus, respondents with less knowledge of the market and competition had more diffuse and irrational answers to the questions given. Therefore we came to the conclusion; with increasing knowledge level (regarding the market and competition) comes an increasing value of ones answers, in this study at least.
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

"It is the theory that decides what can be observed." – Albert Einstein

Theory, similar to glasses, help to focus on what is important in the material gathered. This chapter aims to provide the necessary framework for our forthcoming discussion and will present theories necessary for the forthcoming analysis of data.

3.1 Marketing Research

We are all consumers and we are also different. If this is true then a company reasonably, in order to be successful, need to differentiate its offerings to broad spectra of needs and wants of consumers.23 This is where marketing research enters the picture. The goal of marketing research is to identify and communicate threats, opportunities and performance of the firm.24 Conducting marketing research in the tourism industry is similar marketing research in other consumer oriented industries and can be divided into the below categories:25

3.1.1 Analysis of the market

Good market information is a prerequisite for informed business decisions and essential for good marketing planning. A company will, with the starting point in market analysis, be able to make more informed decisions by knowing where they stand compared to their competitors and through increased awareness of their customers’ preferences26.

3.1.2 Consumer research

Consumer research is traditionally based on surveys of existing and potential customers, taking on a quantitative approach. These studies can provide a guide to the consumers’ motivations but are rarely, if ever, able to describe consumers’ attitudes. To assess the later

23 Kotler et al. (2005), p.31.
24 Kotler et al. (2003), pp.147-173.
26 Aaker et al. (2005), p.4.
quantitative studies are more common. This type of study more often use open-end question than do qualitative and is therefore also more time-consuming, both during the survey itself and the subsequent analysis. 27

3.1.3 Price and product studies
The price level together with offered product reflects the business strategy. Small firms rarely enjoy the scale production benefits of their larger counterparts and instead have to rely on product differentiation and customized service offerings. A low price isn’t necessarily a key to success. Rather price and product have to be compatible with the business strategy meaning that if a small company manager choose to assign premium prices to their products it is essential that the companies’ human capital is on a corresponding level so that the company can deliver accordingly. 28

3.1.4 Sales and promotion research
Measuring sales and promotion effectiveness include information about for example how many customers a certain promotional activity rendered or the average order size that was the result from a certain campaign. Knowledge about the effectiveness of various promotional activities is essential for good decision making. Given the cost of marketing and the often large number of stakeholders in many of today’s businesses this information fulfils an important role. The described research process is formalized in many larger businesses whereas smaller business management generally don’t research this topic very deeply, instead relying more on estimations and intuitive feeling in their choice of market communication medias. 29

3.1.5 Distribution research
Consensus to the benefits of adapting a more cooperative approach to advertising is growing stronger and there are numerous examples where collaboration in this field has proved mutually beneficial. It is of great interest to firms to know how effective information is transferred to the potential customer, be that display of tourism flyers in a tourist bureau downtown or other marketing activities.

27 Middleton et al. (2001), p..
With the birth of the Internet the playing field changed very rapidly. Firms vending online products or services have been able to cut the number of intermediaries dramatically but the importance of information about distribution remains.\(^{30}\)

### 3.1.6 Evaluation of performance

Did any campaign or approach fair better than others and if so why is that? How do customers perceive our products and are they satisfied with them? For the small tourist firm this evaluation can often be carried out in an informal manner through direct interaction with clients but is, for this reason, not less important a tool for measuring performance.\(^{31}\)

### 3.1.7 Marketing research: why bother?

Tourism attractions can be either supply or demand-side oriented and research has shown that northern Scandinavia, with few exceptions, is supply-oriented meaning that the entrepreneur typically gets into the tourism business to show what s/he think is interesting rather than what the market actually demands.\(^{32}\)

Small companies typically don’t see marketing research as a strategic tool for planning but rather as a default means of selling.\(^{33}\) Young firms are also typically short of marketing experience and the result of their marketing is often accordingly.\(^{34}\) Research by Timmons suggest a discontinuance rate for new ventures of up to 70 percent and a decreased discontinuance rate of up to 60 percent for firms that do conduct a professional marketing analysis.\(^{35}\)

Small firms operate on a financial razor’s edge and first and foremost have to rely on general knowledge since professional consulting comes at a cost. Adding to the equation we have the fact that small firms are more susceptible to mistakes in the line of doing business.\(^{36}\) Can small business afford not to undertake market research?

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\(^{32}\) Brown and Hall, (1997).
\(^{33}\) Murdoch et al. (2001).
\(^{34}\) Gruber, M. (2004).
\(^{35}\) Timmons, J.A. (1999).
\(^{36}\) Weinrauch et al. (1991)
3.2 Segmentation

Very few companies have enough resources to address the whole market at the same time. It is much more cost-efficient to address a homogenous group – a segment – of the market. Segmentation is the process of dividing the market into subgroups in order to better meet identified demands of the consumers and some even claim that “market segmentation is the point of origin for all tourism marketing”37.

3.2.1 Niche marketing

A market analysis will help to discern market segments that are underdeveloped and where a specialized actor can enjoy a competitive advantage. While large firms are forced to fall back on mass marketing smaller firms are better suited to quickly step into and serve niches. Consumers that desire custom products or services are often prepared to actively search for information themselves making heavy spending on marketing less important for the niche company. However, if the company hasn’t differentiated its products or services sufficiently or wisely the risk involved with having all eggs in the same basket – aiming for a single market niche - is significant.38

3.3 Market communication

The goal of marketing is to make a company’s products stand out in order to convince the consumer to choose a certain product or service in place of another. The marketing of a service is, as we will see, more complex than the marketing of a product.

3.3.1 Destination marketing

Products and services have their place on the market because they are the answer to a need that the consumers either have or will discover that they have. The classical tool for product marketing is Kotler’s four P’s model – place, price, product and promotion: the marketing mix – but since destination marketing involves experiences, services and products the marketing consequently differ from that of tangible products.39

Destinations, to their nature, require an on location consumption on a specific time. Vacation days can’t be returned in case of a non-satisfying trip and that the overall experience is a

39 Kotler et al. (2005), pp.633-651.
product of multiple factors, in all giving the destinations’ reputation a key role in the consumer’s decision making.\textsuperscript{40}

There are two approaches to destination marketing; a \textit{promotional strategy} in which the firm market itself using internal resources and competences - an approach that demand relatively large resources. The other option is the \textit{facilitation strategy} which describes how a firm can join forces with for example a destination marketing organisation (DMO) such as a tourism board.\textsuperscript{41} Tourism firms have typically already decided on their products before making contact with the DMO. To overcome the problem of not controlling the elements in the marketing mix cooperation is a necessity and this will also help widen the domain and the interest in the destination\textsuperscript{42}.

\subsubsection*{3.3.2 Cooperation vs. competition}

Scarce resources are returning problems when it comes to destination marketing and a cooperative approach can be a plausible solution. There are several advantages to sharing expertise, capital and other resources and this is also becoming increasingly common within the tourism industry. Small firms should focus on what they do well and cooperate on all other issues\textsuperscript{43}. Throwing spanners in the works for cooperation among firms is the fact that tourism firms often are geographically proximate and therefore able to offer resembling products which will obstruct any attempt to cooperation\textsuperscript{44}.

Another problem is that if some, but not all, firms on a specific location team-up for marketing also those that don’t participate will benefit from the campaign. There’s also a prevalent risk that the communicated image will be highly fragmented if each firm market themselves on their own. Marketing is furthermore likely to be unnecessarily costly this way, both in terms of money and effort.\textsuperscript{45}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{40} Gustavsson \textit{et al.}, (1997)
\item \textsuperscript{41} Blumberg, K. (2005)
\item \textsuperscript{42} Fyall \textit{et al.} (2005) p.286.
\item \textsuperscript{43} Björk and Virtanen (2005)
\item \textsuperscript{44} Jansson and Müller, (2007), p.11.
\item \textsuperscript{45} Palmer and Bejou, (1995)
\end{itemize}
3.3.3 Destinations and visitors

Stanley Plog developed a model for the tourism industry which delineates individuals’ personalities along a normally distributed curve. At the one extreme we have the psychocentrics who are adventure adverse and on the other end there is the self-confident allocentrics who feel bored by visiting locations that are explored already. In between these two we have the majority of travellers - the mid-centric.

The allocentrics are paving the way for a destinations development and the psychocentrics are those who travel to the destination when it is well explored. An awareness of which phase the destination is in is important for deciding the destination marketing mix.

3.3.4 Word of mouth

Word of mouth is the appellation for passing of information in a non-commercial purpose. This form of interaction has been portrayed as particularly trustworthy because it derives from a third party therefore running a lower risk of bias. The third party in this case is often a friend or a colleague who tailor information in accordance with what s/he thinks you are interested in knowing. Researchers have shown a greater inclination to tell about negative experiences than vice versa. Word of mouth travels fast and recalling the preference to passing on negative information word of mouth becomes something of great importance.

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47 Silverman, G, (2001)
3.3.5 The Internet as a marketing tool

In the early days of the Internet predictions were made that small firms, from that point on, would be able to compete on a similar terms as their larger counterparts but is this the case? More financial muscles still opens doors for communication with any given market.48

3.3.6 Relationship Marketing

This theory is built on a belief of creating more value for the consumer. The way this should be done varies between the thinkers in this area of marketing. But one thing that’s clear throughout the field is the belief of expanding ones thinking when it comes to how the business ones in should be defined. Grönroos divides marketing into two different ways of approaching your product or service.49

*Relationship marketing*- perspective based on cooperation to promote communally value-in-use.

*Transaction marketing*- perspective based on exchange of developed products for money.

The difference between these two perspective is quite obvious, one promotes value creating and the other just the actual transaction. To further explain this you could say that transaction marketing emanates from a mass-market were the consumer is anonymous. The goal with this perspective is to make the customer choose a particular brand over another one. What this creates is a competitive situation between customer and marketer, were the customer is seen as someone you’re doing something *to*, instead of someone your doing something *for* which ultimately leads to conflicting interests between the two.50

The benchmark is that the customer does not really want to buy, he or she has to be persuaded to it.

Relationship marketing on the other hand is about creating value in cooperation with supplier and customer. The key word being cooperation, instead of competition.

The purpose with this type of marketing is to identify, create and sustain customers. It also states, improve and if necessary liquidate relations with consumers and others. All this so that everybody involved feels that their economic and non-economic, but relevant, goals is fulfilled. And how you do this is by mutual exchange and fulfilling promises.

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3.3.7 Portfolio Analysis

Although many claims that this analysis is quite obvious and therefore needs less attention we feel the need to explain it further since it is so crucial, specially in the initial phase of a product or service. It allows managers to link the overall strategy of the company with those of its parts. It is also a way for managers at different levels to assess the profitability of a certain part of the business, which ultimately leads to more effectiveness for each branch.

The way it is done is by identifying the key businesses of the organization, these are then called Strategic Business Unit (SBU). SBU:s are a unit in the organization that has separate agenda compared to the rest of the company, this so each SBU can be planned and implemented separately. Next step is to estimate the attractiveness of each SBU so managers can pick and choose which one or ones to develop etc.51

3.3.8 Affinity marketing

Affinity marketing is a concept that is used when a company uses a third part to get out with their marketing. One might ask why a company would do that, the answer is plain and simple; the third party has an existing trust between them and the customer. Affinity can roughly be explained as relationship, the ability to use an individual’s connection with a group and its values and norms to your favour. When you put together the terms affinity and marketing you will get a concept that aims towards satisfying the customer both on an individual level and group level52. Affinity marketing differs from other kinds of marketing in three different ways.

1. The biggest difference is that when using affinity marketing the company is using existing relations between the customer and third party. Through this the credibility of your message increases since it is third party, with pre-existing relation with the consumer that is recommending you.

2. Another difference is that there is a mutual benefit for the company and third party since third party usually gets” a piece of the pie”. For example an insurance company that uses a bank to market them self also places money in that bank.

51 Kotler et al. (2005), p.60.
3. A third difference is that the company is trying to create a value increase through different advantages for group members, the advantages can be both monetary and non-monetary. All this in order to increase the feeling of group belonging and exclusivity.\textsuperscript{53}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{affinity_marketing_process.png}
\caption{Affinity marketing process.\textsuperscript{54}}
\end{figure}

There are three different levels to affinity, these different levels are declared below;

1. True affinity is when the company is trying to meet up to all three features of affinity marketing. This kind of affinity is characteristic for groups with a big group belonging, such as teachers and veterinarians.

2. Modest affinity is a more passive form of affinity where the focus is on increasing value.

3. Trivial affinity is the most passive form of the three. Increasing value is important here too but with this form it is done through personal advantages and offers since group belonging is marginal.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p.140.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 141
\textsuperscript{55} Blomqvist et al. (2004), p. 142
3.4 To sum up

- A destination doesn’t consist of one single product but several; each priced, produced and supplied by different actors.

- Information is the starting point for sound decision making and analysing the market essential for this very reason. Studies suggest that professional marketing research dramatically decreases the failure rate for new ventures.

- Small firms don’t enjoy large scale benefits and are therefore better of differentiating. Targeting a small segment of the market can give the firm a competitive advantage, decrease competition and give the firm more leeway in price setting.

- Marketing with joint forces has several advantages but cooperation is often hindered by the fact that many firms offer substitutable products and therefore see each other as competitors.

- A destination attracts different personality types - psychocentrics, allocentrics and midcentrics - depending on the phase that the destination is in.

- Reputation plays an important role in prospective tourists’ decision making because of the immaterial characteristic of the experience that a destination constitutes.

- Research has pointed at a predilection to passing on negative information making word-of-mouth something very important to relate to in a good way.

- The Internet has opened a world of possibilities. Alas, economical muscles still today enhance marketing possibilities leaving large and small players on different play fields.

- There are two approaches to marketing:
  - Promotional strategy - marketing carried using internal resources and competences.
  - Facilitation strategy - cooperation with other e.g. DMOs for marketing.
• Firms can be either demand-oriented, offering what the market asks for or supply-oriented, choosing the product portfolio from what is at hand and what is of interest. Research asserts the latter to be predominant in northern Scandinavia.

• Relationship Marketing promotes communally value-in-use. Hence, based on cooperation between customer and salesman.

• Portfolio Analysis allows managers to link the overall strategy of the company with those of its parts. This is done through identifying the companies SBU:s

• The use of third party in ones marketing is called affinity marketing and has showed to be effective for some businesses, since they are then using an existing relation/trust between third party and the potential customer.
4. EMPIRICAL DATA

“The goal is to transform data into information, and information into insight.” – Carly Fiorina

This chapter will present the result of the interviews ordered by the type of question. Please refer to the Appendix for presentation of raw data.

4.1 Presentation of empirical data

[Background questions]

Question 1.
In question one we’re after how many business-owners that is active in other markets besides tourism, our empirical gathering showed 13. Meaning, 13 respondents are active in other markets. These other markets are forestry, consulting (both in their own market and others), agriculture, media, education and electronics.

Question 2.
Q2 tries to distinguish whether the respondents offers additional activities except hunting and fishing, which were the criteria in order to participate in this study. And what our data showed was that 32 out of 44 participants offered other activities. The average of offered activities was 1,7. Another important number that falls under this question is the total number of offered activities that turned out to be 74.

Question 3.
Q3 takes on the length of the season. This ranged from two months to a full year, with a majority on full year. The scatter for this variable is presented below;
**Empirical data**

**Figure 3. Length of season.**

**Question 4.**

Q4 talks about how many people that is engaged in the tourism business of the company, during season. A great majority (36/44) of the respondents stated that number to be under 4 people. A more specified list of answers to this question follows;

**Figure 4. Number of persons employed during season.**

**Question 5.**

Q5 is aimed towards finding out the experience level of our respondents. The question goes, *how long have you been active in the tourism business?* And as we expected this was very spread amongst the business owners. It ranged between less then a year to 30 years of experience. The spread is presented below;
[Market Research]

**Question 6 & 7.**
Q6 and Q7 deals with the respondents’ opinion on market research. Q6 is asking whether they used one before starting the business and Q7 whether they think it is a must or not. Only 23% (10/44 respondents) stated that they used a market research before start whilst 40% stated that market research is a must. Regarding Q7, the rest was divided evenly between no (30%) and don’t know (30%).

**Question 8.**
This question tries to distinguish the deciding factors for why they chose their offered services. The question listed three different factors and a fourth saying other reason. The listed factors were market research, former interest/hobby, availability and other reason. The respondents were free to pick as many of these as they wanted.

We were unsurprised to find out that 56% presented former interest/hobby as main factor followed by availability with 20% and other reason with 18%. We were on the other hand surprised that only 6% stated market research as a deciding factor. The other reason alternative was followed up with the question, *what?* Here the respondents stated demand, relocation, market experience and sustentation.

**Question 9.**
Q9 builds on to Q8, here we are trying to determine what the deciding factor/s were for their set price. Four options were presented to choose from. Market research, competitive analysis, own price-setting and other reason. 54 % of the respondents stated own price-setting as a deciding factor. Another 38 % listed competitive analysis as deciding factor and last but not least 8 % claimed market research as a deciding factor. An unexpected feature was that none of the respondents stated other reason in this question.

**Question 10.**
This question tries to determine whether the respondents think that new marketing activities should be based on former marketing. What the data gathered shows us is that 27 % (12/44) of them disagrees with the given statement. Hence 73 % (32/44) agrees and think that “new marketing should be based on prior marketing”.

**[Market Segmentation]**

**Question 11.**
This question was designed in order for us to receive information about their consumers. The question asked for who their customer is considering age, gender, nationality and target group. During the empirical gathering we found out that most respondents did not have a clear picture about this so we decided not to use the few useful results we got since we feel that that would be misleading and misleading information.

**Question 12.**
Like the previous question this one tries to distinguish customer information. More specifically, country and region of origin. Here the respondent is obviously free to name as many countries as he or she pleases. The spread is presented below:
Empirical data

Customers country of origin

Figure 6. Customers country of origin.

Question 13.
Q13 deals with competition and differentiation. The question goes, what separates you from your competitors? The main diversification factor according to the respondents was service with 45% (20/44). Another important percentage we came over in this question was the fact that 34% (15/44) stated that they did not have anything that separates them from their competitors. Nature 16% (7/44) and environmental thinking 5% (2/44) was also presented as diversifying features.

[Market Communication]

Question 14 & 15.
Magazine ads were used by roughly one out of three companies with a preference to advertising in branch press over every day newspapers. Advertising in conjunction to an article was considered advantageous. 17 out of 44 companies were dissatisfied with magazine advertising. All the interviewed companies market themselves using the Internet and the overall attitude towards the web is positive. The company website was mentioned as a marketing tool by almost every company. Search engine optimization, Google Ad words and reciprocal linking where the other online marketing methods mentioned. Two companies were dissatisfied with Internet advertising.
More than half of the interviewed companies have experience from participating in trade fairs. Today six of the companies market themselves on trade fairs whereas 18 of the firms ranked this as the least satisfying marketing channel employed. Comments were that right approached and exposed to the proper audience this could be an effective marketing channel. A clear majority of these companies were dissatisfied with the end return on investment in fairs.

Marketing bureaus split the companies into two camps. Out of 28 companies that have cooperated with a bureau 10 were dissatisfied whereas 18 were satisfied. Mouth to mouth marketing followed the Internet in popularity. 32 companies employ mouth to mouth marketing. None of the companies were dissatisfied with this marketing form.

One of the companies used video in their marketing mix. One company claimed not to carry out any marketing what so ever despite the readily available company website. 10 out of the total number of companies weren’t dissatisfied with any marketing method.

![Marketing channels employed today](image_url)
Question 16.
All the companies strived for a long-term customer relationship. On the follow-up question, about their strategy to achieve this, newsletters to clients, personal relationships/contact with customers throughout the year and discounts to returning customers were mentioned. 28 out of 44 companies said that long-term customer relationships are maintained if customers are happy with their experience. These companies didn’t however state an explicit strategy how to reach that goal.

Question 17.
A clear majority of the companies, 34 out of 44 companies, pictured a positive development of visiting clients along with an increasing awareness of the companies’ activities. A few companies said not to believe in an increase of visitors given increasing awareness. One comment to this was an intended increase of the price level in order to maintain number of visitors on a steady level.

Question 18.
Marketing expenditure is fairly evenly distributed more or less one quarter of the companies in each of the expenditure segments provided.

Question 19 & 20.
Three quarters of the companies cooperate with other companies in the same business to market themselves. Shared marketing activities were the most common way of cooperating and exchange of customers the second most common. Price discounts were yet another
widespread way of cooperating. A quarter of all companies cooperate using a mixture of the three methods discussed.

**Question 21 & 22.**
Just about every second, 21 out of 44, companies have experience from marketing through one or several of: Visit Sweden, The Swedish Ecotourism Society or Nature’s Best. On a scale where 1 is equal to *not satisfied* and 5 equals *excellent*, the rating given to Visit Sweden averaged 2.9, very similar to the average of 2.8 given to The Swedish Ecotourism Society but both higher than the 2.6 awarded to Nature’s Best. Two respondents chose not to rate Nature’s Best since they were on the point of departure for cooperation.

**[Level of Ambition]**

**Question 23.**
Out of 44 respondents 39 companies answered affirmative on the question whether they will be active in ten years from today. The spontaneous comment from a few of the companies answering in the negative on this question concerned old age and retirement.

Out of the 39 companies 23 thought that the number of employees would have increased ten years from today whereas 35 looked positive onto the total number of customers by the same time whereas the number of activities offered was though to have increased in two thirds of the companies interviewed.
Empirical data

**Question 24.**
The reason for venturing into the tourism business varies, as seen in figure 9.

![Figure 9. Reasons for venturing into the tourism business.](image)

The two prevailing reasons for starting-up a firm were the vision of being self employed and *other reasons* than the stated alternatives. On the follow-up question regarding what this reason might be motives such as growing a hobby activity, a rejected job application, complement to other activities/jobs, market demand and a perception of the tourism business being underdeveloped were mentioned.
5. ANALYSIS

“The analysis of the thing is not the thing itself.” – Aaron Allston

In this chapter we will analyse the empirical result, presented in the previous chapter, with the starting point in our theoretical framework constituting a spring board for our conclusions, the chapter the follows.

5.1 Data analysis

[Background questions]

The first question in the interview guide is trying to establish if our respondents are active in other markets except tourism. This is of relevance according to us because it allows us to see if the respondents have their full focus on tourism or if they are simultaneously active in other markets. If the last named is the case it might affect their ambition level, regarding the tourism part of their business. What our data showed was that 13 out of 44 respondents where active in other markets. A majority of those markets, all named in the empirical part, are compatible with the tourism business.

Secondly we wanted to know what and how many other activities they offered except hunting and fishing. This in order to estimate if the number of offered activities is in correlation with season length and employed during season. That was our starting point, but with time and the data in our hands we realized that this would not be possible since the answers weren’t consistent. We received a variety of non-compatible answers, therefore we decided not to emphasize this question.

The length of the season is yet another factor we studied, our empirics showed that 30 out of 44 of our interviewed companies season lasts for six months or more. And 16 out these 30 companies have a 12 month season. This number turned out to be greater then we expected.
As we expected a great majority (17/44) of the interviewed businesses were a one man show meaning that the person we spoke to was the only person active in the company. The reason we expected this was because according to our preconceptions the “normal peripheral tourism business” is operated by its originator. Another data that’s worth mentioning is the fact that 36 out of 44 companies had three or less people active within the company. What we believe this tells us is that the industry is family oriented in the sense that if a company has more then one person employed it’s most likely a spouse to the person in question.

Experience is also something we studied. The results we got told us that 30 out of 44 businesses had between 0-12 years of experience and the rest had between 13-30 years. The reason for asking our respondents this question is that we think that, how long a business has been active affects the kind of people it attracts. As presented in theory part under Stanley’s Plog. Stanley’s Plog illustrates how a destination attracts different kinds of individuals depending on what stage that particular destination is in, it also speaks of the importance of adjusting ones marketing accordingly.

[Market research]
In our study we asked for whether or not the company had used a market research before start and if they think it is a must to use market research. According to our theories, knowledge about the market ones in is essential for running a successful business. What our empirics showed was that a great majority (77%) of the respondents had not performed an actual market research before starting their business. But surprisingly 40 % said that they think it is a must in order to run a successful business. What this tells is that the business owners might have a jaggy view of the market were they see themselves as set apart from “the rest”. In the sense that they don’t feel they need market researching because of their personal skills in the field, but everybody else should use it. As presented in the theory, small firms does not have big marginal to play on which builds up the belief of general knowledge as main indicator to whether or not the market is recipient to what they are offering. Often small firms can not survive mistakes in the line of doing business. So, as asked in the theory, can small firms really afford not to undertake market research? We’ll leave that discussion to the conclusion part of the study.
As discussed in theory the Scandinavian tourism market is supply-based, meaning that the business owner supplies whatever interests him or her. Our data strengthens this theory because of the fact that 56% of our respondents stated former interest/hobby as main reason for their offered services. The rest was spread amongst the options with availability coming in as second biggest reason for starting the business, with 20% of the respondents’ answers.

Pricing is discussed, in the theory, as a reflection of the companies’ business strategy. It is stated that the level on the price isn’t of any significance to how the service or product is perceived by the customer. Rather how compatible price and product/service are with the set out business strategy. Our data showed that 54% of the interviewed firms used own price-setting and another 38% stated competitive analysis as deciding factor for the price. This tells us that the respondents might have had a non-favourable approach to their pricing. Were they haven’t made an aware choose to combine the quality of the overall experience with their set price. This since the number of respondents who had market research as reference point to their price level was just 6%.

Marketing has been considered as a tool which one can use in order to gain bigger revenues. In order to maximize profit with the use of different marketing tools one should be aware of what earlier marketing has contributed to the firms revenues. Our respondents seem to agree with us on that point since the empirics showed that 73% agrees with the statement “evaluation of current marketing constitutes the basis for deciding future marketing activities”.

[Market Segmentation]
Our interviewed companies’ consumers were spread all over the world, with Sweden, England and Germany as main countries of origin. This is also reflected in the chose of arena for their marketing. All of our respondents market themselves online, 72% also uses the word-of-mouth method and another 41% use marketing bureaus as well.

The level of service was the most frequent reply to the question of the one distinguishing quality for the respondents company compared to their competitors’. Remarkable was that 7 out of the 44 companies considered nature to be the key differentiating factor despite the fact
that many of these companies are geographically proximate hence should face, at least to some extent, comparable natural surroundings.

Noteworthy is also the fact that more than a quarter of the companies weren’t aware of anything that put them ahead of the competition implying either little knowledge of the market or intention to differentiate.

[Market Communication]

Internet usage for marketing has increased dramatically the last couple of years but pointing at the fact that all the respondents have a company website isn’t relevant even though one could argue that this is very likely to be the case for firms similar to those interviewed. Significant though is the fact that the Internet was the second most satisfying marketing channel (2 out of 44 were dissatisfied with it) showing proof of its strength. The stronger the financial muscles the more the possibilities for effective marketing, on the Internet and elsewhere, but it interesting to see the positive attitude to marketing on the Internet despite the fact that all these companies market themselves on a strictly limited budget. The Internet has clearly gained recognition as an effective marketing channel. Of interest is also the popularity of word of mouth, by theory portrayed as a very powerful marketing tool. None of the companies were dissatisfied with word of mouth marketing.

Customers matter, without them no company would be able to stay in business. Our respondent, in full numbers, said to make every effort for maintaining long-term customer relationships thus working for the customer - relationship marketing - rather than seeing the customer as merely a means of transaction. The follow-up question enquired how the long-term customer relationship strive is expressed where to continuous contact with clients was mentioned as important. However, 28 out of 44 respondents weren’t able to pinpoint or didn’t have an active strategy.

A clear majority of our respondents were convinced that customer turnout would increase in pace with a growing awareness of their company and its’ services. Yet, a handful of the firms were hesitant that this would be the case clarifying their reasoning by an aspiration to constantly escalate the price level to maintain a constant customer base i.e. adjusting the price/product relationship.
Even though our respondents marketing expenditure demonstrated joint variation the annual outlay on marketing is relatively modest, of course depending on one’s point of reference. Few would argue that a five digit spending on marketing is sufficient for addressing the whole market at once. On the other hand, companies choosing the segmentation or niche marketing route could do just fine with this marketing budget but in this light the slight suspicion to marketing research, as discussed earlier, doesn’t quite coincide. Analysing and knowing your marketing is, if not a necessity, than at least of great help for decision making.

Three out of four respondents have teamed up with other companies in the tourism business to market themselves, cooperation taking form in a variety of ways. The advantages to cooperation are many why this augurs well for these companies’ future.

Sweden has walked at the head of labelling ecological journeys but firms aren’t overly enthusiastic is seems. Although our data suggest a constructive cooperation Swedish Ecotourism Society and less so with Visit Sweden and Nature’s Best, it is dangerous to draw any definite conclusions as the number of observations is relatively low.

[Level of Ambition]
Theory suggests that most of the investigated firms are in business for lifestyle motives, to finance a hobby, rather than for strictly economic-rational reasons. If this is true then these firms should be reluctant to expansion. Five out of all respondents held unlikely that they would be active ten years from now due to age reasons. Of the other 39 respondent 16 firms vision the number of employees as unchanged at that point in time giving support to Muller’s theory. On the other hand the theory is challenged by the predominant wish of adding more attractions to the company’s portfolio of services. Data also indicate widespread faith in an increasing number of visitors over time. In line with our earlier discussions a lion share, 28 out of 44, of the firms under loupe employ two persons possibly suggesting that many of these firms are run within the family.

Neither family nor unemployment appears to have played a key part in the decision to venture into the tourism business. Instead, the prospect of self-employment has been the most important reason for 21 of the firms. Of interest are also those 16 respondents who stated another reason for their company start-up. A number of respondents voiced the importance played by the outlook of pursuing an earlier interest, supporting the supply theory, whereas
only one respondent asserted engagement because of the perception of an underdeveloped market advocating the demand theory.
6. CONCLUSIONS

"You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink" – John Heywood

This chapter presents our conclusions drawn from the analysis of our empirical material. In order to recap the purpose of this study we will state it once more; to look at how small tourism firms situated in the upper northern half of Sweden are marketing themselves today and to explore their knowledge of causal relationships in their marketing.

6.1 Conclusions

The aim of this exploratory study has been to determine how our chosen small tourism firms operate, marketing wise that is. It sought to do this in two ways; finding out what their marketing practices are, and to what extent they are aware of causal relationship in their marketing. Through our questions we found that the common marketing arenas for our respondent were, in chronological order, the internet, mouth-to-mouth and marketing bureaus. The internet was used by all, mouth to mouth by 32 out of 44 and last but not least marketing bureaus with an 18 out of 44 usage.

As our purpose and research questions propose, we’re after identifying our respondents “approach to marketing”. We had a question in our interview guide that said “evaluation of current marketing constitutes the basis for deciding future marketing activities”, that question deals directly with our second research question. The ratio amongst our respondents regarding this yes or no question was 32 to 12. What that tells us is that 32 out of 44 respondents seems to acknowledge the fact that a marketing tool or marketing project should not “stand alone” but rather be combined with other tools or projects. Through that one will receive better outcome. Another conclusion in the study is the one about cooperation and the respondents view on the same. Thirty-three of our respondents cooperate with others active in the same industry to market themselves, whilst just eleven did not. The cooperation constituted of price discounts, exchange of customers, shared marketing activities and of course a combination of
all of the above. That tells us that most of our interview objects are aware of the benefits that come with cooperation, such as mutual customer increase. Not saying that all cooperation leads to greater outcome, but that is what the majority of marketing theories and textbooks tell us. The fact that 33 of the interviewed firms stated own interest/hobby as the deciding factor for their offered services is yet another conclusion in the study. In conclusion we would like to bring up the concept market research, here the majority of our respondents (34/44) stated that they did not execute one before start up. Meanwhile they also stated in the following question of the interview guide that they believe market research is a necessity. The conclusion we made about that is, the respondents seems to think that firms should undertake market research with the exception of themselves.
7. DISCUSSION

"I never discuss discussions" – Dag Hammarskjöld

This chapter will present suggestions a discussion about our findings, the study’s reliability and validity to round of with a few suggestions for future research.

7.1 Discussion of conclusions

The fact that three out of four firms have overcome the discussed obstacles to cooperation and teamed up with other companies in order to market themselves is good news and we can nothing but encourage them to continue wandering along the chosen path.

A yearly marketing expenditure of five digit numbers of Swedish kronor isn’t very impressive in a broader context, yet sufficient, when well spent. We believe that the current usage of mouth-to-mouth and Internet marketing are reasonable from not only a cost perspective but also the fact that many of the interviewed firms turn towards an international audience. This target market also supports the lower success from utilizing magazines and trade fairs for marketing and we believe that this marketing mix is adequate under these circumstances.

A majority of the interviewed companies are supply-based, family run, businesses for which the firm is emanating from the business owners’ interest rather than marketing research. What the market demands and one’s personal interests indeed coincide at times and yes; people do win the lottery, but knowing the market and offering what it asks for increases the odds of success manifold.

Almost twice as many of our respondents held marketing research as a necessity for successful business as those that actually had undertaken marketing research before start-up. Is this possibly due to hindsight? We think so. Analysing a market can be done in a number of
ways and how the information is gather isn’t as important as actually collecting it. Pushing forward without knowing your market greatly increases the risk of failure. We believe in information as a competitive tool and therefore consider unawareness of the market one is operating in to be a problem.

The third most frequent reply to the one distinguishing factor that put the interviewed company owners ahead of the competition was nature. Many of these firms are de facto geographically proximate and nature is therefore hardly unique for each and every company. The second most common answer to what made their company better than their competitors’ was that they didn’t know. This was striking to learn but both these answers support our theory that quite a few of the companies are unaware of their market situation, something that may have difficult consequences.

The most frequent reply in regard to unique characteristic for the respondents’ company was the level of service. Utilization and awareness of a tool for competition is pleasing; but 20 companies that each is better than their competitors? Someone is either lying or talking through their hat. To their defence should be said that customers can hardly compare various companies’ level of service but we believe that stating level of service as a main competitive tool is blue eyed and also something that reflects lack of information about the market.

Our respondents, in full numbers, said to work for long-term customer relationships. Yet, a clear majority didn’t have an active strategy how to reach this goal. Fortuna may be benevolent but even her grace has its’ limits. There appears to be a lack of conscious navigation towards company goals, exceptions confirming the rule.

Small firms often have small budgets and suffer from big mistakes. Increased information about the market will decrease the risk of backing the wrong horse. The question isn’t as much whether companies can afford to analyse the market as whether they can afford not to.

**7.2 Quality criteria**

Social science, as a discipline, at times has to endure scorn and derision for being influenced by the researcher’s judgments. To counteract this, in order to ensure the quality of this study, we below present two important tools for assessing the reliability and validity of our findings.
7.2.1 Reliability

If repeating a research procedure on different occasions yields the same results and the same observations are made a finding is said to be reliable\textsuperscript{56}. Linking this to our study measures we have taken for ensuring reliability are:

- Pilot study to ensure the quality of the questionnaire.
- Standardized procedure for deciding what number to call and contact person.
- Standardized interviewing procedure and the same person asking the questions throughout the entire study.
- Guaranteeing the respondents anonymity.
- Recorded all telephone calls, which vouches for correct transcribing of data.
- Provided full insight to our entire research process.

7.2.2 Validity

The concept of validity refers to the extent in which a study is able to answer a research question judged on both the collection of data and the subsequent analysis i.e. does the findings really provided a measure for what they seek to measure\textsuperscript{57}.

By thoroughly ploughing current state-of-the-art marketing theories, only presenting you those that deal with the questions at hand, we have placed the high jump bar high up in the air. Being positivistic inclined we wish to avoid that our preconceptions affect the outcome. Also, by being aware of this risk we have gone great lengths to avoid our personal values to influence.

It is our firm belief that all these measures together, to the best of our knowledge, hold promise of a high quality level for the research in question

7.3 Suggestions for future research

We have now brought to light a selection of marketing tools that are used by small companies in the tourism business. However, there still remain gaps in knowledge to be bridged and we’d therefore like to flag for a few that would make interesting starting points for future research.

\textsuperscript{56} Bryman and Bell p.163.
\textsuperscript{57} Bryman and Bell p.165.
The focus of this study has been operative companies but while the importance of marketing research for successful business has been emphasized this study hasn’t taken discontinued firms into consideration. Doing this would be interesting and also necessary for a further scrutinize the importance of marketing research.

A more profound study that explored the actual return on investment on a selection of marketing activities would also be very interesting reading. Another interesting approach would be to include customers’ perception of the respective companies. Investigating the other side of the coin would permit further knowledge creation through the evaluation of among other various marketing channels effectiveness.

Yet another approach would be a comparative study between, on the one hand, companies that do ascribe constant marketing analysis great importance and, on the other hand, companies that do not. Such a study could bring forward an assessment of the causal economical relationship between really knowing one’s business and pitching in the dark.
List of references

Printed sources


Brown, F., Hall, D., (1997), *Case studies of tourism in peripheral areas - Proceedings from an international seminar on Bornholm*. Bornholms Forskningscenter, Bornholm.


List of references


**Electronic sources**

Nature’s Best. www.naturensbasta.com
Nutek - the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth. www.nutek.se


Svensk Turism. www.svenskturism.se

TIES - The International Ecotourism society. www.ecotourism.org

TSES - The Swedish Ecotourism Society. www.ekoturism.org

Visit Sweden. www.visitsweden.com
APPENDIX

Interview guide (Swedish)
Mitt namn är namn och jag studerar på Handelshögskolan vid Umeå Universitet. Jag och en kollega skriver kandidatuppsats i ämnet marknadsföring och syftet är att studera små turismföretags marknadsföringsvanor.

I vår undersökning ingår ett 70-tal turismföretag från Dalarna och norröver i Sverige. Studien och dess resultat kommer, efter avslutande, att finnas tillgänglig för läsning på Umeås hemsida.

I valideringssyfte kommer intervjun att bandas men ingenstans i studien kommer det att framgå vilket företag som svarat vad. Hade du några minuter för att svara på 20-talet frågor skulle det vara till stor hjälp och verklig uppskattas.

Background Questions
1. Inom vilka branscher är ert företag aktivt?
2. Vilka turismaktiviteter erbjuder ni?
3. Hur lång är säsongen för er turismverksamhet?
4. Hur många personer sysselsätter er turismverksamhet under säsong?
5. Hur många år har ni varit verksamma inom turismbranschen?

Marketing Research
6. Genomförde ni en marknadsundersökning innan uppstart? ja nej
7. Marknadsundersökningar är ett måste för lyckat företagande. ja nej vet ej
8. Vad låg till grund för valet av ert företags erbjudna tjänster inom turism?
   ▪ Marknadsundersökning.
   ▪ Tidigare intresse / hobby.
   ▪ Tillgänglighet.
   ▪ Annan anledning, vilken?
9. Vad låg till grund för prissättningen av ert företags tjänster?
   ▪ Marknadsundersökning.
   ▪ Konkurrensanalys.
   ▪ Egen prissättning.
   ▪ Annan anledning, vilken?
10. Uppföljning av företagets marknadsföring ligger till grund för kommande marknadsföringsaktiviteter  
    (Med uppföljning avses exempelvis samtal med kunder om exponering av företagets reklam).
    
**Market Segmentation**

11. Vem är din kund utifrån; nationalitet, målgrupp, ålder och kön?
12. I vilket land och region finns dina kunder?
13. Vad skiljer era erbjudanden från konkurrenters?

**Market Communication**

14. Hur marknadsför ni er idag:
    - Tidningar, vilka?
    - Internet, var/hur?
    - Mässor, var/vilka?
    - Turist/marknadsföringsbyråer
    - Mun till mun
    - Annat sätt, vilket?
15. Vilka marknadsföringssätt är ni missnöjda med sedan tidigare:
    - Tidningar
    - Internet
    - Mässor
    - Turist/marknadsföringsbyråer
    - Mun till mun
    - Annat, vilket?
    - Inget
16. Satsar ni på långvariga kundrelationer?  
    **ja**  **nej**
    - *Om ja*, på vilket sätt?
17. I takt med ökat medvetande om företagets tjänster kommer kundtillströmmningen att öka.  
    **ja**  **nej**  **vet ej**
18. Hur mycket pengar spenderar ni årligen på marknadsföring av er turismaktivitet:
    - < 20.000
    - 20.000-40.000
    - 40.000-60.000
    - > 60.000
19. Samarbetar ni med andra företag inom turismbranschen för att marknadsföra era tjänster?  
    **ja**  **nej**
20. *Om ja*, på vilket eller vilka sätt?
    - Rabatterade priser för företaget i fråga
    - Utbyte av befintliga och potentiella kunder
• Gemensamma marknadsaktiviteter
• Annat
• Kombination av allihopa

21. Har ni använt er av endera Visit Sweden, Ekoturismföreningen eller Naturens Bästa i er marknadsföring? ja nej
(Om nej, hoppa till fråga 23).

22. Om ja, vilken eller vilka:
• Visit Sweden
• Ekoturismföreningen
• Naturens Bästa

Hur nöjd är ni med utfallet av marknadsföringen hos
• Visit Sweden 1 2 3 4 5
• Ekoturismföreningen 1 2 3 4 5
• Naturens Bästa 1 2 3 4 5

Level of Ambition

23. Är företaget aktivt om 10 år? ja nej
(Om nej, hoppa till fråga 25).

Om ja, hur ser företaget ut på följande punkter vid denna tidpunkt?:
• Antal anställda ökat minskat oförändrat
• Antal kunder ökat minskat oförändrat
• Antal erbjudna aktiviteter ökat minskat oförändrat

24. Vilken är den viktigaste anledningen till att ni startade företag inom turism?
• Miljöbyte
• Arbetslöshet
• Vision om eget företagande
• Familjeskäl
• Lön
• Annat skäl, vilket?
Interview guide (English)

My name is name and I’m a student at Umeå School of Business. I and a colleague are writing a bachelor thesis in marketing and the purpose is to study the marketing habits of small tourism firms.

About 70 companies, from Dalarna and northwards, are part of our study. The study and its result will, when finished, be available for reading on the University of Umeå’s homepage.

This interview will be recorded in order to validate our study but the answers won’t be traceable to the respective company. If you had time to answer some 20 questions this would be of great help and much appreciated.

Background Questions

1. In which branches of trade is your company active?
2. Which tourism activities do you offer?
3. How long is the season for your tourism activity?
4. How many people does your company’s tourism activity employ during season?
5. How many years have you been active in the tourism industry?

Marketing Research

6. Did you carry out marketing research before start-up? yes no
7. Marketing research is a necessity for successful business? yes no don’t know
8. What was the decision ground for your company's service offerings?
   ▪ Marketing research
   ▪ Earlier interest / hobby
   ▪ Availability
   ▪ Other reason, which?
9. On what ground did you settle on the pricing for your company's services?
   ▪ Marketing research
   ▪ Competitor analysis
   ▪ Independent pricing
   ▪ Other reason, which?
10. Evaluation of current marketing is the basis for deciding upon future marketing activities? yes no
    (Evaluation could refer to e.g. discussions with clients regarding the exposure of the companies advertising).
Market Segmentation

11. Who is your customer from a starting point in: nationality, age and gender?

12. From which countries and regions do your customers originate?

13. What differentiates your company’s services from competitors’?

Market Communication

14. How do you market yourself today?
   - Magazines, which?
   - Internet, where/how?
   - Trade fairs, where/which?
   - Marketing bureaus
   - Word-of-mouth
   - Other way, which?

15. Which marketing channels are you dissatisfied with historically?
   - Magazines
   - Internet
   - Trade fairs
   - Marketing bureaus
   - Mouth to mouth
   - Other, which?
   - None

16. Do you strive for long-term customer relationships?  yes no
   - If yes, how?

17. The number of visiting clients will increase in pace with growing awareness of the company yes no don’t know

18. What is your yearly marketing expenditure?
   - < 20.000
   - 20.000-40.000
   - 40.000-60.000
   - > 60.000

19. Do you cooperate with other companies in the tourism business to market your services?  yes no
   - If yes, how?
   - Price discounts
   - Exchange of customers
   - Shared marketing activities
   - Other, which?
   - Combination of the above
21. Have your marketed yourself through either: Visit Sweden, Swedish Ecotourism Society or Nature's Best?  
   yes no  
   *(If no, skip to question 23).* 

22. If yes, which of the above?  
   - Visit Sweden  
   - The Swedish Ecotourism Society  
   - Nature’s Best  
   
   How satisfied are you with the result from marketing using  
   - Visit Sweden   1 2 3 4 5  
   - The Swedish Ecotourism Society 1 2 3 4 5  
   - Nature’s Best  1 2 3 4 5  

**Level of Ambition**

23. Is your company active 10 years from today?  
   yes no  
   *(If no, skip to question 25).* 

   *If yes, what is, at that point in time, the state of affairs for your company in terms of:*  
   - Employees   increased decreased unchanged  
   - Visiting customers   increased decreased unchanged  
   - Offered services   increased decreased unchanged  

24. Which is the most important reason why you ventured into the tourism business?  
   - Change of working environment  
   - Unemployment  
   - Vision about self-employment  
   - Family reasons  
   - Salary  
   - Other reason, which?
Contacted companies
Below is a list of all the companies that we have contacted in this study. In order to facilitate for anyone that wish to get in touch with any of these companies we also provide the companies’ Internet address.

- Ammeråns Jakt & Fiske: www.ammeran.se
- Anariset AB: www.anariset.se
- Arctic Circle Experience: www.arcticexperience.se
- Arctic Fishing: www.arcticfishing.se
- Arctic Life: www.arcticlife.se
- B-O Johansson: www.guideb-o.se
- Bidac: www.vildmarkdalarna.com
- Birribissen: www.birribissen.se
- Bulldog Flyfishing: www.bulldogflyfishing.se
- Creative Adventure: www.creative-adventure.se
- Destination Laponia: www.destination-laponia.se
- Ekosafari: www.ekosafari.se
- Explore the North: www.exploretthenorth.se
- Fiske & Naturupplevelser: www.naturupplevelser.net
- Fjelljakt: www.fjelljakt.se
- Fjällspirit: www.fjallspirit.com
- Flyfisher Jonas Hagborg: www.flyfisher.nu
- Furukollen: www.furukollen.no
- Guide Laponica: www.guidelaponica.com
- Hemavan Outdoor: www.hemavanoutdoor.com
- Härkan & Långan: www.jaktfiske.com
- Härjedalens Jakt & Fiske: www.jaktochfiskeaventyr.com
- IdiVildmark: www.idivildmark.com
- Isfiske i Idre: www.nordicride.se
- Kengisbruk: www.kengisbruk.se
- Kilnäset Jakt och Fiske Camp: www.kilnaset.com
- Kiruna in Norr: www.kirunainorr.se
- Kiruna Winter Activity: www.kirunawinteractivity.com
- Lainio Vildmark: www.lainio.com
- Lapland Fish & Hunt Service: www.laplandfishandhuntsafari.com
- Lapland Inspiration: www.lappland-inspiration.se
- Lapland Magic Sweden: www.magiclapland.se
- Lapland Pro Nature: www.lpn.nu
- Lapland Tourist Service: www.lapland-tourist:service.se
Appendix

- Lapland Wildlife: www.laplandwildlife.net
- Laponia Flyfishing: www.laponiaflyfishing.se
- Laponia Jakt & Fiske: www.camp-lapponia.se
- Lappland Safari: www.lapplandsafari.se
- Malungs Fiskecenter: www.malungsfiskecenter.se
- MinEallin: www.mineallin.com
- Miraculous Voyage: www.miraculousvoyage.com
- Naturturen: www.naturturen.se
- Naturupplevelser: www.naturupplevelser.se
- Nordic Escapes: www.nordicescapes.com
- Nordic Flyfishing: www.nordicflyfishing.com
- Nordic Footprints: www.nordicfootprints.com
- Nordic Wilderness: www.nowivildmark.se
- Nordiskt Jakt & Fiske: www.nijfc.com
- Nordström Hans Consulting: www.nordstromhans.se
- Nättan Skog & Fritid: www.nettanskog.nu
- Orra: www.orra.se
- Outcat: www.outcat.biz
- Outdoor-Lapland: www.outdoor:lapland.se
- Peakpoints Sled Dog Adventure: www.hundspann.com
- Polar Outdoor: www.polarout.com
- Rajamaa: www.rajamaa.com
- Rid i Ammarnäs: www.ridiammarnas.com
- Rönntorpet: www.ronntorpet.se
- Secrets of Sweden: www.secretsofsweden.com
- Sovvene: www.sovvene.se
- Sunnansjögårdens jakt & fiske: www.sunnansjogarden.se
- Sutme: www.sutme.com
- Svanrek: www.svanrek.se
- Time:Out Gellivare: www.timeoutgellivare.se
- Trophy Hunting: www.trophyhunting.se
- Vildmarksentreprenörerna: www.goforit.se
- Vildmarksservice: www.vildmarksservice.com
- Vilhelmina Vildmark: http://hem.passagen.se/vildmark
- Virisen: www.virisen.se
- Åtta Årstiderna: www.attaarstiderna.se
## Empirical data

**Question 1. In which branches of trade is your company active?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch of trade</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting/Manpower</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture/Reindeer herding</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 2. Which tourism activities does your company offer?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
<th>Activities (total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hunting &amp; Fishing</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering activities other than hunting or fishing</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities in addition to hunting or fishing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 3. How long is the season for your tourism activity?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season duration (months)</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 4. How many people does your company's tourism activity employ during season?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individuals employed during season</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6+</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Question 5. How many years have you been active in the tourism industry?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years active</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13–15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19–21</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22–24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–27</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28–30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 6. Did you carry out marketing research before start-up?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 7. Marketing research is a necessity for successful business?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 8. What was the decision ground for your company's service offerings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own interest / hobby</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reason</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 9. On what ground did you settle on the pricing for your company's services?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing research</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitor analysis</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent pricing</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reason</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 10. Evaluation of current marketing constitutes the basis for deciding future marketing activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 11. Who is your customer from a starting point in: nationality, age and gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly women</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly men</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swedes only</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedes and foreigners</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 12. From which countries and regions do your customers originate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 13. What differentiates your company's services from competitors’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentally sustainable</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 14. How do you market yourself today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing channels</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade fairs</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing bureaus</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouth to mouth</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing video</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 15. Which marketing channel are you dissatisfied with historically?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing channels</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade fairs</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing bureaus</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouth to mouth</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 16. Do you strive for long-term customer relationships?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Follow up to question 16. If yes, how?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods employed</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter to customers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous contact with customers throughout the year</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discount to returning customers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strive for content customers but without strategy</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 17. Number of visiting customers will increase in pace with growing awareness of the company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 18. What is your yearly marketing expenditure (kSEK)?
### Marketing expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing expenditure</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0--10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10--20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20--30</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 19. Do you cooperate with other companies in the tourism business to market your services?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 20. In what way?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price discounts</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange of customers</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared marketing activities</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of all mentioned</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 21. Have you marketed yourself through either: Visit Sweden, Swedish Ecotourism Society or Nature's Best?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 22. If yes, which of the above?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visit Sweden</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Ecotourism Society</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature's Best</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No experience</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Visit Sweden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of satisfaction</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Swedish Ecotourism Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of satisfaction</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Nature's Best

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of satisfaction</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 23. Is your company active 10 years from today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number of employees 10 years from today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of employees 10 years from today?</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unchanged</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number of customers 10 years from today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of customers 10 years from today?</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unchanged</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number of offered activities 10 years from today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of offered activities 10 years from today?</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unchanged</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 24. Why did you venture into the tourism business? (Most important reason)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision about self-employment</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family reasons</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reason</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>