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Master's Degree Programme in International Marketing Management (MIMM)

Master's Thesis

**THE IMPACT OF EVENT MARKETING ON BRAND AWARENESS IN ESPORT
INDUSTRY**

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this qualitative research is to study what is the impact of event marketing on brand awareness in the context of electronic sport industry. Based on the research questions, the theoretical framework will be developed. This research will analyze earlier theories, and also searching more fresh literature to explain the current phenomenon in the eSport industry. In the empirical part, there were total of five case companies interviewed. The context of this research is eSport, which has its own chapter.

The theoretical part of the thesis focuses on event marketing and brand awareness. In this research, event marketing is analyzed from the event organizers perspective. In some occasions, event exhibitors' perspective is also analyzed. In brand awareness, the focus is how to create a brand recognizable, recalled and from there top of mind in consumers' minds.

The results of this research revealed that many companies' struggles on getting their brand recognizable. Some of the case companies lacks a strategy and don't exactly know the core values of their customers. However some of the case companies were opposite. One reason behind this is that some of them has experience on the field and the companies have resources that covers them. Also the current strong brand has clearly a positive affect on their business.

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Tämä kvalitatiivinen tutkielma selvittää, kuinka tapahtumamarkkinan avulla yritykset pystyvät parantamaan bränditunnettuuttaan elektronisen urheilun toimialalla. Tutkimuskysymysten pohjalta luodaan työn teoreettinen viitekehitys. Tutkimuksen rakenne on jaettu teoreettiseen, kontekstiin ja empiiriseen osioon, minkä avulla tutkimus pyrkii luomaan pohjan seuraavia tutkimuksia varten.

Työn teoreettinen osuus sisältää tapahtumamarkkinoinnin ja bränditunnettuuden. Tutkimus on asetettu tapahtumajärjestäjän näkökulmasta, mutta tietyissä osioissa myös näytteilleasettajan näkökulmaa tarkastellaan. Bränditunnettuudessa fokus selittää kuinka tehdä brändi tunnetuksi, muistettavaksi ja sitä kautta ensimmäisenä mielessä.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että monet yritykset kamppailevat saadakseen brändinsä tunnetuksi. Monet yritykset ovat vailla markkinointistrategiaa ja eivät ole tunnistaneeet asiakkaittensa arvoja ja sitä kautta heille tärkeitä asioita. Tietyt yhtiöt olivat kuitenkin päinvastaisessa asemassa. Yksi syy varmasti tähän on se, että näillä yrityksillä on kokemusta tapahtumajärjestämisestä ja on käytössään paljon resursseja. Myös vahvalla brändillä on suuri osuus siihen, että asiat menevät näillä yrityksillä mallikkaasti. Jokainen yritys on kuitenkin lähtenyt liikkeelle samasta pisteestä, joten monien tulee muuttua jotta pääsee haluamalleen tasolle.

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There are many people I should thank. I would like to thank all the friends from LUT, all the other students I have met during trips and all my friends back home in Helsinki. Without you, my life as a student would have been an empty void and I feel extremely fortunate to have experienced all this. Special thanks goes for my parents and brother. They have always supported me and have helped me in difficult times.

I feel a little miserable but at the same time relieved that my studies comes to an end. I'm ready to take advantage of the things I have learned and use them in future challenges. I'm ready to jump to the next chapter in my life.

Helsinki, 12 January, 2016

Erik Alopaeus

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter of the master's thesis, the author gives an extensive introduction about what the thesis will include. In the beginning the background of the given topics are discussed and the literature review of these topics are briefly explained. After that the research questions, theoretical framework and key definitions are explained. The introduction chapter also includes the research methodology and structure of the thesis.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Electronic sports is becoming an extremely popular part of the digital gaming culture. During the last decade, eSports has taken major steps from a gaming subculture into becoming a mainstream activity. ESport as an industry, has created opportunities for brand managers to evolve their marketing strategies for creating better brands. In 2014, Amazon invested almost a billion dollars into Twitch.TV, the largest platform for gaming. This did get a lot of attention from mainstream media. Even though the industry is almost monopolized and dominated by a few big companies, the industry is getting more and more attention, and start-ups have started to take some market shares. (CGC, 2014)

As the competition has become fiercer, smaller companies have had difficulties to become known for the bigger audience (Ven & Jeurissen 2005). However, today thanks to applications like Twitch.Tv and other social medias, smaller companies can create brand awareness with a relatively small budget and therefore compete with the bigger companies with an almost equal footing (Palumbo & Herbig 1998). Everything comes down to what is the entrepreneurs or companies goal, passion and motivation to give the message to the target audience (Miner 2000).

But how can a company create brand awareness? There are multiple channels to achieve awareness. A company should handle most of the marketing and promotion mix channels in order to create, achieve and maintain a brand. However, in this thesis, the delimitation is focused mainly on event marketing and how a company

can create awareness from organizing an event. In this thesis there will be discussions about how to promote an event, so therefore the sales process to both exhibitors and audience is discussed. The context of the thesis will be the eSport. There is a tremendous amount of potential for companies to get awareness because it's a growing industry. However, for most people especially in Finland, it's unknown. (Needleman 2015).

Even though there are several different definitions on event marketing, the common aspect is that the event is seen as a strategically planned event, where companies can meet the target groups face to face, discuss with the customers and from there create brand awareness (Vallo & Häyrynen 2003). Event marketing is focusing on a specific target group, which involves high contact activity with parties and gathers the group on a specific time and space (Behrer & Larson 1998). All this is done for possible future benefits. In order to talk about event marketing, the following criteria's has to be fulfilled.

1. The event is planned in advance
2. The goal and target group is defined
3. The event is experiential, memorable and interactive (Vallo & Häyrynen 2003, 26)

Event marketing is being viewed as an extremely important element of promotion in order to boost up company's products (Taranto 1998) and according to some studies, it should be included in the marketing mix strategy (Alabama, 2015). According to Alabama's (2015) studies, nearly 70% of B2B marketers listed in-person events as their top B2B marketing tactic. This study also applies to the B2C market. Events are relatively cheap to organize, you can discuss face-to-face with potential customers, create brand awareness and achieve immediate feedback. (Alabama, 2015; Ahluwalia 2002; Sneath et al. 2005; Williams 2006).

There are many companies and decision-makers, who asks why they should create or build a brand, when they can exclusively rely on their existing features of the

products that they are currently offering. These companies usually show resistance towards change and don't drive for scaling their businesses. Usually these persons or companies do not seriously take care of their businesses, because they are afraid of failure. If a company aims for growth, things have to usually be done differently and it often requires risks. (Bettger 1992) Figure 1 describes the phases that usually happen which companies face during the period of change. The emotional responses differ from denial, anger to acceptance. In this research, the author encourages companies to take risks and should be open-minded towards change.

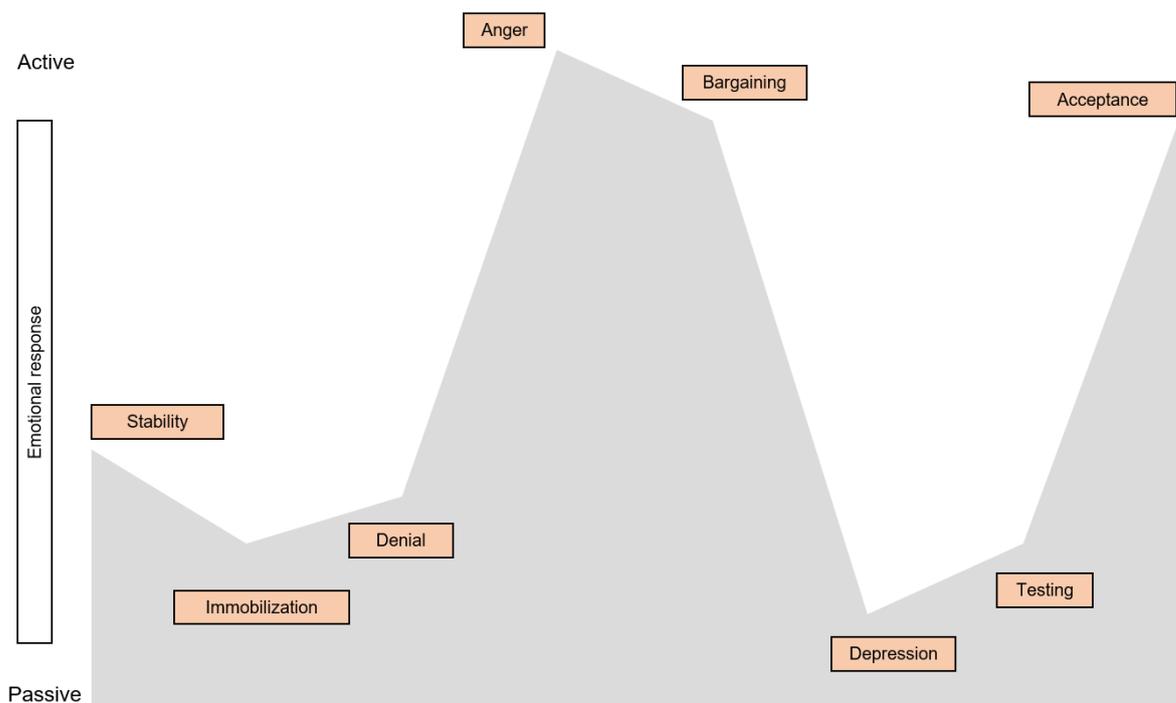


Figure 1: Managing Negative Responses to Change (Marshall & Conner, 1996)

In this thesis the focus will be on creating brand awareness through event marketing. According to Aaker (1991) it's the brand, not the product that determines how much people are willing to pay for it. A brand is "a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of them" which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those competitors (Heding et al. 2009). In this research, the event marketing will be discussed from the event organizers' perspective. However, if the organizers aim to achieve the best possible outcome from the event, they need to understand the objectives of the exhibitors as well. Therefore some theories related to the exhibitors will be explained.

In short, the brand is everything for a company. It improves recognition, creates trust, supports advertising, builds financial value, generates new customers and inspires employees. (Heding et al. 2009; Keller 2013; Wang et al. 2010). In this research, the author will discuss about the theoretical tools of how a company can create brand awareness through event marketing. In the empirical part the author will combine both theoretical and interviews and draw the conclusions of how companies in eSport industry currently do event marketing. After that the author will give managerial implications suggestions of how the event marketing should be done in order to achieve best possible brand awareness.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature of this thesis is divided into three parts: event marketing, brand awareness and eSports. Event marketing is “an attempt to co-ordinate the communication around a created or sponsored event. In event marketing, the event is an activity that gathers the target group simultaneously in time and space; a meeting in which an experience is created and a message communicated”. (Behrer & Larson 1998, 18) Macri (2005) states that the key characteristics and elements of event marketing are promotion and follow-ups, effective message and giveaways, showing the products and evaluating each event. Exhibitors and event organizers may approach the event depending on which goal they set. This leads to different marketing strategies for different customer segments. Is the aim to achieve better brand image for a loyal audience or create something new to an audience which doesn't know the event in advance? Both of these require different approaches. A well planned and delivered event can create brand awareness for the organizer, reputation and get some qualified sales leads. For the exhibitor, event marketing is such an important tool for a company to promote and therefore it's considered as a component in the promotion mix (Schultz & Barnes 1995; Gupta 2003).

There is some discussion whether event marketing is the same as sponsorship. In sponsorship, the sponsor usually buys rights from the event organizer for instance visibility (Behrer & Larsson 1997). Behrer & Larsson (1998, 18) defines event marketing that “is it's an attempt to co-ordinate the communication around a created

or sponsored event. In event marketing, the event is an activity that gathers the target group in time and space; a meeting in which an experience is created and a message communicated". The difference between this depends on from what perspective to look from.

When organizing an event there are certain patterns to follow. The parts of how to organize an element can be done separately or simultaneously, slow or quickly or by promoting the event in various channel or focusing on certain channels. One comprehensive fact is that when organizing the event, the planning stage includes defining objectives (Lanner & Söderberg 2006, 69), time schedule, where to promote (Lanner & Söderberg 2006, 76) and sales process (Skok, 2010).

The ways of creating brand awareness has changed rapidly during recent years. The idea of branding comes from the ancient marketplace Babylon, where the sellers and buyers gathered in the same place, where they traded goods such as rugs, wines and spices. This way trading continued for centuries and the set of mass communication were created. Merchants and buyers around the world gathered in this brand place called Babylon. (Landa 2005) The development of branding started to boom properly first in the late 1400's when the printing press provided the tools for wide distribution. The industrial revolution in the mid 1700's and early 1800's improved the distribution tremendously. Currently in the era of mass media, companies with small budgets can make themselves aware in many promotion channels. However, the ancient type of branding still holds a big role in marketing. In events people meet each other, and some even say this is the most effective way of doing promotion. (Landa 2005).

How does a brand differ from products? A brand can have several dimensions that differentiate from products so that it can satisfy the need. These dimensions can be either tangible which are related to product performance of the brand, or it can be intangible like emotional feelings about what the brand represents (Aaker 1996). The product however is anything we are able to offer to a market for attention, use or consume that satisfies a need or want. It can be either physical object or service (Aaker 1996).

Brand awareness, which is an element of brand knowledge (Keller 2003), is something that is strongly related to the consumers' memory (Gustafson & Chabot 2007). Brand awareness is further divided into brand recognition, brand recall and top of mind (Aaker 1991). Brand recognition reflects the ability of consumers to confirm prior exposure to the brand (Tuominen 1999; Keller 1993). Brand recall refers to "consumers' ability to correctly generate the brand from a memory" (Keller 1993, 3). If the brand is top of mind, the "consumer is strongly associated with the product category in memory" (Keller 1993, 12) and are the first brand that comes in mind in a specific product category. If the brand has achieved this step of awareness, the consumers are willing to pay more for the brand because "brand adds value". (Cobb-Walgen et al. 1995, 29).

The term eSport, which is built around the words "sport" and "electronic", appeared first time, when there was competitive gaming in video games. The practice of eSport is played by millions around the world. For some it's a hobby and for others it's their lifestyle. (Hamilton et al. 2012) Concept of eSport is relatively fresh, and there are discussions whether it's a sport or not (Griffiths et al. 2003). For those where eSport is more like a lifestyle, it requires a tremendous amount of work to become the best in the industry. Becoming even an average professional requires daily training. The gamers need reflexes, pressure tolerance and intelligence in order to clear any given situation. Most of the eSport games are team based, and requires teamwork and communication skills to elaborate strategies and tactics. (Arnaud 2009)

ESports has evolved significantly during the last decade. The history has developed from the arcade era towards local area networks era. From there, the industry has developed into competition based online gaming, where players are participating with other players in events or from their home computers (Wagner 2006). Currently there are hundreds of millions of spectators who watch other eSport players playing annually. The spectator numbers have even exceeded the NHL Stanley Cup finals (Wingfield 2014). Things which attracts millions of spectators and players, usually attracts also companies. This leads to high prize pools from events, which are typical in the current eSport environment. Back in the late 1990's the total amount of money

involved in events were just under million dollars. Fifteen years later the numbers exceeded over 58 million (ESport earning, 2015). During the year 2014 alone, the total amount of money involved in events increased 63 percent compared to 2013. The industry is on a serious the rise. (eSport earning, 2015). According to several studies, the slope will be even steeper. It's estimated that by the year 2017, 335 million people will watch the best players to play head to head online (Oddshot 2015).

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main objective of this research is to reveal how event marketing can help in creating or achieving brand awareness. The purpose of this question is to create an understanding of which elements are needed to create a brand, whether it's a known or unknown brand. The goal is to combine the theoretical summary and sources from both event marketing and brand awareness in the context of eSport. The theoretical part will be compared to the empirical part where the patterns will be created. By this, the author will figure out the most important patterns of how to create brand awareness from event marketing. In order to reach the goal of this research, the main research question is formulated as follows:

- *How does event marketing help creating brand awareness in eSport industry?*

In order to create a successful event, the planning of it plays a crucial role. There are certain patterns which to follow, but because the market is rapidly changing, the methods of how to plan an event are also changing. There has been numerous cases where event organizers have strived to achieve visibility and awareness, but they have faced challenges already in the planning stage. There are also many event organizations which do not have a brand at all, and strive to be acknowledged. Almost every company that are fresh, face this challenge. They just don't know what to do or where to start the planning. In order to achieve the answer to this dilemma, the author has created the first sub-question, which will be answered in this thesis:

1. What are the most critical steps in event planning?

Currently there are many promotional channels where to choose from for the company to deliver the needed message. However, the challenge is that the internet and social media has made the messaging even harder because of the information inflation. This has led to the channels being overwhelmed. Where, how, when and what are important questions to consider when promoting. It's important, that the message has to be delivered through the right channels, at the right time and it needs to be catchy. Therefore the author will answer in this thesis to the following sub-question:

2. What channels to use when promoting an event in order to achieve brand awareness?

Many event organizers and exhibitors may have a good product or idea, but struggle in getting customers. Regardless of what industry or company we talk about, the company's objective is to get and keep customers. The idea must be sold, even for the exhibitors who come to the event. But where do the customers come from? How do you prospect qualified leads? How do you sell an event? What if the event itself is unknown? The author will find answer to the last sub-question in the thesis.

3. How does brand awareness help when prospecting and selling an event?

The time aspect of when the event should be organized also plays a big role according to the author. The answers will be answered later in the thesis context, eSport. Electronic sport as an industry is rapidly growing but are dominated by few big players. It's important that the smaller companies who have not achieved a strong brand, can also make it to the "big" league. The author believes that eSport will make a final breakthrough in the upcoming years. Therefore the author tries to give some tools and tips for the companies, who most likely don't have any brand, of how to create that awareness through an event.

1.4 DEFINITIONS

The key concepts and definitions are beneficial in this section. The definitions given will be in the same order as the thesis is written, so that it can be easy for the reader to jump back to this page. Most of the definitions are withdrawn from academic literature. In some cases, the author has decided to choose few definitions from the current times in order to get as current definitions as possible.

Event Marketing: There is no one true definition to event marketing. Some studies say that event marketing is the same as sponsorship, some say it includes sponsorship and some define those two separately. The definition may also vary if the perspective is either from the event organizers or exhibitor.

“Event marketing is a launch towards coordinating communication regarding a created or sponsored event, and the event is said to be an activity that collects the target group in time and space for a meeting in which an experience is created and a message is communicated” (Behrer & Larsson 1998, 18).

“Event marketing is seen as strategically planned event, where companies can meet the target groups face to face in order to create brand awareness” (Vallo & Häyrynen 2003, 24).

Sponsorship: *“It is an investment, in cash or kind, in an activity, in return of access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that activity”* (Meenaghan 1991, 36).

Brand: *“A name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competitors”* (Wood 2000, 664; Heding et al. 2009, 9).

Brand awareness: *“Brand awareness is the probability that, consumers are familiar about the availability and accessibility of a company’s product and service.”* (Malik et al. 2013, 168).

“Brand awareness means the ability of a consumer to recognize and recall a brand in different situations” (Aaker 1996).

Brand recognition: *“Brand recognition reflects the ability of consumers to confirm prior exposure to the brand” (Tuominen 1999, 76).*

Brand recall: *“Customers’ ability to retrieve the brand when the product category is already given and the needs fulfilled by the category.” (Keller 1993, 3)*

Top of mind: *“The first brand that comes in mind in a specific product category, is recognized as top of mind. In other words, the top of mind brand is ahead of every other companies in a person’s mind” (Aaker 1991).*

Brand knowledge: *“What we remember and think about a brand. It is all the memories, whether positive or negative thoughts about the brand.” (Keller 2003, 596)*

eSport: *“Electronic sports, more commonly known as eSports, is the term used to describe playing high-level games and spectating of digital games in a competitive atmosphere.” (Hamilton et al. 2012).*

Spectatorship: *“Act of observing an event without participating in the event. Video games is primarily designed for the players but video spectating and streaming of those players has increased majorly.” (Cheung & Huang 2011)*

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND DELIMITATIONS

The theoretical framework in this research is based on the literature and theories that are analyzed. It’s a compound of different theories, mostly from event marketing and brand awareness. The goal in this framework is to either increase or create brand awareness through an event. Before even thinking about increasing or creating brand awareness, the event has to be well planned. It’s important to determine what message should be delivered to the target audience and via what

channel. The sales process and prospecting also plays a crucial role, because an event without exhibitors and audience is automatically a failure. Everything comes down to a well-planned event, and if these steps are done thoroughly, almost certainly the brand awareness is increased or created.

The theoretical framework is based on the combination of Aaker’s (1991) brand awareness theory, event marketing theory (Schultz & Barnes 1995) and the current promotional mix theory (Gupta 2003, 87 Cornwell & Maignan 1998). The theoretical framework will be an excellent reminder and tool in the thesis, and every part of the thesis will try to give related ideas directly or indirectly that provides guidance to the research question. Figure 2 illustrates the theoretical framework of this research.

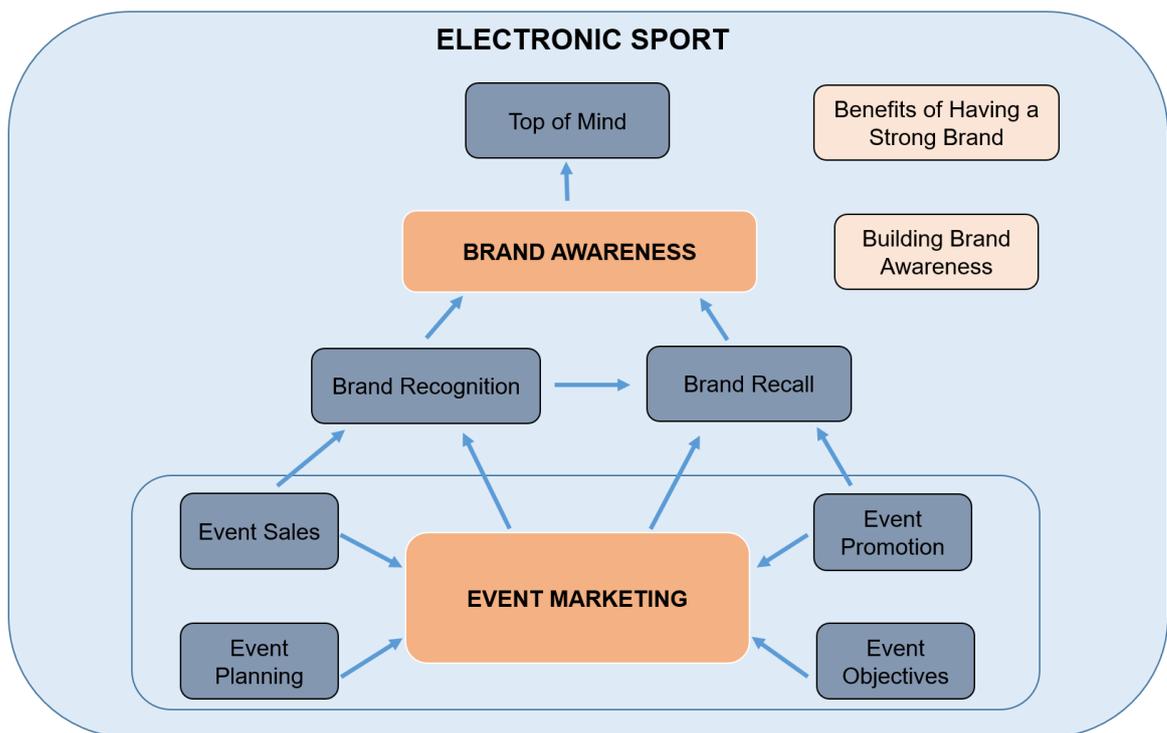


Figure 2: Theoretical Framework of the Research

In the next chapter of the thesis the lowest part of the theoretical framework is discussed. This is not the only way to organize an event, but the author has decided to delimitate the research into event planning, defining the event objectives, event promotion and sales. After this the elements of brand awareness are discussed. In this thesis brand awareness is divided into three elements; brand recognition, brand

recall and top of mind. How to build brand awareness and benefits of having a strong brand is also discussed. The context of this research is eSport.

The starting point of this thesis was the personal interest to explore how to create brand awareness in an industry, where there may occur a big outburst and change in the near future. After analyzing some trends in the markets, the author determined the area of research. The author noticed that there is a fierce competition in the market, which is dominated by few players. The interest in the given topic raised, when the author wanted to challenge himself to explore, how a company without any brand, can communicate efficiently in order to play against the big players.

The scope of the research sets some delimitation of this study. Even though the research of this thesis relates to event marketing, it's important to understand that the company needs to understand the other marketing mix elements as well, in order to understand the whole picture. The author makes the assumption that the reader understands already all the basic key issues related to the marketing mix and its elements. The author however doesn't make the assumption that the reader does know event marketing and its contents. Event marketing is a relatively new topic and there are many definitions about what it is and whether it's a part of the promotion mix or not. Also the ways to organize an event changes all the time.

Another crucial delimitation of this study is to focus only on what happens before the event and what it requires to organize and event. Matters that happens during the event is only partly discussed in this thesis. For instance, the event organizer should realize how to manage the exhibitors in order to create a successful event. Things that happen after the event will not be discussed, except of what are the benefits of having a strong brand. The second crucial delimitation is that the goal is only to create brand awareness. The topics related to brand awareness are thoroughly discussed and the process of creating it is explained. The other brand activities like brand equity is not discussed. The goal is only to create brand awareness through an event.

The last delimitation of this thesis is regarding to what perspective to study from. The thesis is written mostly from the event organizers perspective. However according to the author, if the organizer wants to create an efficient event and create brand awareness, he has to understand the other parties', like exhibitors, point of view as well. Therefore especially in the event marketing chapter, the goals and objectives from exhibitors is also described, because then the organizer understands the needs and objectives of them. This helps in the sales process when the organizers can tailor its sales according to the exhibitors needs.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research will include both theoretical and empirical part. In the theoretical part, the author will analyze previous literature from the two topics; event marketing and brand awareness. Electronic Sport section is the context of the thesis and therefore it's not the actual part of the theory. In the first two topics, event marketing and brand awareness, there are plenty of articles and journals to choose from. However, event marketing is a relatively fresh topic, so therefore the literature is mostly acquired from the last decade. The literature of electronic sport is a fresh topic, so even though there are some articles done in this area, the author will also use mainly secondary sources, like articles as references. The quality of the articles aims to be high both in quality and numbers. The data in the theoretical part is collected mostly from EBSCO – Academic Search Elite, EBSCO – Business Source Complete, ABI/INFORM Global, JSTOR Arts & Sciences, Springerlink eBooks, Google Scholar and several web pages. Also the author has used several books that are either bought from Amazon.com or rented from libraries.

The empirical part of the thesis is based on qualitative research. In this part, the author has interviewed five individuals from Arctic eSports, Messukesus, Pulp Agency, Neogames and one anonymous. Qualitative research is characterized by its goals, which relate to understanding methods which mostly generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis (Patton, Cochran 2002). Merriam (2009, 13) continues that, on the other hand “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make

sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world.” Nkwi et al. (2001, 1) defines it more simple; “Qualitative research involves any research that uses data that do not indicate ordinal values”.

The empirical part of the research is made with semi-structured approach. A total of five interviews will be conducted. To ensure that the data gathered is accurate and reflects the actual situation, top management and personnel who daily are operating in this field will be interviewed. These companies and persons have been selected because each of them are involved on operational level with the subjects.

All the informants were contacted by either e-mail or phone before the interview. In semi-structured interview, the interviewed will receive the list of questions and themes before the actual interview in order to prepare for the interview. The content of the interview differs from every interview and the order of questions may also be varied depending of the flow in the interview. Also, the interview may include some additional questions in order to gather the needed data. (Saunders et al. 2009)

In Finland there are only few companies that operates in eSport industry in daily basis. The author decided to do a qualitative approach in the research because according to him, a quantitative approach would not have given a valid image of the industry. Qualitative approach gives an idea of where the industry in Finland currently operates.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

In this section the structure of the master’s thesis will be outlined. The thesis includes seven chapters.

In the first chapter, the introduction of the thesis will be presented. This chapter includes the background of the given topics and the reason why the author decided to write about this subject. After that the research questions and the reasons to those are thoroughly explained. The main definitions of given subjects are then explained. After that the theoretical framework is explained together with the

delimitations. In the last part the research methodology and the reasons of this approach is described.

In the second and third chapter the theoretical part of the thesis will be presented. Firstly, the event marketing is explained. This section includes the objectives, planning, promotion, sales process and which channels to use in order to organize an event. After those the second theoretical part, brand awareness is conducted. The elements of the awareness pyramid are opened and where the term is born. Also the author describes the benefits about having a strong brand and how to achieve even more brand awareness.

The context of the thesis will be discussed in the fourth chapter. In the beginning the term eSport is explained. After that follows the development of industry and the importance of spectatorship analyzed. In the later part there will be a discussion about how players and companies receive salaries and revenue in the eSport industry. After this the prognosis and trends in eSport are analyzed and predicted.

The fifth and sixth chapter contain the empirical part of the thesis. There will be discussion about the methods and data used in the thesis. The research context and data collections methods is thoroughly answered. After this the data analysis methods is described. In the last part the reliability and validity is presented. This part also includes the introductions of the target companies which were interviewed for this research. The content of the sixth chapter is based on the interviews.

The seventh chapter of the research, which is the last one, will be the conclusion and discussion. Here the author compares the theoretical part with empirical part and draw conclusions on the basis of these. This part conducts theoretical and managerial implications and suggestions for further studies.

2. EVENT MARKETING

This section of the thesis contains aspects related to event marketing. Theories described below is written mostly from the event organizers' perspective, because the empirical part in the following chapters follows this perspective.

In the beginning the concept and definition of event marketing is explained thoroughly. After that follows the comparison between sponsorship and event marketing, and why many mix these concepts with each other. After the definitions, the event organizing takes its part. Here the discussion will be about objectives of event marketing, event planning, how to promote an event, which channels are efficient and what the sales process to different segment groups is. In the last part the evolution of event marketing is analyzed and also about the prognosis of the upcoming trends.

2.1 THE ROLE OF EVENT MARKETING

The concept of event marketing is relatively fresh, and there are roughly as many definitions of it than there are authors in this area. However, the common aspect for all of the authors is that, event marketing is seen as strategically planned event, where companies can meet the target groups face to face in order to create brand awareness. (Vallo & Häyrynen 2003, 24). However, currently there are plenty of online events which enables the organizer easily reach a geographically dispersed audience (Marketo 2012).

Behrer & Larsson (1998, 18) defines event marketing as: "Event marketing is an attempt to co-ordinate the communication around a created or sponsored event. In event marketing the event is an activity that gathers the target group in time and space; a meeting in which an experience is created and a message communicated". This definition is more general and can be used in different kind of events. However, depending on the objective of the event, the definition may be changed. The usual objective for exhibitors to participate are to increasing brand awareness, boost their sales or increase traffic in their services.

According to Cornwell & Maignan (1998), there are two different types of event marketing. Firstly is marketing of events and secondly marketing with events. They state that, marketing of an event is not related to sponsorship, whereas marketing with events entails the promotion of sponsors.

Event marketing is a component in promotion mix and its importance has increased during last decade. Another name for promotion mix is marketing communication mix. It has rapidly gained popularity (Schultz & Barnes 1995; Gupta 2003; Behrer & Larsson 1998) due some cost reductions compared to traditional marketing and its reaches to an audience (Sneath et al. 2005). Close et al. (2006) continues that events have assumed a key role to the current marketing mix and approximately of 96 % of U.S corporations include event marketing in their promotional strategies.

The market has changed tremendously from what it was in the 1990's. During that era and before, there was an excess demand in many industries and the company's had a relatively easy task to sell its products, and didn't need so big investments in marketing. (Sarasvuo 2007) Currently there are oversupply and an event marketing strategy is a great path to access to a target audience. The figure 3 illustrates that, according to IDC Tech Marketing Benchmarks study in 2012, over 20 % of companies marketing budget is allocated to event marketing (Ferrantino & Vancil 2012).

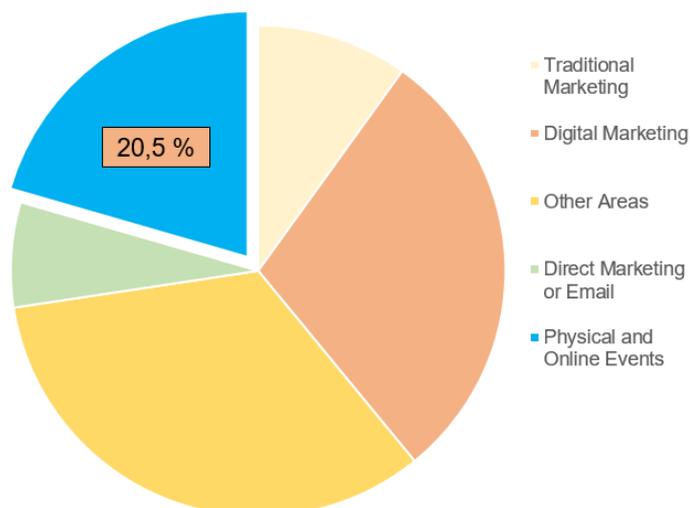


Figure 3: Percentage of Marketing Budgets Allocated to Events (Ferrantino & Vancil 2012)

When promoting an event, there are different ways to do it. According to figure 4, the marketing communication mix, there are four additional elements to promote an event. In addition to event marketing the other elements are advertising, direct sales, public relations and sponsoring. (Behrer & Larsson 1997) In promotion these elements can be often be stacked with each other or done separately. The marketer must understand how the event marketing fits together with the current marketing strategy (Kotler 2003). Well organized event requires all the components of marketing communication mix (Behrer & Larsson 1997)

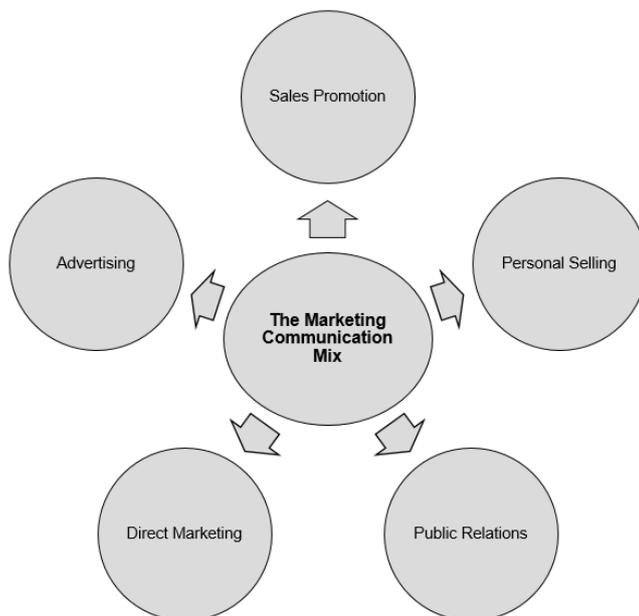


Figure 4: The Marketing Communications Mix (Behrer & Larsson 1997)

Even though event marketing is a part of promotion mix, the organizer can create an own marketing mix of the event. Hoyle (2002, 18-21) has presented a model where there is an additional P in the marketing mix. Event marketing relies heavily on the proper positioning of the product. The key to a successful marketing plan is positioning. The organizer should consider the following aspects when positioning an event (Hoyle 2002, 19):

- **Location:** Must be constantly evaluated, because interests of the markets change constantly.

- **Attention span:** People tend to forget quickly. Marketing materials must constantly emphasize the needs to the audience.
- **Competitive costs:** What level of registration fee is the competition charging? Be sure that the value of the event is higher than the price itself.

The organizing of an event can be seen as a project and therefore the organizer can have different techniques to use when managing the event. Event marketing from the organizers perspective consists of initiation, planning, implementation, monitoring of the event, and evaluation (Bowdin et al. 2011). This research is delimited only on the objectives of the event, event planning and sales process.

2.2 SPONSORSHIP VS EVENT MARKETING

Meenaghan (1991, 36) defines sponsorship that “it is an investment, in cash or kind, in an activity, in return of access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that activity”. Mullin et al. (2000) continues that, sponsorships involves acquisitions of rights to associate with a product, event, or organization for the purpose of deriving related benefits. Commercial sponsorship, also known as event and sports marketing, is increasingly important aspect of marketing communication activity (Meenaghan 2001) and sponsorship is fast becoming the fourth arm of marketing mix, in addition to advertising, promotions, and public relations. Sport events dominate currently the events sponsored, but there are steadily increase in other areas as well, for instance arts, causes, festivals and entertainment tours (Hoyle 2002). Currently, eSport is starting to join the scenes as well. It’s important, that organizations have a clear idea and goal of what they want to accomplish from the sponsorship (Heffler 1994). Heffler continues that often the sponsors participates in events as exhibitors, or then their aim may be supporting financially a specific community.

According to Duncan (2002), there are three different ways to participate to events; by creating own event, participate as an exhibitor or sponsoring other events. By creating an own event, the party who is responsible for the event, can freely make the event look like as preferred, can decide the details themselves and has control.

The more the event is creative, fun and exciting, the more people will most likely attend, if the marketing is done properly.

The second way is to participate as an exhibitor. This way is less risky for the exhibitor and the costs consist mainly of the area used during the event and the participation fee. Other advantages may be increase of brand awareness, increase the prospect list, and direct communication with the customers. On the other hand the disadvantages of being an exhibitor is that, the company has less freedom to decide how the exhibition looks a like, exhibitor is one of many stands, risk that the event group doesn't match with the company's target group and the lack of promotional salespeople. (Duncan 2002)

The last way to approach and event is by sponsoring. By sponsoring, "the company pays for an appearance on the event, where the company's products, name or brand appears on the event" (Duncan 2002, 728). According to Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000), the characteristics of event sponsorship is by providing brand experience, demonstrating new products and technologies, and allowing the brand to become part of an event. Sneath et al. (2005) continues that by event sponsoring, the sponsor may have face-to-face contact with their target audience.

The biggest difference between event marketing and sponsorship is that when using event marketing, the organization works with the event as part of the whole marketing strategy. Sponsoring an event however, the sponsor buys rights during an event from the event organizer. The traditional sponsoring and event marketing plays a big role in companies marketing budgets and it's estimated that it's increasing rapidly during the upcoming years. (Behrer & Larsson 1997) In the figure 5 below, the differences between traditional sponsoring and event marketing is described. In the upper left corner, there is some business agreements with at least two parties which event marketing doesn't necessarily have. Difference between event marketing 1 and event marketing 3 is that the event organizer increases its control over the event but at the same time the risk is increases. When the control is increased, the event organizer may integrate other marketing activities in the event itself. (Behrer & Larsson 1997, 194)

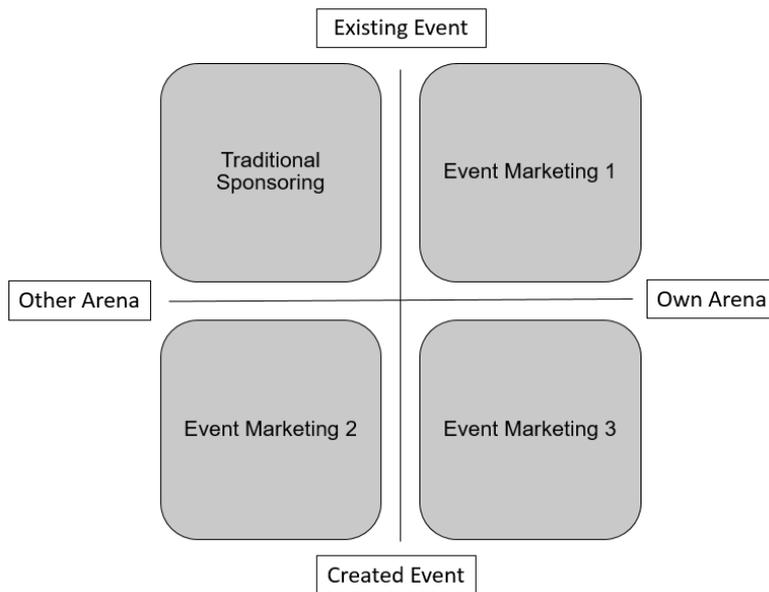


Figure 5: Traditional Sponsoring vs. Event Marketing (Behrer & Larsson 1997, 194)

How is the sponsor identified? The usual and most popular ones are banners, signs or special programs that can be attached with prizes, free samples or retail promotions (Keller 2013). If the event is either streamed online or casted in television, the viewers usually can't avoid commercial, and are subconsciously exposed to the banners. However, this kind of passive communication is not that effective, although it's the only communication tool for a visual audience (Nickell et al. 2011).

Why do event organizers need sponsorships? According to Mays (2007), there is three reasons why the event organizer need it and should be included into the sales process. Firstly, it's the best way to get the event paid for on someone else's money. This leads to less stress because of the financial backup. Secondly it helps credibility if the organizer have not established it already with the consumers. Lastly, having a sponsor may help the organizer to secure publicity which can help the event grow and expand into bigger heights. With good publicity the organizer may secure even more sponsor. (Mays 2007)

In this thesis the delimitation will be more on the organizers' perspective, so therefore the sponsorship is not explained further. However, the event organizer

should know the objectives and goals for companies who they want to be as exhibitors or sponsors in the event (Sneath et al. 2005). Event organizer task is to determine whether the target company is better as an exhibitor or as a sponsor. Many companies are still uncertain how to measure sponsorship and how it's related to the promotional mix (McDonald 1991).

2.3 EVENT PLANNING

In order to create an effective event, careful planning it is the key for success (Lanner & Söderberg 2006, 69). It's important that the plan is done carefully so that the resources will not be allocated to wrong areas (Williams 2006, 161). There are various ways to plan an event but according to most research, the plan should consist following steps; objective, audience, timing, location, budget and idea (Lanner & Söderberg 2006, 76) Bowdin et al. (2011) continues, that marketing, design and sponsorships includes also in the planning process. Planning process usually consumes the biggest amount time, and the "process starts from the beginning of the planning until the evaluation" (Bowdin et al. 2011, 258).

Events can be categorized into either direct events, such as exhibitions, fairs, dealer meets and conferences. In these events, people attends direct bearing to the objectives, which usually sponsors define. Events can also be indirect, where people participating may not be necessarily form the target audience. These kind of events usually creates and builds brand image. (Gupta 2003).

"The event plan starts by defining the goals and objectives" (Lanner & Söderberg 2006, 76). However, the goals and objectives should already been determined before the planning process has been begun. Like mentioned before, there are more than one type of event and each has their own objectives. The three possible ways of approach and therefore plan an event are; creating an own event, participating as exhibitor or by sponsoring events. (Duncan 2002). Liu et al. (2006) however states that in general there are three types of events; task status related events, events produced by a task and external events.

Once all the goals have been identified, the actual planning process can begin. In this part the process target audience and budget has already been determined. It's important to decide in what season, month, weekend, day and time fit the best. By this, the organizer can anticipate and prepare if something will go wrong. (Wolf 2005,). Having event at the same time with another who targets the same audience, might lead to loss of participants (Campbell et al. 2003). While deciding on what the date the event will be held, the flow of the event, like duration and schedule, should also be determined (Wolf 2005).

There are several of different categories of event types which each of those events requires a different way of planning. However there are none standardized solution for event marketing (Behrer & Larsson 1998). Being flexible in the planning process plays a big role, because circumstances may change over time. Therefore the objectives are important, so that the process won't go to a totally different route (Shone & Parry 2004). "Promoting should start as soon as the objectives and basics has been determined" (Campbell et al. 2004, 61-63). Promotion strategies will be discussed later.

As the figure 6 below shows, in the planning stage the organizer needs to take into consideration many things. The organizers task is to place orders, pay the taxes, and invest in the infrastructure in the event. To organize an event, choosing the organizing team and recruitment of them is needed. These employees need also wages. The organizer should use sufficient amount of time in recruitment, in order to get the best and committed team (Campbell et al. 2003). All these and some other expenses comes to the budget and that will most likely determine what the price fee is for the exhibitors and attendees. (Shone & Parry 2004; Ufi 2015)

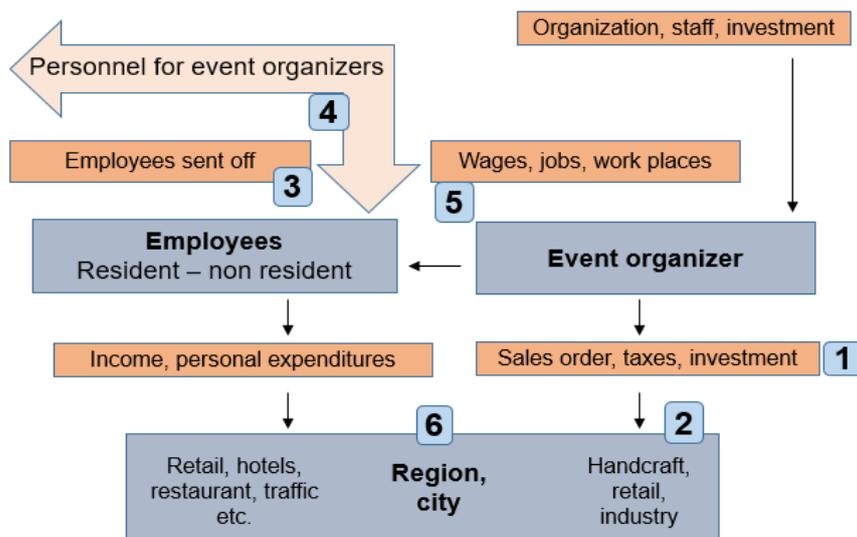


Figure 6: Revised Network – Trade Fair Organizing Company (Adapted from Ufi 2015)

Thanks to the power of internet, there are virtual events, webinars and live streaming events, where the organizer may get a totally new scale of audience (Marketo 2012, 11). Events are heavily relied-upon channel, especially online. According to a survey, 38 % of people overall who participates in online events, participates six times a year (Hosford 2010). However, some surveys says that virtual events have not make a break through yet. Only 30 % of companies says that it's somewhat effective and 48 % are not sure if the virtual event can help them to reach marketing goals (Hosford 2010).

Event planning process consists of various other elements like financial planning, risk management and evaluation (Bowdin et al. 2011; Robinson et al 2010). In this research, the financial and post event evaluations are not discussed. The focus will be on the actual planning stages and how to achieve the target audience and exhibitors to the event whether it's an online or traditional event.

2.3.1 OBJECTIVES OF EVENT MARKETING

One of the main goals in event marketing is to increase consumer experience and brand awareness of company's products (Sneath et al. 2005). These experiences often "involves emotional, cognitive, sensory, behavioral and relational values that

replace functional values". (Schmitt 1999, 26). Some other goals and objectives can be such as raising awareness, raising money, moving an idea or activity forward, generating energy for further events, to reach a specific number of participants, connecting exhibitors and attendees, or to achieve coverage in the media (Ahluwalia 2002; Behrer & Larsson 1998) Basically the objectives can be categorized to corporate-related, product-related, sales, media coverage or personal objectives (Meenaghan 1983).

The objective made will help the organizer to determine what the target audience is. For the organizer the focus and goal will be on key strategic issues such as revenue, improving and creating value, identifying new exhibitor and attendee segments, and creating new ideas like show launches (Cox 2009). Common objective for organizing an event is to increase public and brand awareness of the company (Behrer & Larsson 1998). Behrer & Larsson (1998) continues that, most significant and primary object for both the exhibitor and organizer, is to create and strengthen the brand itself. Creation of goodwill can also be one objective for an organizer (Meenaghan 1983). Arcodia & Reid (2008) has a different opinion. According to their studies, information exchange is the main objective for event organizer, because this creates most of the value for the exhibitors and attendees who will participate to the event.

An event should never be arranged without any reason behind it (Vallo & Häyriinen 2008). When organizing an event, seminar or any other similar convention, the usage of five W's come in hand; who, what, when, where and why comes handy (Wolf et al. 2005). Following things has to be thought and planned thoroughly before every event (Vallo & Häyriinen 2008; Wolf et al 2005):

Who:

- What is the target group?
- How well do the organizer know the audience and their interests?
- How can they be reached?

Knowing and analyzing these will set the base to the event. After this the organizer should have the answer to who the exhibitors and attendees will be, how many should participate to the event, demographical facts etc. Knowing these facts will help the organizer to decide the structure of the event. (Wolf 2005)

What:

- What is the event like?
- Entertaining, educational or formal event?
- Corporate event, social event or something else?

Knowing these questions usually leads to what design the event will be. Social events are usually most flexible kind of events. Determining location, whether it's online or traditional, is there printed material or is it digitalized and the attractiveness plays a big role (Wolf 2005). Corporate events are much more challenging because the organizer needs to handle time management (Vallo & Häyriinen 2008). It requires careful planning like creating of schedules, preparing a layout, delegation of work, creating minding deadlines and availing the current technology (Allen 2005).

When:

- What time of year, month, week, day and specific time?
- Duration of the event?
- When are the potential exhibitors and customers available?

It's crucial to plan this ahead, because it can be a very difficult task (Vallo & Häyriinen 2008). If the event is international, the invitation to the event can be rejected of various reasons. The organizer have to study if the invited quest is having a vacation, does he/she handle cold weather or how much earlier the invitation should been send (Wolf 2005). The organizer have to determine the duration of the event, is it few hours or does it last days (Allen 2005).

Where:

- Where the event should be held in?

- Where can the event be held?

Analyzing these questions may give the organizer a fixed budget to the event. Also it gives answer to logistics, services offered, capacity and availability (Wolf 2005). Online events are currently cost-efficient, and combined with accurate promotion, the reach of big audience is possible.

Why:

- What is the purpose of the event?
- Why should the event be organized?

A skilled organizer are able to keep answers to these questions throughout the planning process, because then it's relatively easy to stay on track in all decisions (Vallo & Häyrynen 2008). Corporate events are usually held because of following reasons; meetings, product launches, creating brand (Wolf 2005).

Whatever the purpose when planning an event is, the objective consist of attracting attendees and exhibitors to participate to the event. This requires ability to sell the idea. The organizers task is to invite attendees to the event so that both organizer and the exhibitors who has participated to the event, will reach their objectives. This idea must be sold, so it's important that the organizer understand also the exhibitors objectives and needs. It's important that the idea is sold that, the both parties' benefits for the outcome of the event. (Ahluwalia 2002)

There are many kinds of events with different objectives. Some events are educational and informational, some raises money, some are non-profits, other focus mainly on bringing people together, and some events are simply preparation for other events. (Ahluwalia 2002, 8) Over time, event themselves have changed from informal to spectacular events, requiring new set of skills, experience, planning, experience and leadership. Event marketing has evolved during last decade with demands, expectations from attendees, sponsors and exhibitors (Wickline 2011).

According to Williams (2006), the objectives in event marketing should and must help to deliver the company's vision and mission. Objectives need to set out clearly and a great tool is to use George Doran's SMART analysis (1981). Some say that Peter Drucker invented the idea of SMART already in 1954, but there is no direct proof that he did. According to Doran (1981), the SMART analysis in event marketing should consist the following criteria's:

1. **Specific:** The organizer has to be specific about what is to be achieved.
2. **Measurable:** System, method or procedure is required to allow the tracking and recording of the action upon which the objective is focused.
3. **Achievable:** The objectives should never be overestimated. The given objective must be achievable and realistic.
4. **Relevant:** Is the objective itself important to the event?
5. **Time-Based:** Clear start and completion date for each objective.

It's important to understand the basis and reasons why events are organized. Event marketing play a big role in professional support and assists companies and managers to grow, succeed and become recognized. However, there has been very little academic literature and research about objectives about event marketing objectives (Arcodia & Reid 2003).

2.3.2 EVENT PROMOTION

Currently there are various ways to promote an event. One important task is to know the target audience and their values. The background work must be done, so that the event organizer finds out the audience habits, values and attitudes. (Lanner & Söderberg 2006) "Promoting an event plays a significant role no matter what size, type or themed the event is itself" (Shone & Parky 2004, 92-93). Events compete for people's time, money and attention and should be promoted efficiently (McDonnel et al. 1999). Public attitudes towards advertising have been a big subject of considerable research and commentary (Meenaghan 2001). Some event organizers may have a small budget on marketing, and should therefore focus on public relations rather than advertising (Shone & Parry 2004).

In event marketing, the promotion should be divided to two parties; promotion to exhibitors and sponsors and promotion to the audience. Each event will be marketed differently depending on the target group, theme of the event, objectives and values (Watt 1998) Suggestion is to do a proper market research to understand the consumer and audience behavior (Getz 1997), and by that decrease the risk of failure in marketing (Watt 1998). McDonnell et al. (1999) suggests that the research should consist the market analysis, consumer research, promotion studies and performance evaluation.

In order to reach a wide audience, there is a need of mix of email, social relations, public relations and other promotions to get the message delivered. "Marketing needs to be aimed to the target market and group" (McDonnell et al. 1999). The key thing is to communicate early with the target group. First step is to be find where the target group spends its time. The content of promotion are beneficial for the event organizer first when the exhibitors and audience have been attracted (Iny 2012). Other key elements is to share the event content aggressively with proper messages, promoting the best content inside the event for attracting the audience and answering questions from the audience (Padveen 2013).

A successful event promotion will consist of a series of different touches like releases, emails, direct mails, direct calls etc. It's important to remember to what kind of an event the organizer are hosting, and linking the correct sales tactic to the potential companies and audience. The event should over satisfy the expectations and create value to the audience and companies. Involving the organizing team to promotion is important because of by that, the team will most likely also promote efficiently for the organizer and achieve either exhibitors or attendees (Allen 2015; Marketo 2012; Shone & Parry 2004)

However, no matter what sort of a promotion the organizer will use, segmentation is vital in order to get the right exhibitors to the event. The exhibitors ultimately is the content of the event and they make it either successful or failure (Freeborn 2015). It's important to spend time on data quality and not throw away the names of potential exhibitors who neglected. They can be potential exhibitors during next

years. In the segmentation, the organizer should focus on demographics like job title, industry, location etc. and be sure that the data can be reused in the future. (Marketo 2012) When being active and creating awareness before the event, desire to attend to the event may increase (Shone & Parry 2004).

What is the right way to promote an event? What channels to use? Like mentioned before, there are no correct answer to this (Watt 1998). However, hard work is needed to be done if the event organizer have ambitious objectives. The power of social media is big, and creates opportunities for the event organizer to be different (Ellwood 2010). Being active in many social media, may create brand awareness. The key thing is to be active and consistent, no matter of the size of the event. (Ellwood 2010).

Social media is not the only channel to promote online. Networking with other companies creates a strong client base. Contacting existing customers and potential prospects by phone, email or by meeting them is especially important in the b2b environment. Like mentioned before, sales is extremely important even in event marketing. Event organizer usually needs to arrange a meeting, whether it's a potential exhibitor or sponsor, and sell the idea. (Bergstein 2012). In order to create a network, the organizer needs to be active in the sales process. What does sales process include? That will be discussed next.

2.3.3 PROSPECTING AND SELLING

Sales process is a series of value-added steps which goal is close a sale. Acquiring customers in b2b environment involves usually variety of different marketing approaches, sales meetings and support steps before the customer is acquired (Skok 2010). For the event organizer, the sales process include acquiring both exhibitors, sponsors and attendees. Event organizer usually has a different sales process for both parties. Usually in b2c environment, an effective advertising and promotion campaign is enough. However in b2b environment, the sales process is much different. It requires a close coordination with people, tools, equipment's, and techniques which also includes advertising and promotion (Nilsson 2015). A large

database of target companies is a key to devote a robust promotional plan. (Marketo 2012) If the company doesn't have a brand, they have to go through a sales process in order to make themselves aware. It's hard to get people visit the website and place an order from there, so consistent promotional work needs to be done (Arnaud 2010).

Like in every other business, the idea have to been sold. If the organizer strives on acquiring exhibitors, sponsors and attendees to participate to the event, they have to sell it. Many companies and sales managers have difficulties in getting products sold and usually complains about unnecessary things rather than analyzing on internal matters (Francis 2013).

If the goal of the event is to become big, the organizer and target company or sponsor will most likely to meet each other before closing any deal. Every meeting can take up to few hours, so this step has to take into consideration in the sales process. Sometimes the outcome of the meeting is rejected, and may be a waste of time. Francis (2013) presents a sales funnel tool in figure 7, which helps the salesman to understand what it really takes to achieve the sale. A sales funnel is a visual representation of what it requires to sell a product or service. It shows how many prospect will remain in each stage (Francis 2013) and what it requires to close a sale. The task is also create productivity in the selling process (Kahle 2013).

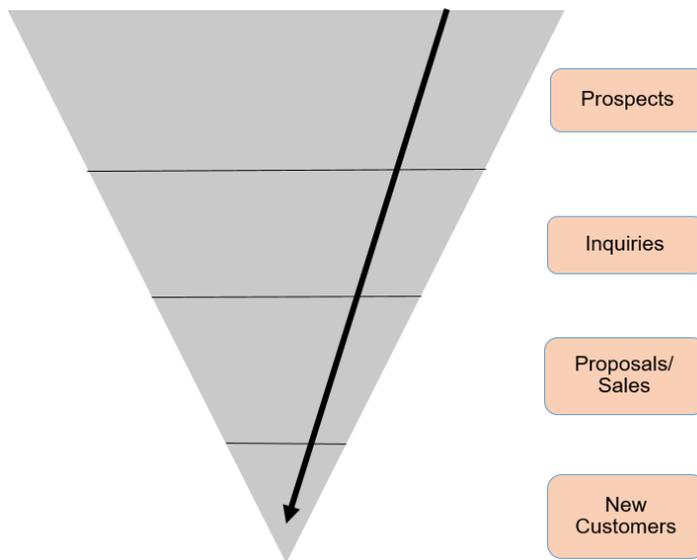


Figure 7: Remodeled Sales Funnel (Francis 2013)

In the beginning, the organizers task is to determine what its target audience is. In this step, the goal is to identify potential customers and make them prospects. Prospects can be qualified according to their special needs, volume of business, financial ability, location or possibilities of growth (Kotler & Armstrong 2012; Blythe 2005). Before contacting the prospect, the organizer should briefly determine how they could help the prospect achieving its goals (Gupta 2003). Keeping the pipeline full of prospects isn't an easy task. However, for an event organizer, they should have sufficient amount of time to do it. Jacques Werth (2006) and Jim Dickie (2006, 16) points out some elements that should be done during the prospecting phase.

1. Keep a highly targeted prospecting list that would most likely attend to the event.
2. Call every name on your list 3-4 times a week.
3. Present the offer in no more than 45 words and have a clear message.
4. Schedule a meeting with the prospect.
5. Telephone prospecting is most productive way to build up the volume. Keep these prospect later to your referrals because it's easier to talk with them in future.

Sometimes the prospect is not ready to take action. That specific lead should be placed into a CRM or an alternative program that informs the salesperson the reason why the prospect neglected. The goal for this is to contact this specific person again when the time is right. (Dickie 2006) When looking at the sales funnel process, the event organizer have to analyze how many leads it takes to arrange a meeting. One important fact to remember is to know how much time it takes to create a prospect (Boyer 2014). Boyer continues that by analyzing this, the sales person can calculate how many minutes it takes to create a qualified prospect and how many prospects it takes to arrange a meeting.

When the meeting is scheduled, the inquiries step takes place. In this part of the funnel, the organizer gathers inside and outside information about the target company. In many cases, before meeting the prospect for the first time, the organizer doesn't know any inside detail information about the person the salesperson is going to meet. Therefore it's important to prepare very well to each meeting, know about the target company and the person the organizer will be meet. In every sales process, the seller should prepare few questions in advance so that he or she can lead the meeting. (Druggan 2014)

The first meeting can be divided in three parts; before the meeting, during the meeting and closing the meeting. Before the meeting the organizer should dress appropriately by trying to anticipate the dress code of the target company. On the day of the meeting, the organizer should arrive few minutes earlier of the arranged time because the first impression plays a big role when building trust. During the meeting, proper handshake and introduction are relevant. In face to face meetings, it's important to create loyalty and trust in the beginning. A good way to start is to talk about other topics rather than going straight to the business. Learning and understanding about the target person's characteristics and its passions are important. The salespersons task is to present how their offerings will add value to the prospect. Salesperson needs to be a good listener and present the product or service towards the customer's needs. In the closing step, the organizer should decide on what actions to take next. Good way is to schedule a new meeting,

arrange follow-up phone calls or close the deal right on spot (Duggan 2014; Kotler & Armstrong 201; Porter 2011)

If an initial meetings has resulted into a proposal meeting, the first meeting have most likely been successful. The first impression have been strong and the seller has been able to understand the potential customer's needs. In this phase the salesperson must have a solution for that. (Bisset 2013). The organizer or seller must be sure that the proposal is clear and well written addressed to the customer's goals, needs and objectives. The proposal should be fully addressed with the problem, issue or job and how mission will be carried. If the proposal is done solid and simple, it usually ends up in cooperation (Lohrey 2015).

In the next stage the relationship has been built. In this research, the customer relationship will not be addressed. The task is to create a model and understanding what it requires to sell a brand to prospects. The funnel helps the company to understand how many prospects and leads they have to create in order to get the sale. After that, usually counted in percentage, the company visually recognizes what is the hit ratio from the first meeting to get to the proposal meeting. Lastly, the funnel measures how many percentage of the proposal meetings ends up in a sale. (Clegg 2012) Knowing exactly which stage of the sales funnel each lead is, it enables to salesperson to forecast his or hers sales in the short-term. This model should constantly be updated according to the sellers' recent sales statistics (Clegg 2012; Lohrey 2015).

2.4 EVENT PARTICIPATION AS AN EXHIBITOR

Marketo (2012, 15) shows the four main reasons why companies participates as exhibitors to events and why event organizer should know these:

1. Creation of branding and awareness
2. Generating leads
3. Engaging with prospects and existing customers
4. Educating attendees

One of the main reasons for a company to participate as an exhibitor is to increase its brand awareness. During the planning process, the event organizer should inquire some inside detail about is there a demand for such as event. These companies should represent the industry of the events theme. (Kittaneh 2014) Currently many companies, whether exhibits alone or joining another, chooses the event based on the branding opportunity afforded by the organizer. (Marketo 2012)

Another important reason for companies to participate as an exhibitor is to generate leads. Over 80 % of the companies who exhibits in an event says that lead generation is the most important goal. This lead generation contains also the direct sales during the event. (Hosford 2010) It's important that the exhibitor are part of an event where the target demographic audience is present. To interact with a group who are familiar with the business area during the event, may generate potential sales leads for the company. The other question is what to do to the leads and prospects after the event (Hosford 2010). Meeting in the event may not be the first encounter between both parties, but most likely most it will be memorable and therefore create brand awareness and recognition (Hosford 2010). For an organizer, they should invite some current customers but also inviting new exhibitors as well. The key thing is to invite those who are interested of the chosen theme of the event. Therefore it's important to plan ahead, generate qualified leads from the existing data sources and choose the right companies participating the event. (Marketo 2012)

The third reason to participate in events is customer engagement and upsell. Those who are engaged prospects are those who shows real interest by attending to webinars, educational sessions and to meetings at a trade show. These people are far more engaged than those who just simply throw the business cards in a bowl. In these situations, the exhibitor have the opportunity to create a positive customer experience. In the event, the exhibitor may introduce the engaged prospect by showing them new products or services they may not know about. By this, the exhibitor may again increase brand awareness. For the organizer, properly planned events may generate a huge buzz long time after the event has been held. If this

step has been launched properly, the exhibitors will most likely participate the same event next time, and may even pay more money for that. (Marketo 2012)

The last reason to exhibit in events is education. Most attends in events for two reasons; to network or to be educated. If the agenda of the event is educational, the information and message presented and marketed is the key elements to focus on. Even though the event is not an educational, it's critical to deliver knowledge and information to the audience so that it's valuable (Vallo & Häyrynen 2008). In these kinds of event both exhibitors and attendees have the opportunity to attend seminars within the event, conduct presentations and have some panel discussion with the audience (Hosford 2010). For the organizer, it can be important to draw out a crowd towards to high-profile speaker, so that the organizer can share unique insights and experience for an audience. (Marketo 2012)

3. BRAND AWARENESS

This part of thesis consist the aspects regarding to brand awareness. How can a company create or increase brand awareness? Why is it so important? How to achieve it? Although the company might not achieve the super brand status, that doesn't mean that a company can't do a lot in order to achieve awareness of its brand.

This chapter on the one side discusses about the definitions of brand, brand awareness and where does brand awareness come from. On the other side brand awareness, brand recognition, brand recall and top of mind is described. In the last part the benefits of having a strong brand and how to achieve it is disclosed.

3.1 BRAND

According to Heding et al. (2009, 9) and Keller (2008) a brand is "a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of them which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those competitors." Technically speaking, whenever a company creates a new product, service, logo, symbol, a new brand has been created (Aaker 2013). Brand is everywhere and it penetrates almost every aspect of our lives like economic, social, cultural, sporting and religion (Mishra 2012). Branding makes it easier to differentiate its products and it helps the companies to communicate efficiently to their customers (Gil et al. 2007).

The concept of brand is not a new phenomenon. It's actually rooted back to the ancient Greek times, where the Greeks used names and marks to identify or indicate their offerings like wines, metals, ointments and pots (Sarkar & Singh 2005). However, the origin of the term "brand" itself comes from the word "brandr", which means to burn the mark of the producer on to the product the producer has made (Ritson 2006).

Before going further, it's important to determine what the difference between a product and a brand is. A product is anything we are able to offer to a market for attention, use or consumption that satisfies a need or want. A product can be a physical object or a service. Aaker (2013, 31) defines a product in five meanings:

1. The **core benefit level** is the fundamental need or want that consumers satisfy by consuming the product or service.
2. The **generic product level** is a basic version of the product containing only those attributes or characteristics absolutely necessary for its functioning but with no distinguishing features.
3. The **expected product level** is a set for attributes or characteristics that buyers normally expect and agree to when they purchase a product.
4. The **augmented product level** includes additional product attributes, benefits, or related services that distinguish the product from competitors.
5. The **potential product level** includes all the augmentations and transformations that a product might ultimately undergo in the future.

A brand is more than a product. According to Joseph (2015) products performs functions whereas brands offers emotions. A brand can have several dimensions that differentiate from products so that it can satisfy the need (Aaker 2013). These dimensions can be either tangible which are related to product performance of the brand, or it can be intangible like emotional feelings about what the brand represents. For example, Coca Cola understands consumer's motivation and creates appealing and relevant images around its products. These intangible images is a way to distinguish different brands in a product category. (Aaker 2013)

Every consumer uses and likes the brand for several different reasons. Products are basically parity of each other because they fulfill the same needs when the consumer wants it. Brands however are what differentiate because that's how brands make consumers feel uniquely about them (Joseph 2015). According to Dahlén et al. (2010), a brand can be classified to four different components. These components covers the areas how a company distinguish itself from the competitor:

1. **Functions** – What is the product or service about? What kind of a brand it is?
2. **Personality / image** – How is the brand perceived by the consumer?
3. **Source** – What is the company signifying?
4. **Difference** – What are the elements that make the difference compared to the competitors?

A brand is ultimately built in the consumer's mind, where he or she gathers all the information regarding about the company, product, service or even the person. These information's have been built from the outside world, the experience and emotions the consumer have had which leads to brand knowledge. If a company have not invested any resources on brand management, the brand image is totally at the mercy of the consumer. Consumers has always an opinion about a product and therefore a company should create an appealing picture of their own products in order to achieve positive impression. (Aaker 2013; Keller 2008; Keller 2009)

3.2 BRAND AWARENESS PART OF BRAND KNOWLEDGE

Brand knowledge can be defined as what we remember and think about a brand. "It is all the memories, whether positive or negative thoughts about the brand". (Keller 2003) Keller (2009, 143) continues; "Brand knowledge is about the feelings, images, perceptions and experiences linked to the brand from the minds of the customers". It's a function of awareness, which relates to the consumers ability to recognize a brand (Keller 2009). Malik et al. (2013, 168) states simply that brand knowledge answers to the question – "what brand means to you".

Using the network memory model, we can consider that brand knowledge has two components; brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness is related to the strength of the brand in person's memory. Brand image is however the consumer's perception about the brand, as reflected by the brand association held in the consumers' minds. (Keller 2013) In other words, brand image is the emotional perceptions customers attach to a certain brand (Dobni & Zinkhan 1990) which influence the consumer (Thompson 2014). Brand image consist usually on multiple

concepts; a) perception, because the brand itself is perceived; b) cognition, because the brand is constantly evaluated cognitively; and c) attitude, because consumers can change their attitude towards the brand after perceiving and evaluating it in their mind. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2002; Heding et al. 2009) Brand image is more challenging than brand awareness, because of small changes in consumers' minds may influence the customers buying decision (Thompson 2015).

It's important that the brand knowledge is mapped in the minds of the individual consumer, because then it's possible to measure if the brand has customer-based equity. By measuring it, the company may understand the drivers about the brand itself in order to support strategic decisions. An easy measure is done through easy-to-obtain proxies such as brand awareness or market share. (Phillips 2008) If the customer is not aware of the brand, the relevance of discussion about brand equity is irrelevant. It's the key to create brand equity, because it creates the differential effect that drives brand (Heding et al. 2009).

The importance of brand knowledge plays a big role in the consumer's decision making process, and therefore companies should invest resources so that the marketers can influence customer's primary reactions towards the brand (Keller 2009, 146). According to Wang and Yang (2010), both brand awareness and brand image can give important signals of how to predict customers purchase decision. For instance, if a company are aware about the consumer's perception about the brand and even predict its upcoming associations, it may create leverage compared to other brands in that product category. Keller (1993) describes in the figure 8 below about what are the dimensions in brand knowledge.

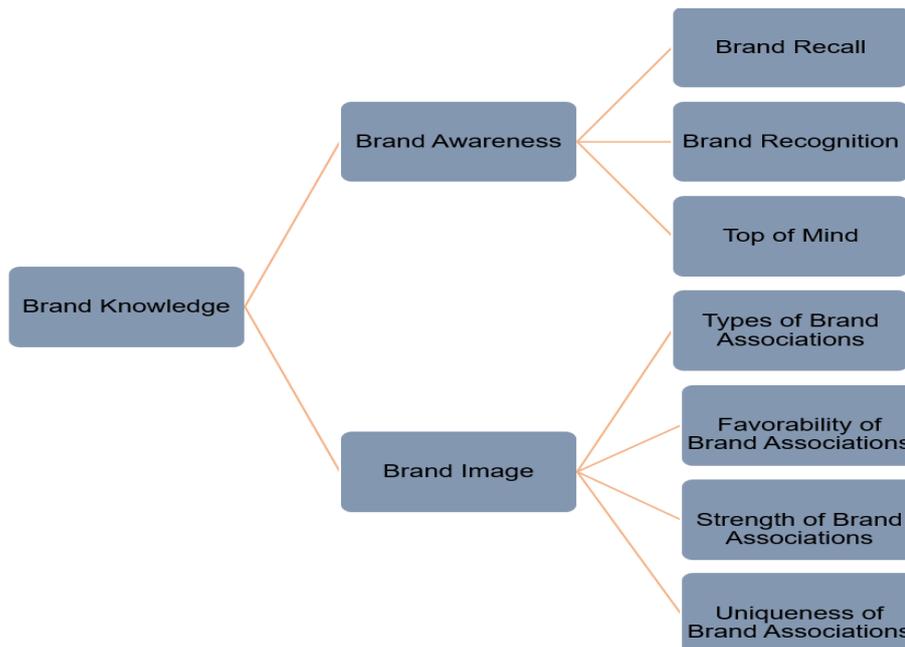


Figure 8: Dimensions of Brand Knowledge (Keller 1993)

One important part of the brand knowledge is the brand personality. It's a slow and steady process, because it's usually built over time. According to Jennifer Aaker (1997, 347) brand personality is defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand". This includes all the experience the consumer have about the brand. She continues that a brand personality is something which the customer can rely on. A high brand personality usually means that the brand has expressed and represented itself well and created some success in the regions they operates. (Aaker 1997)

In this research the author will not focus on brand image perspective. It's however important to understand which other elements in addition to brand awareness, consist in the brand knowledge model. When developing a marketing strategy, and researching about which attitudes customers have about the brand, the importance of brand knowledge should be taking into consideration (Keller 1993). By understanding the content about the knowledge, the marketer can influence the consumer's primary reactions towards the brand and how they are exposed during a certain market activity (Keller 1993).

3.3 BRAND AWARENESS

Brand awareness is a term indicating awareness of a customer about a company, product, service or person. The term “awareness” is strongly related of the consumer’s memory. (Gustafson & Chabot 2007) Aaker (2013) continues that is related to the strength of brand node or trace in memory, which we can measure as the consumer’s ability to identify the brand under different conditions. Brand awareness is the probability that, consumers are familiar about the availability and accessibility of a company’s product and service. (Malik et al. 2013)

A number of studies replies that if a consumer knows a brand, their willingness to purchase the product or service is increased (Oliver 1980; Pritchard et al. 1999). If the company creates brand awareness by showing the features of the product or service, it can create goodwill among the consumers. For instance, within one week after iPhone’s introduction, over 90% of US consumers had heard about the phone. This was an exceptionally high brand awareness. Achieving successful brand awareness means that the brand is easily recognizable. (Gustafson & Chabot 2007)

Creation of brand awareness follows a certain process, although customers may not think about these steps when buying a certain product or service. The first step is that the customer perceives a need for a product. This step contains the information seeking regarding to the product and evaluation on alternatives. At the same time, the customer places a value, both financial and personal on the product he plans to buy. After the purchase, the customer reviews his purchase and make some adjustments. (Nathan 2011)

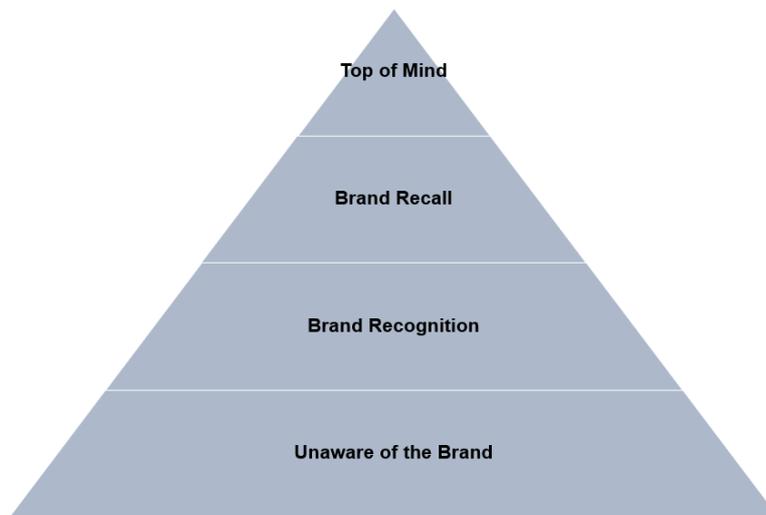


Figure 9: The Awareness Pyramid (Aaker 1991)

As figure 9 shows, Aaker (1991) have created a brand awareness pyramid, which has divided brand awareness into three levels; brand recognition, brand recall and top of mind. In short, consumers instinctively prefers a brand that they have previously seen compared to one that is new for them (Aaker 1991). A familiar brand has always the edge (Aaker 1991) and the old saying “a known devil is better than an unknown angel” fits well in this theme.

3.3.1 BRAND RECOGNITION

The second lowest level of the awareness pyramid (Aaker 1991) is brand recognition. “Brand recognition reflects the ability of consumers to confirm prior exposure to the brand” (Tuominen 1999, 76; Keller 1993, 3). Aaker (1991) says that it can be measured by a recall test, where respondents are given a set of brand names from a given product category, where they will be asked to identify brands. According to Percy and Rossiter (1992) a responded may fail a recognition test, but could still recognize a product later in the market in the time of purchase decision.

Brand recognition is recalled as a part of brand awareness and therefore touches the brand knowledge. A consumer correctly discriminates the brand when having seen it or heard it previously (Dolak 2004; Keller 1993). Keller continues (1998) that brand recognition reflects on the ability of consumers to confirm prior exposure to

the brand when given the brand as a cue. If brand recognition is done correctly, the customer should recognize the product without seeing its name. The goal is to get the customer to recognize the brand without requiring that much of effort. (Dolak 2004; Keller 1998)

The brand managers' task is to create brand recognition from a step, where the consumers are unaware of the brand (Aaker 1991). Getting the brand recognized is about the messages that are delivered to the customer. According to Brown (2015), the brand's core message must be simple, direct and consistent among all marketing channels. Usually the importance of creating brand recognition to the customers are more important than brand recall, especially when the consumer makes purchase decision in-store (Keller 1993).

Currently brand recognition is very important in designs such as packaging. It's all about how to exposure the brand and what message to give to the customer. If a company can't afford huge amount of money in promotion, the visibility, appeal and appearance in packaging a product or service is important. (Keller 2008) Kucuk (2010) adds that brand recognition should be investigated in media advertising, so that the managers can make better decisions in investments, when the goal is to increase brand awareness. However it's important to remember that brand recognition measures only the potential recall ability. In order to find out the actual recall of the brand, the brand recall should be measured (Keller 2008).

3.3.2 BRAND RECALL

The next level in the awareness pyramid (Aaker 1991) is brand recall. It refers to the customers' ability to retrieve the brand when the product category is already given and the needs are fulfilled by the category. The relative importance of brand recall and its recognition on to the extent, which the customer makes decisions in the store. (Keller 1993) Brand recall relates to the consumers' ability to correctly generate the brand from a memory. It can be divided into two categories, unaided and aided recall. In terms of unaided brand recall, a customer remembers a certain

brand when the brand name is brought into discussion. In aided brand recall the name is brought up, enchainning the memory in the customer's mind (Bhasin 2011).

In many cases, the brand is not present in all decision-making situations. In these cases, the consumer has to recall one or several brands from its memories in order to make the purchase decision. (Perce & Rossiter 1992) Bhasin (2011) continues simply that if a customer remembers a brand, the customer will most likely buy it. If the customer doesn't remember it, the customer buys the product he or she remembers. Going from brand recognition to recall is difficult, because it requires in depth-learning, experience and many repetitions. In other words, the more the brand is recognized, it turns eventually to brand recall (Aaker 1991).

The brand recall test is tested by asking a person to name a brand in a product category. However in this step, the respondent is not assisted by having the brand names provided. (Aaker 1991) This is why the recall process takes some time to achieve, because usually it requires several repetitions so that it will be remembered (Aaker 1991). Acquiring brand recall in consumer's mind usually leads to product identity, because then consumers are able to link the brand to a product category (Keller 2013). Companies usually strives to achieve high level of recall in relation to their competitors. The first recalled brand from the test, is often in for that person top of mind (Romaniuk et al. 2004)

3.3.3 TOP OF MIND

The highest level of the pyramid is "top of mind". In this level, the consumer is strongly associated with the product category in memory (Keller 1993). The first brand that comes in mind in a specific product category, is recognized as top of mind. In other words, the top of mind brand is ahead of every other companies in a person's mind (Aaker 1991). Achieving this level gives a company an enormous competitive advantage, and consumers are willing to pay for that. For a brand to be successful, it must occupy the top of mind position within the target audience's consideration set (Elliot & Percy 2007).

Top of mind measures how well brands rank in the mind of the customers. It plays an important role in consumers purchase decision for three different reason. Firstly, it's important that the brand comes immediately to mind to the consumer, when they think about a product category. Secondly, brand awareness can affect purchase decisions about the brand even though there are essentially no other brand associations. Lastly, brand awareness affects consumer's decision making by associating to the brand image itself. (Keller 1993)

Acquiring and maintaining top of mind position requires a long term strategy. The company needs to make the consumer "love" them. Achieving top of mind awareness should always be the objective when planning any kind of advertising strategies. Marketing should be consistent and make buzz. Doing it repeatedly in positive matter, the more awareness increases. (Lautenslager 2002) Maintaining this position acquires that a company should be easily found, making sure that the messages given outside are rich and valuable, understanding the consumers problems and making sure that sales should not be pushed. (Crawford 2003)

3.4 BUILDING A BRAND

Brand strategy should involve the development of a brand and how that brand will be perceived. Building a strong brand requires a strong sustainable business development process, and can take a long time to achieve it. Developing and maintaining a lasting brand requires a lot more than simply changing the logo. (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006) Building a brand starts with accurate understanding the business strategy to ensure strategic consistency (Van Gelder 2003). The strategy is based on the brand core, where the company identifies which brand elements are required to create appropriate and feasible brand propositions to the target group (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006).

When building strong brand, brand evaluation must be taken into account. Quality is everything of a strong brand and a company must deliver superior performance to the consumers compared to the competitors (Keller 2008). Aaker (1991, 89)

presents three types of brand evaluations. In order to create positive brand evaluation, a company should at least aim for one of the following types:

1. Affective responses
 - Involves emotions or feelings toward the brand
2. Cognitive evaluations
 - Inferences made from beliefs about the brand
3. Behavioral intentions
 - Developed from habits or heuristic interest toward the brand

In order to build a strong brand, Keller presents a brand resonance model, which is illustrated in figure 10. The model describes how to create an intense and active loyal relationship with customers. The model is built around four steps, where each next step is conditional to the success of achieving the objectives of the previous one. Brand positioning affects what a customer may think, feel and do about the brand. The model consists of four steps and each step represents a several of questions that customers asks about the brand itself. (Keller 2008)

1. Ensure identification of the brand with customers and association of the brand in customers' minds with a specific product class, product benefit, or customer need.
2. Firmly establish the totality of brand meaning in the minds of customers by strategically linking a host of tangible and intangible brand associations.
3. Elicit the proper customer responses to the brand.
4. Convert brand responses to create brand resonance and an intense, active loyalty relationship between customers and the brand.

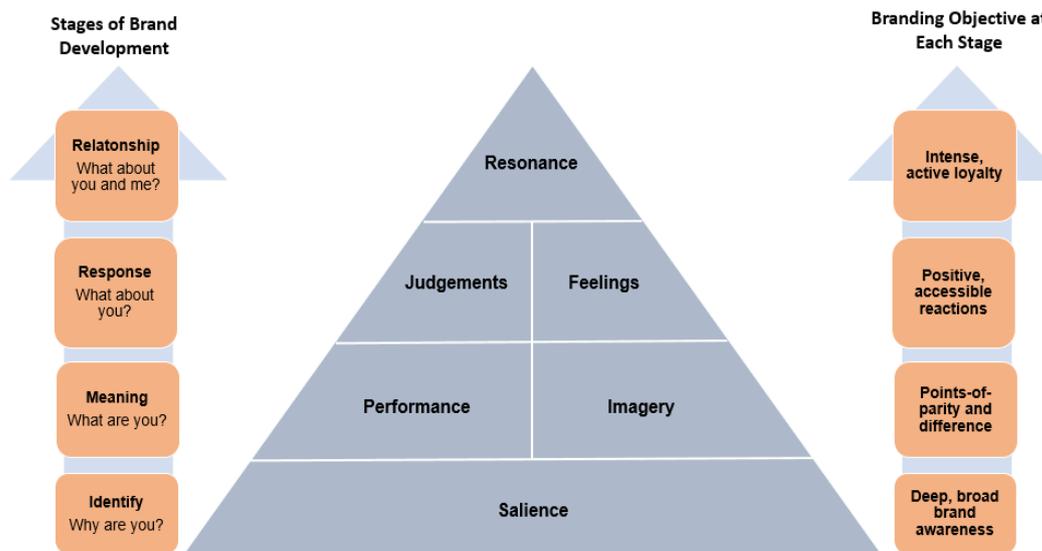


Figure 10: Brand Resonance Pyramid (Keller 2008)

Each step contains an objective. This research focus on the lowest step, brand salience. Creating brand salience means that the company should achieve the right brand identity and awareness. It measures various aspects of brand awareness and how often the brand is aroused under different situations. In other words, brand salience relates to how easily and often the brand is recognized under different purchase conditions. Brand awareness refers to how customers' recall and recognize a brand and how they link it to name, logo, symbol or person. This helps customers to understand the product and in what field it competes. (Aaker 2013; Keller 2008)

The depth of brand awareness measures how likely a brand comes to a customers' mind. An easily recognized brand has a deeper level of awareness compared to a brand who is remembered only when seeing it. The breath of brand awareness concerns the range of purchase decisions and usage where the brand element itself comes to mind. Customers like familiar products and therefore recognition of the brand with a sense of familiarity plays a big role. It's important that consumers think of the brand when they think about the product category itself (Aaker 2013).

Creating a brand isn't as scary and complicated as it sounds. Sammy Blindell (2013) mentions in a video; "You are not going to pay for your lifestyle, your customers are".

She refers to that it's essential to position the company in the marketplace. The company needs constantly prove that they are credible and visible, in order to create a brand. Blindell (2013) continues that there are hundreds of ways to get in front of the target customers. The task is to identify the target customer who the company want to really work with. When building a brand, the company should think of it as a person. The aim is to build a long-term relationship with the customer and constantly being innovative, bold and daring without mimicking other brands. (Blindell & Fryer 2013)

3.4.1 ACHIEVING BRAND AWARENESS

When a company strives for achieving brand awareness, one effective way is to create a story around them. Having a brand alone is not enough to win over the costumers. Businesses today needs the story to be attached to the company's core and strategy. The story should be shared throughout the organization in order to bring the brand even more visible for the customer. (Klotz, 2015) To win over the customers, the brand name should be shouted for as many persons as possible in the target group segment. However, the promotion should include the brand's story, because the audience wants to know the people and story behind the brand (Holland 2015). Achieving brand awareness and creating a brand image comes from an effective brand communication (Zehir et al. 2011). It's a combination of different activities that changes the customer's opinion of a certain company or a product.

It's important that the company makes a written strategy of how they operate when aiming for achieving brand awareness. Today there are several communication channels where to choose from. Social media can for instance raise the brand's awareness and at the same time allow the company to build direct relationships with the customers. (Holland 2015) Companies should be on alert and recognize where potential customers are. The promotion should be allocated in those channels. Understanding the customer's activities and behaviors, and having the ability to take advantage of customer knowledge, can separate the best from others. (Ryan 2011)

The new media environment have created complications to the marketers' because usually they don't know where to communicate with the target audience or how to find them. A basic start to determine the audience is by analyzing the age, location, gender, income, education, occupation, ethnicity, marital status etc. From these demographic factors few, the company should look determine which of them influenced the major purchases. (Walker 2014) Keller (2013) illustrates in figure 11 a very simple tool of what companies should do when create a brand awareness plan. Implementing this model effectively usually results in increase of sales, market shares and profits (Low 2000; Beerli & Santana 1999).



Figure 11: Simple Test for Marketing Communication Effectiveness (Keller 2013, 220)

The marketing communications in figure 11 are the activities by which companies attempt to inform, persuade and remind the consumers about the brands they sell (Keller 2013). The first step is analyze what is the current brand. In this step the target company should create a mental map of the existing brand. After that the company should define the desired brand knowledge. Lastly the question how does the communication option help the brand get from current to desired knowledge with consumers? What are the specific effects on knowledge engendered by communications? The goal is to convey a message that gets results. Keller (2013) points out that the communication consist of knowing the customers, keeping the message simple and tracking the results are important factor to achieve the desired stage. (Keller 2013)

In 1970's the promotional mix consisted of media advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, packaging and publicity (Wolfe & Twedt 1970). Even though the traditional ways to promote is still efficient, the ways to promote has changed rapidly. According to Belch & Belch (2009), in addition to the traditional promote strategies, the social media plays currently a huge role in the promotional mix.

Many companies struggle to make themselves recognizable and spend huge amounts of resources in different marketing activities. Social media allows companies, whether they are big or small, to promote themselves with a low marketing budget. The marketing and the messages sent via social media should be planned carefully through to get the best possible effect. (Hodkinson 2014) The communication in medias must be consistent, well defined and should generate action (Chordas 2009, 74).

People, companies and industries are all different, and therefore there are no right answers to how to increase brand awareness. In social media however, there are some steps that companies should carefully consider if they would want to increase brand awareness. (Hodkinson 2014)

1. Find your market
 - Search different social platforms to find conversations regarding to your industry, before you start reaching out.
2. Make it manageable
 - You don't need to be in every social media platform. Find where your customers are and manage your time there.
3. Get visual
 - In the noisy world of social media, you need to have eye-catching subjects, like photos and videos. The key is to grab the attention of the target audience.
4. Get the right mix of engagement and action
 - Use both engagement and funny posts. Try to analyze the reactions of the followers and by that understanding the consumer behavior.
5. Track everything
 - Growing brand awareness can only be proven if you measure it. Many social media platforms provide the statistics. Analyzing the statistics, you can learn what works and what doesn't. (Hodkinson, 2014)

Social media's role has been integrated in many companies marketing strategy. The communities among the platforms, such as chat rooms and groups have evolved considerably. (Harris & Rae 2010) Businesses are recognizing the potential of social media and digitalization in the networking perspective. These channels helps the company to achieve their brand to get into another level. (Harris & Rae 2010). If the company consistently shares great content to the social media and leverages the powers to the target group, the brand building in these channels bounds to be paid off in the long-term (Agius 2015).

3.4.2 BENEFITS OF HAVING A STRONG BRAND

It's relatively easy to recognize the best-known brands simply by walking down to a supermarket. Some of the strong brands has been leaders in their product categories for decades. Building strong brands has currently become a marketing priority for several companies because it provides advantages to establish and creating an identity in a market that customer recognize. Nothing is permanent, markets changes all the time, and leading brands more likely loses their edge. Over half of the leading brands lost their edge over periods from 12 to 39 years. Once the leadership is lost, it's rarely retained back. Most of the big companies have either been foundered, shrunk, acquired by rivals or grown obsolete. (Aaker 2013) Table 1 below illustrates how different brands have either maintained, shrunk or foundered between 1923 and 1997 (Golder 2000).

Category	1923 Leaders	1997 Leaders
Cleansers	Old Dutch	Comet Soft Scrub Ajax
Chewing gum	Wrigley Adams	Wrigley's Bubble Yum Bublicious
Motorcycles	Indian Harley-Davidson	Harley-Davidson Honda Kawasaki
Five cent mint candies	Life Savers	Breath-Savers Tic Tac Certs
Peanut butter	Beech-Nut Heinz	Jif Skippy Peter Pan
Razors	Gillette Gem Ever Ready	Gillette Bic Schick
Soft drinks	Coca-Cola Cliquot Club Bevo	Coca-Cola Pepsi Dr. Pepper
Coffee	Arbuckle's Yuban White House Hotel Astor	Folger's Maxwell House Hills Bros.
Laundry soap	Fels Naptha Octagon Kirk	Tide Cheer Wisk
Cigarettes	Camel Fatima Pall Mall	Marlboro Winston Newport
Shoes	Douglas Walkover	Nike Reebok
Candy	Huylers Loft Page & Shaw	Hershey M&M/Mars Nestle
Jelly or jam	Heinz	Smucker's Welch's Kraft

Table 1: Brands Then and Now (Golder 2000)

Even though brand leaders lose their edges over time, it doesn't mean that the company shouldn't aim to become a strong brand. Having a strong brand means most likely that the company has successfully created brand awareness, and therefore having a competitive edge in some era of the business. However as table above shows, companies tend to fall out from the competition even though they have been a market leader at some point. It is assumed that strong brands hold strong, unique and favorable associations in consumers' minds but eventually lose that position. (Keller 1993)

Strong brands help customers in the evaluation process in the differentiation of the firms (Davis et al. 2008) and therefore may help a company to survive longer than its competitors (Tuominen 1999). Cobb-Walgen et al. (1995) states simply that consumers are willing to pay more for brand names because "brand names add value". A positive experience towards the brand will eventually strengthen the customer's attachment to the brand itself. When the brand has achieved as

dominant player in an industry, it will most likely become the generic name of that industry, like Coca Cola in beverage industry. (Keller 2007)

When having a successful and strong brand, the probability of profit is increasing because by adding an emotional value, customers are willing to buy the product. (Aaker 1991) “A strong brand influences the buying decision and shapes the ownership experience” (Dolak 2004, 3). Keller (2009, 143 continues) that “having a strong and positive brand, the marketing activities are more likely to affect positively on consumers’ minds”. Keller (2008) lists out three benefits that brand awareness delivers:

1. The learning advantage: The higher the level of awareness is, the easier it’s learn about it. This leads to that the brand is easy to register in the mind.
2. The brand itself is a part of the consideration set
3. The choice advantage within a low-involvement purchase decision when the consumer lacks purchase motivation.

When the strong brand status has been acquired, the company are usually less vulnerable to competitive actions or crises because customers are loyal to them (Keller 2001.) Usually these attachments are emotional towards the brand and the customers are willing to pay more for it (Keller 1993). Also the development and a launch of a new product is less risky (Dolak 2004; Keller 1993).

Hoeffler and Keller (2003) introduces a brand strength summary model in figure 12, which proves that there is a link between strong brands that creates advantages in consumer’s behavior and mind. Having a strong brand enables the company to higher price premiums, creates better outcome of their marketing efforts and can make the consumers pay more attention towards the message and communication tactics the company does.

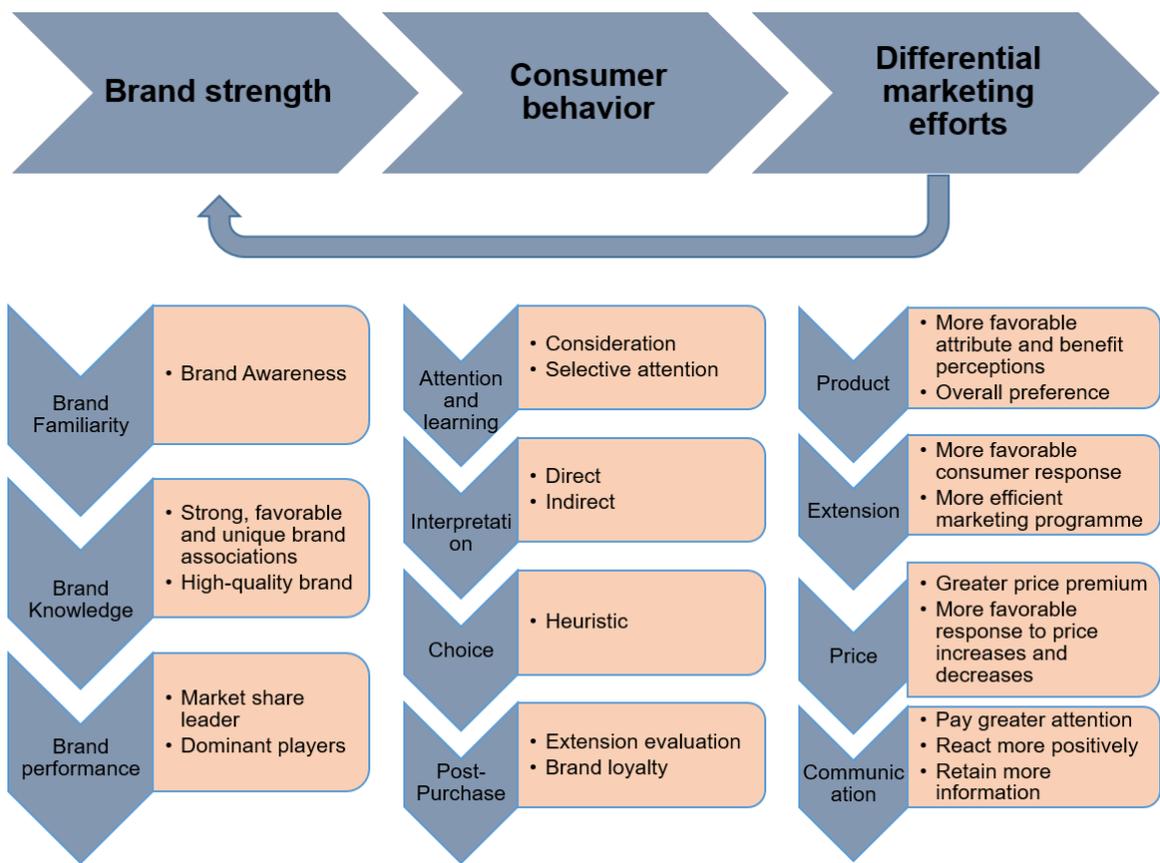


Figure 12: Re-modeled Brand Strength Summary (Adapted from Hoeffler & Keller 2003)

According to Keller (1993), it is assumed that strong brand holds unique and favorable association in the minds of consumers. It acts as an influence of a choice by pressing emotional buttons to the customer. It creates loyalty and advocacy, and the brands goes beyond by making promises to the tangible benefits. It enables the company to command a premium price (Cobb-Walgen et al. 1995), because customers are willing to pay for a brand. Strong brand provides also a vital differentiator, especially when the product or service is widely offered. A strong brand also provides a platform to for growth, because recognition of what the brand stands for can be transferred into new business and markets. (Cobb-Walgen et al. 1995; Dolak 2004; Keller 1993)

4. ELECTRONIC SPORT

In this section of research the industry electronic sport will be thoroughly explained. In the beginning the definition eSport is analyzed and how it has developed during its history. After that the importance of online spectatorship is properly opened. In the last part of the chapter the salaries and price pools among players and tournaments in the eSport industry will be discussed. In the last part, there will be brief discussion about where the future of eSport might be.

4.1 ESPORT

Electronic sports, or more commonly known as eSports, is the term used to describe playing high-level games and spectating of digital games in a competitive atmosphere (Hamilton et al. 2012). Danielsson (2005) continues that, eSport is a subculture in a video game industry, where people are watching and spectating the best players in a specific game. ESport is competition based online gaming, where players are participating with other players in events or they play from their homes. Michael Wagner (2006) believes that eSport as an industry, is still on an infancy level. Wagner (2006, 3) has defined eSport in the following manner; “eSports is an area of sport activities in which people develop and train mental or physical abilities in the use of information and communication technologies”. This definition is almost nine years old and mainly focus on team disciplines.

ESport can be said that it is established as a new entertainment genre. Today more and more players stream their online gaming, which has led to more spectators for the professional gamers. In fact, according to some studies, today more people prefer watching other people playing rather than playing themselves. (Kaytone et al. 2012) With the ease of fast Internet and current streaming, eSport has started to reach great numbers of spectatorship. The trend of watching other people playing emerged from South Korean and Chinese internet cafés where people couldn't afford to buy themselves consoles or computers. Players played for several of hours and watched other players play when they were in the café. (Kharpal 2013)

Currently the spectating has developed from cafeterias into Internet based spectating (Kaytone et al. 2012).

There has been several discussions about whether competitive gaming is a sport or not. To some extent, this discussion is irrelevant for the academic discussion. Many researches has tended to concentrate on more negative aspects when talking about eSport, like addiction, excessive play, aggression during games and psychological consequences (Griffiths et al. 2003) However, there is a clear connection between eSport and traditional sport. Both requires tremendous amount of training, resting and hand-eye coordination in order to be successful. (Wagner 2016) Similar to traditional sport, “eSport attract a massive community of pro-gamers, clans, sponsors, managers, commentators, spectators and fans in different events “(Kaytone et al. 2012, 1).

Like in many traditional sport, in eSports there are coaches, games are carefully studies and the strategies chosen can lead to either victory or defeat. Professional gamers dedicate several of hours from their days to exercise their minds and keep their bodies in shape. According to some studies, the professional eSport gamers eats healthy meals and take care of their sleeping. These are same things that’s required in traditional professional sport. (Lynn 2015)

While the phenomenon of eSports is still in its “infancy” level, there are promises for an unprecedented marketing potential (Seo 2013). In South Korea alone, there were 430 professional eSport players year 2013, that practice the industry as a form of work and make their living out of eSport (Seo 2013). In the global perspective, there were in year 2013 4865 professional gamers. Two years later in 2015, there were 12248 professional gamers worldwide (Esport earning 2015).

But why do people play eSport as professionals? The other question is that why do people spectate other playin? Seo (2013) points out a re-modeled 4E-model in figure 13, which describes the consumers and spectators experience from eSport and why they either plays or spectates it.

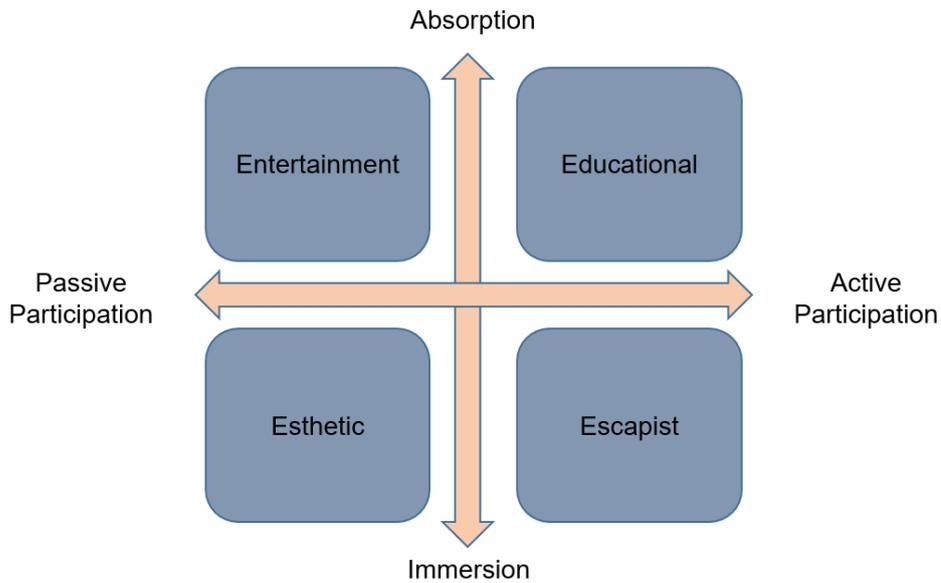


Figure 13: The 4Es of Experience Economy (Seo 2013)

Escapist experience “entails active participation and immersion of consumers into a performance eliciting the experience” (Seo 2013, 1550). This is a stage where consumers and spectators are so involved in the situation that nothing else seems to matter. For eSports, escapist is rooted within the activities that are necessary to the competitive gaming. In other words, professional gamers plays computer games as a form of sport. (Molesworth 2009; Seo 2013) The escapist experience started when Blizzard Entertainment provided games in 1996, where player could create own customized games. This platform provided an opportunity for players to start and join games and the gamers were responsible for their own advertisement. (Seo 2013)

Esthetic in eSports “performances producing the esthetic experience involve those where participants are still immersed in a performance”. The thing is that, while not all the eSport players or spectators can participate in eSport tournaments themselves, those who come to spectate and watch the tournament inevitably immerse to the game. In the tournaments where spectators can participate in, these tournaments are the most usually place for the spectators to share their devotion and aspiration within the event. (Christophers & Scholz 2011; Seo 2013)

The educational experience in 4E-models is “experience performances where participants are actively engaged, but they are more outside the event than immersed in the action” (Seo 2013, 1552). In eSport, the performances are important and valuable for increase of the consumers’ knowledge about the industry itself. Some of the performances are provided by the game companies themselves like in-game tutorials or exhibitions. The majority of the educational performances are however done by the eSport gamers themselves, like streaming. Game communities plays an essential role in the educational aspect, when other gamers provide strategies, tactics and walkthroughs (Rambusch et al. 2007) in order to pass some hard barrier inside a game. Gamers share their experience in forums, community sites or by live streaming videos. Communities may also provide spectators the most recent eSport events or when the gamers together with a clan tries to pass a certain mission of a specific game. (Seo 2013)

The experience in entertainment involve “those performances in which gamers participate more passively, where the connection with a performance is more likely to be the one of absorption than of immersion, and which generally occurs when we view a performance” (Seo 2013, 1553) The experience is created mainly from the streamed broadcasts and the live events that are held by game companies, communities or small event organizers. Currently when the trend and culture of eSport have increased tremendously, gamers and spectators find it more pleasure not only playing the games themselves, but by watching other playing. (Christophers & Scholz 2011; Seo 2013) In South Korea there are several television channels that provide live eSport events, such as StarCraft II, DotA 2 and Counter-Strike (Peichi, 2008). The industry seems to grow exponentially. The questions is when does the grown slow down?

4.2 DEVELOPMENT OF ESPORT

The definition eSport dates back to late nineties, when Online Gamers Association (OGA) were created. In year 1993, before OGA was created, the first tournaments of networked first person shooting games were held. In these events, teams of online players called clans, competed in the tournaments. Among the first

tournaments, the events where held in front of a live audience. (Wagner 2006) Competitive gaming has however existed even earlier, where players in arcade halls competed against each other to best others high scores (Edwards 2013). Unlike other computer-games, where gamers play to enjoy the storytelling of a game, in eSport gamers play primarily to improve themselves in a competitive environment (Molesworth 2009).

Lee et al. (2010, 39) states that “eSport may be classified into two era; arcade and internet era”. During the early arcade era from late 1970’s to early 1990’s popular games like Pong, NBA Jam and Virtua Jam took the stages. With the first video gaming, eSport spectatorship came to existence at the time. Spectatorship were on-site because Internet were not available yet, and people tended to come visit other players gaming in the arcade. During this era, games were mostly human versus computer (Taylor 2012).

During arcade era, the competition between different arcade houses and from there among the players improved slightly. The competition between players were basically turn based in the arcade halls, where players tried to achieve high scores of a specific. Some arcade halls however worked together, when they collected the high score lists of various games in order to keep track who was the best player. The spreading and communication of these scores happened mostly via game magazines. (Borowy & Jin 2013) It didn’t take long for the arcade halls to jump from high score competition into organized tournaments. Atari held in 1980, the first video game competition, which attracted over ten thousand participant (Edwards 2013).

ESport truly started to flourish at the turn of the millennium (Edwards 2013). Increase of consumers’ literacy and the huge popularity towards arcade games, created the next step in eSport history. The next step was creation of local area networks (LAN) and rise of the PC. (Edwards 2013; Hartmann & Klimmt 2006) The development and advancement of local area networks, created the game modes towards human versus human modes (Griffiths et al. 2003). During these early events, more than 800 games from 78 countries participated in the 2008 World

Cyber Games (WCG). This was the moment, when eSport were recognized as an emerging spectator sport. (Lee et al. 2010)

The modern history of eSports is dominated by two developments. The first is the increase of consumer literacy and popularity towards the computer games. Entertainment Software Association reported that 49 % of the US households owned at least one game console during year 2012. The second is the dynamic technological development of Internet and digital technologies. This development enabled players to co-play, which allowed them to compete with each other over Internet. (Seo 2013) Currently competitive gaming is increased tremendously in Western and Asian countries. For instance in South Korea, many people claims that their national sport is an electronic sport game, StarCraft I. (Wagner 2007)

The current market for competitive eSport gaming is truly international. Almost every big event that is held in a physical place or online, and involves players around the world. (Seo 2013) Currently, most of eSport events that are held, are played with “clans”, where professional eSport gamers compete in teams in either physical or online tournaments. For instance the 2010 World Computer Gaming tournament involved over 450 participants all around the world and attracted over 9.5 million spectators during a weekend (Seo 2013).

The eSport is relatively unknown for majority because of its non-physical presence (Seo 2013). ESport as an industry get little respect from many people, even though there are tens of millions of fans around the globe (Johnson 2015). Many claims that there are no engagement between fans and players. However, gamers and spectators seek their engagement in eSport via Internet or online, where there is involved only nonphysical objects. What consumers value is the experience associated to the industry, and currently consumers are able to spectate almost any game, regarding on where in the planet the server is up. (Seo 2013)

Currently eSport has grown to a massive platforms like Twitch.Tv or YouTube. This is due to the emerged Internet community, where consumers can easily use fast Internet connection. Providing an easy internet access without any further software's

or hardware's has increased the spectatorship tremendously. Internet has created communities among eSport games, where people share their mutual interests and feelings. Professional gamers has found each other and created clans to compete against other clans. The combination of entertainment, social community and convenience have created a truly an entertainment industry, which seems to have no end. (Edge 2013)

4.3 SPECTATORSHIP

Spectatorship can be described as the act of observing an event without participating in the event. Video games is primarily designed for the players themselves but spectatorship and streaming of other players gaming has increased majorly. (Cheung & Huang 2011) In eSport, the spectators watch the game and doesn't directly interact with the game. Seo (2015, 3) continues that "spectatorship reinforces the subcultural element within eSports consumption by strengthening boundaries between the social world of eSports".

The concept of spectatorship is not a new phenomenon. It has been around for a long time like in sports and theaters. The traditional spectatorships has many similarities with eSport spectatorship. However there are other attributes in eSport spectatorship, that doesn't appear in traditional spectator platforms. ESport has some unique aspects, such as a virtual camera, that the spectator can control however he/she want's, and follow the direction of a specific game however the spectator wants (Schäfer 2011).

The topic of spectatorship interests in many fields like film industry, sport and sociology (McDonald et al. 2002). However, the spectatorship is much more than the act of watching. People engage with the event and topic, talks about with people with similar interest and by that create communities (Crawford 2003). You can say that people watch the eSports for the same reasons as they watch sports. They want to know the story of the game, personalities of the players, or just to watch the graphics and beautifulness of the game (Le 2015).

Professionalized eSport players manifests rivalry with each other by adhering to predetermined social rules. The rules of the games includes external and social regulations established within the game events. These rules has attracted many consumers and the consumption, online streaming, and spectatorship in eSports has increased tremendously during last years. (Seo 2015) Cheung and Huang (2011) continues that the presence of a large spectating audience creates more attention towards the game, drives up the sales, can increase advertising revenues and also improve the experience for the players themselves.

According to Newzoos' (2014) studies, over 200 million people watched live stream gaming in multiple platforms during 2013. These spectators alone came from events, where professional gamers played against each other. For instance, League of Legends world championship attracted over 30 million online spectator viewers alone, more than double US baseball's World Series or even the game seven of NBA's finals. Another example of exponential growth of eSports, is the fact that over seven hundred big eSport events were held in 2012 as opposed only ten in 2010. (Popper 2013).

More and more players enjoy streaming their games, and by doing so, they attract more viewers. In some studies, the current trend is that people rather watch other playing than playing themselves. With this content alone, the advertising and marketing for companies can play important role in their marketing strategy because the potential audience is huge. ESport events attracts professional gamers, teams, commentators, sponsor and spectators all in the same room at the same time. This creates new marketing opportunities, creates new jobs and for some companies an opportunity to increase brand awareness. (Kaytone et al. 2012)

In electronic sport industry, the biggest platform where people spectate games is Twitch. Twitch.tv is a live streaming platform owned by Amazon. In 2013, they had monthly over 50 million viewers, and in year 2014 it had fourth biggest source peak traffic in United States. Each of these visitors spend an average of 106 minutes in Twitch.tv every day and watch other playing. (Diris 2015; Needleman 2015) During

the first quarter of 2015 the numbers have even increased. Over 100 million viewers spectate over 1.5 million broadcasts monthly. (Needleman 2015).

More than 70 million people watch annually eSports over the television or Internet. South Korea has even an own TV channel that is devoted directly to eSports. In October 2014, a championship match at League of Legend, attracted over 8.5 million watchers in South Korea TV, which is more than in professional NHL Stanley Cup finals. In the same year, League of Legends championship, attracted over 40 thousand attendees to a stadium in South Korea Seoul. (Wingfield 2014)

Today the spectatorships in eSports are done usually in in-game spectator mode. This mode refers to a mode, where the spectator can follow what happens in the game, without influencing the state of the game. The spectator can usually follow any player whenever he or she want's. By doing this, the spectator can study different gamers strategies or tactics in order to learn from the best. (Schäfer 2011). In 2012 total online viewership of eSports was around 134 million watchers. Two years later it had grown to 204 million. It's estimated that by year 2017, 335 million people will watch the best players to play head to head online (Oddshot 2015).

Inside the spectators there are variety of different spectating personas and people spectate other gamers for different reasons. Edge (2013) and Cheung & Huang (2011) has defined few different spectator personas, which is formulated in figure 14. The personas and reasons why spectators exists in eSport industry are they are inspired of others, learning purposes, seeking of entertained and of communal reasons (Edge 2013; Cheung & Huang 2011).

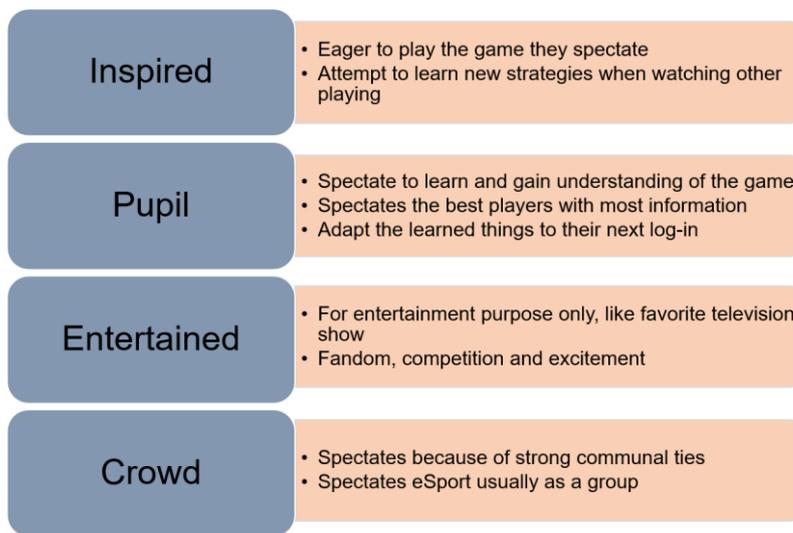


Figure 14: Personas among eSport Spectators (Remodeled from Cheung & Huang 2011; Edge 2013)

Where there are millions of spectators, there is always companies involved. If some event attracts big mass of audience there is money involved. The event price pools and salaries of events, online streams and sponsorship in the context of eSport is discussed next.

4.4 PRICE POOLS AND SALARIES

ESport players, also called gamers, mainly earn their salary through sponsors, contracts, prize pools through events and in some cases gets support from their local community (Danielsson 2005). During past years, some of the gamers get their paychecks via online gaming, when spectators watch their live streams. The areas of how the industry itself makes money are team and individual revenue models, event revenue models and media revenue models (Mah 2015).

The live events where money is involved has increased tremendously. Currently there are events held every day where money is involved. However the price pools varies of these events all from few hundred dollars to few millions. Top players can earn over 250 000 dollars per tournament, where the tournament last typically two days (Kharpal 2013). During the first three quarters of year 2015 alone, there has been over 3700 eSport events with an average price pool of 15.5 thousand dollars.

Some of the gamers has alone earned over few million dollars alone year 2015. (ESport earnings, 2015)

Like mentioned above, the trend of eSport has increased. During year 1998, when the industry were at is early stage, there was held total of seven official eSport tournaments in the world to known. Two years later the number had increased to 46. The total prize money during year 2002 was 663 thousand dollars. During that year, there were total of 207 eSport players that were conducted as professionals. Average earning for those players were little over 3 thousand dollars. Three years later in 2005 there were held 253 events with total of 4.5 million dollars in share. (ESport earning, 2015)

During year 2010 the numbers event increased. Total amounts of tournaments held was 794 with total of 5.5 million dollars of prize money. During year 2010, the players which were recognized as professional players where already almost 2600. Year 2010 was the turning point, where professional players started to really see this industry as a job. The total prize money during year 2010 had not increased as much, because new professional active players came to the industry. Next year the statistics shows that the companies and sponsors really started to invest to industry and events, because the prize pool almost doubled from 5.5 million to 9.9 million dollars. At the same time the number of professional gamers only increased by 10 %. (ESport earning, 2015)

Numbers have increased even further in 2015 when compared to the statistics of year 2014. When analyzing only the three first quarters of 2015 against the whole year 2014, total prize money in tournaments had already exceeded 60 million dollars, which was 63 % bigger than year 2014. However, professional gamers in the field had also increased 57 percent into eleven thousand professional gamers. The prize money that are discussed covers only the live events either physical or online, not the salaries players get from sponsors or by spectatorship. (ESport earning, 2015) Table 2 below illustrates how the eSport as an industry has evolved during the last 17 years.

Year	Total Prize Money (Dollars)	Total Tournaments	Professional eSport Gamers	Average Tournament Prize Pool (Dollars)	Average Earnings / Player (Dollars)
1998	110,900	7	28	15,842	3,960
2000	663,005	46	207	14,413	3,302
2002	848,146	38	459	22,319	1,847
2004	2,183,160	175	732	12,475	2,982
2006	4,524,679	298	1148	15,495	3,941
2008	6,515,420	415	1689	15,699	3,857
2010	5,470,869	800	2686	6,838	2,036
2012	13,394,004	1679	3971	7,977	3,372
2014	36,460,205	2584	7081	14,109	5,149
2015 (Q1-Q3)	60,958,407	3907	11250	15,626	5,418

Table 2: Overall eSports Stats (Remodeled from ESport Earning, 2015)

Unfortunately there are currently only several games that attracts the sponsors, spectators and players in eSport industry. Therefore the majority of the money is addressed more towards those games. The games are DotA 2, League of Legends, StarCraft II, Counter-Strike and Counter-Strike: Global Offensive. These games differs from each other by more strategy approach to hand-eye skills. (Mind Games 2015; Wingfield 2014) Table 3 describes which games are most attracted, when focusing on prize pools.

Rank	Computer game	Total prizes in USD	Number of tournamnets	Developer	Country of origin	Release year
1.	Starcraft II	6,546,885	297	Blizzard Entertainment	United States	2012
2.	League of Legends	4,710,325	128	Riot Games	United States	2009
3.	DotA 2	3,637,300	53	Valve Corporation	United States	Beta
4.	Counter Strike 1.6	1,087,415	46	Valve Corporation	United States	2003
5.	Call of Duty MW3	1,032,250	6	Infinity Ward	United States	2011
6.	Heroes of Newerth	439,900	44	S2 Games	United States	2010
7.	Counter Strike Source	283,550	23	Valve Corporation	United States	2004
8.	Call of Duty Black Ops	281,000	8	Treyarch	United States	2012
9.	Shootmania Storm	120,000	2	Nadeo	France	Beta
10.	Counter Strike Global Offensive	114,450	7	Valve Corporation	United States	2012

Table 3: Top 10 eSport Games Ranked According to the Total Prize Pool (Seo 2013)

These games requires different skills from the players. Depending on the game, the required skills differs to stay at the top. For some of the games, the player needs tremendous amount of reflexes and in other strategic thinking. In most cases, a 30 year old gamer is already conducted as retired gamers due his slow reflexes compared to 16 year old. However, every eSport player in professional level require tremendous mental skills such as cohesion, communication and emotional control in order to handle the stressful situation. Games such as StarCraft 2, requires intense concentration and mental focus. Like in traditional sport, if mistakes or errors occurs, the outcome may cost some points or even matches. If errors continuously appear, player may have self-doubts, anxiety raising and their confidence will decrease. Therefore in addition to coach, eSport clubs have even mental coaches in their roster. (Mind Games, 2015)

Where there are massive amount of spectators there are usually sponsors. ESport is no exception in this. Big company's like Coca-Cola, Red Bull and American Express have lined as a sponsors in eSport. There are even universities in US that provide scholarships in eSport industry by sponsoring player's computers, rooms and coaches. In year 2013, US State Department began granting some visas to professional eSport gamers under the name of traditional athletes. (Wingfield, 2014) The trend with sponsors and support by schools have a big impact on the industry and gaming in general. As the competitive gaming communities become larger, it's important to pay attention to the players and brands which has big influence in the communities at large (Ziarko 2015).

Currently the professional gamer don't necessary need to be an elite in order achieve sponsorship. One requirement is to be active on social media and have a fan base. Depending on the size of the sponsorship, the usual minimum requirement is to have few thousand followers on either Facebook or Twitter. Currently the new platform Periscope, is a tool to create brand awareness for the player and by that create a fan base. Usually for these "small" professional gamers, the sponsorship is more provided in a material form such as computers, screens, keyboards etc. Other requirements for getting a sponsorships depends on which games the player plays,

have he/she entered some previous tournaments and does the gamer play locally/internationally. (Madcatz 2015; Esportify 2015)

Twitch.tv also provides gamers the opportunity to make money through gaming. When being active, dedicated and having an interactive fan base, the gamer can make some profits in addition to participating to events for instance by creating speed runs, playing classic games or doing something different inside a game. The goal is to attract new visitors. (Webb 2012; Edge 2013) YouTube also provides some revenues for its user depending on how many subscribers or viewers the video has. However the revenues doesn't necessary come from this alone. Instead YouTube pays from the share it earns from showing advertisings during the videos (Shah, 2015)

4.5 PROGNOSIS OF ESPORT

Like stated before, professional video gaming has increased tremendously during the past years (Schäfer 2011). In fact, it's estimated that eSport will surpass both NFL and Formula one by year 2020. One reason for this is the easy access to online streaming and the increase of eSport communities. Whatever the reasons is why the audience spectate the events, whether it's inspiring reasons, pupil perspective, entertained or crowd reasons (Cheung & Huang 2011; Edge 2013), the prognosis of those in the near future is bright. Twitch.tv is the largest online streaming service that provided over 16 billion minutes watching materials per month in 2014. (Bates 2015)

But how will the future look like in this field? The fact is that any person with a decent internet connection can spectate the best in certain eSport game and by that learn from it and may become a professional one day. When practicing a lot, and by that increasing own skills, the player may master a niche area of the game. From there the player will usually create a brand of himself in the game. This step usually attracts players to go even further. The next step is to become one of the best players in the community. These players can play either alone or with a clan to win some events. (Bates 2015; Oddshot 2015)

Up to this point players have made a name of themselves in-game. Thanks to the different online streaming platforms, these games are available for all. Twitch.tv for example provides players who had previously created a brand of himself in-game, to create a brand outside the game. (Bates 2015) Currently big company's like Red Bull, Coca Cola and McDonald's have paid attention to eSports events and invested big amount of marketing capital to the field (Gaudiosi 2014).

Even though eSports may still be in a way a subculture, the gaming community is growing rapidly and soon will become a mainstream in entertainment if the slope is increasing as fast as it has during last few years. (Kanne 2013) High schools and universities has also started to provide scholarships to gamer, and they are under the name of traditional athletes (Kanne 2013; Wingfield, 2014). The number of universities that provides scholarships are just increasing. Scott Dalrymble, the President of Columbia College stated; "eSport is not the future, it's present today" Even more pupils are seeking for the scholarships and there is clearly a demand (Mueller 2015).

ESports has turned out to be a big industry and teams and players are managed like other sport teams. They have coaches, environments where to play, training sessions and even big live audience. The players even have multiple career paths to choose from. Games varies from first person shooting, strategy and even sport games. (Durrani 2015) Players have started to become true stars in their communities and even superstars in countries like South Korea. That position attracts millions of gamers and this is exactly what the sponsors' wants (Horstmann 2012).

Companies like Cineplex Entertainment Inc. has started to invest in the industry. They invested over 15 million U.S dollars in eSports competitions across Canada. They acquired WorldGaming for 10 million dollars, in order to use their platform for tournaments and competitive gaming community. The games and events will take place on theatre stages, In front of a live audience and big screen. The events will also being streamed in other venues and online. Cineplex mission is also to draw local gamers to tournaments, where there will be qualifications to national and

international tournaments. According to Cineplex co-founder Sten Dragoti believes that eSports isn't just a fad, "it's here to stay". (Henderson 2015) Cineplex predicts that this attracts even more players and spectators to the industry, because it attracts local areas and creates opportunities for players to become small heroes (Horstmann 2012).

By acquiring WorldGaming, Cineplex will be the one company who runs the leagues in eSports, especially in Canada. In the near future, this model can create some jobs for local communities. The figure 15 shows how the money can flow in the ecosystem. The league can make money in the following ways; media rights, online streaming, sponsorships or local revenue (ticket sales, merchandises etc.) From here the teams who perform well will also get prize pools and players' salaries. They get their money from prize winnings, merchandise and through sponsorships. (Pau 2015)

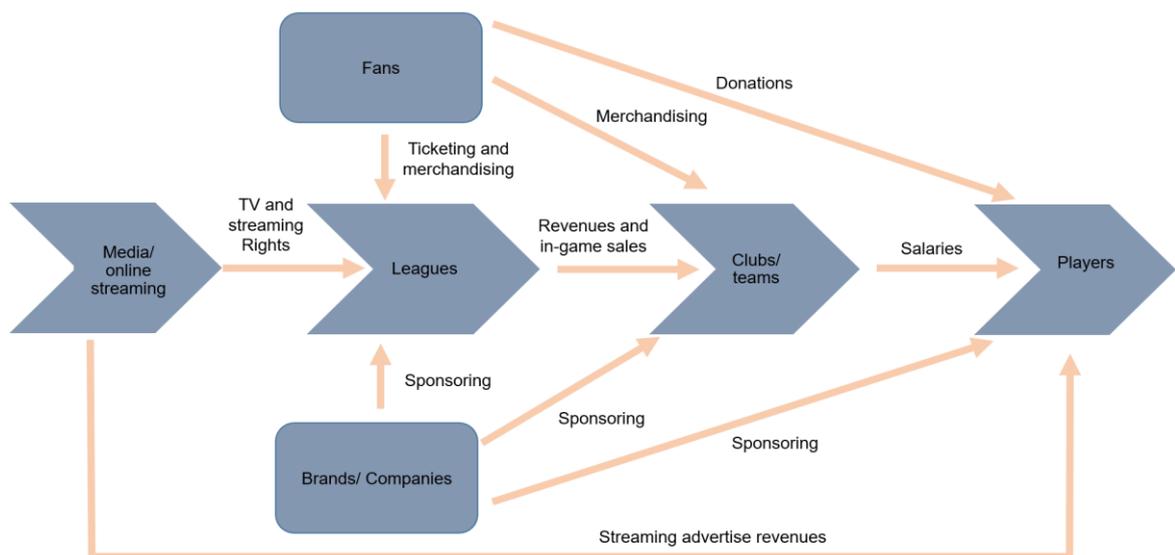


Figure 15: The eSports Ecosystem (Remodeled Pau 2015)

The growth of eSports is undeniable for the gamers and the spectators. It will grow but how fast and when will it be approved as a regular sport? The time will eventually come but eSports as an industry lacks some infrastructure and only a handful of players make real money out of it. There is a need of big amount of investors with a sustainable business model and strategy and also with the passion towards the

industry. The goal is to increase the average player career length, increase the amount of sponsorships and partnering with game publishers are things to consider. (Pan 2015)

5. METHODS AND DATA

In the following the author will present the research approach of the study. This part of the thesis the research context, data collection methods, data analysis methods and the reliability and validity will be explained. Also the companies that were interviewed will be introduced.

5.1 DATA SAMPLING

The group of possible companies to be involved to the research was limited by few criteria's. The criteria's were related to event organizing and involvement to eSport industry either directly or indirectly. All the companies were selected from their participation to Digital Exhibition in November of 2015. From these companies the author researched that how many of them had organized events during last few years.

Most of the major Finnish eSport companies were somehow involved to the Digital Exhibition. Few of the companies that didn't participate in the exhibition were only few players "teams", so therefore they were delimited from the research. All together the author created a pool of eleven companies. From these eleven, he successfully managed to achieve five interviews.

5.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The empirical part of the research is qualitative and aims to give answers of how to increase brand awareness through event marketing in eSport environment. Based on the theoretical part, the author has interviewed different persons from eSports and other industries as well. Based from the theoretical part and interviews from different industries, the author will create a model of how to increase brand awareness in event marketing, which he believes is relevant in the current eSport industry.

In the theoretical part, primary data used in both event marketing and brand awareness were gathered most from journals, books and articles. As mentioned in the theoretical part, there are other marketing mix elements for increasing brand awareness. This research however focus on the event marketing, and how can an event organizer increase its brand awareness from the promotional perspective. Also, the event organizer must understand the other perspectives as well, like exhibitors that and attendees.

5.3 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

The empirical part of the thesis is based on qualitative research. The author have interviewed five individuals from RCTIC, Suomen Messukeskus, Neogames, RCTIT, Pulp Agency and Company A. Qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which relate to understanding methods which mostly generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis (Patton, Cochran 2002, 2). Merriam (2009, 13) on the other hand states that “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world.” Nkwi et al. (2001, 1) defines it more simple; “qualitative research involves any research that uses data that do not indicate ordinal values”. The author decided to do a qualitative approach, because there are only few eSport companies in Finland, who do even little promotion in their business. There are only a few eSport companies in Finland who has even a small business behind them.

The empirical part of the research was made by semi-structured approach. All the informants were contacted by either e-mail or phone before the interview. In semi-structured interview, the interviewed will receive the list of questions and themes before the actual interview in order to prepare for the interview. The content of the interview differs from every interview and the order of questions may also be varied depending of the flow in the interview. Also, the interview may include some additional questions in order to gather the needed data. (Saunders et al. 2009, 320)

The interviewees were selected based on whether they were event organizers or tightly dealing with eSports industry. The author did not get all the interviews he hoped in the beginning. One of them cancelled the meeting during the same day as the meeting was scheduled. That person from that company never answered to phone calls or emails after the meeting were rejected. The other company never answered to any messages even though the author repeatedly tried to pursue them.

In order to get the best possible understanding from the interviewees, the author decided to choose CEO's, sales managers and event organizer as interviewed. The title and position depended on how big the company was and how close they really were to the event organizing and eSports themselves. Each of the respondents has been dealing tightly with event marketing. Three of them had experience of eSport. The author decided to choose both small and big companies and analyzed how they do event marketing differently.

The interview questions were picked from the background theory, authors own ideas and from the research questions. The questions varied little from each other because of some of the interviewees were event organizers and some as exhibitors. Also the title and the industry the companies was operating, made the questionnaire more customized. By asking somewhat different questions, the author could gather some unique experiences from the interview. The interviewer should lead the interview, follow the flow of the situation and adapt right questions at the right time (Stake 1995, 65).

The interviews was conducted in Finnish language. In this way the author could minimize the misunderstanding and errors in some terminology. Three of the interviews was conducted face to face, two of them by Skype. All of the interviews were recorded and the author got permission to do that. Four of the interviewed gave permission to use their names and companies in the research and one of them refused. The refused person and company will be referred as Company A.

After the interviewees was done and data had been collected, the author transcribed the interviews. Transcribing the data is important part of the research and helps the

author to adapt the comments to the thesis without any errors. It could be described as labels or tags for allocating meanings to descriptive information when gathering a study (Basit 2003).

There were some differences between the length of the interviews and how many pages were transcribed. In the table 4 the author illustrates how the interviews differed in durations and pages transcribed.

Name	Duration of the interview	Pages transcribed
Arctic eSport	59 minutes	8
Messukeskus	59 minutes	8
Pulp Agency	47 minutes	4
Neogames	38 minutes	5
Company A	1 hour 14 minutes	8

Table 4: Duration of the Interviews and Pages Transcribed

In the analysis section of the research, the important findings from the interviewees will be concluded and discussed. The empirical findings will be illustrated in the base of the primary theoretical data collection. Based on these facts, the author will benchmark some best ideas into best practices which will be discussed in the latest part of the thesis. Before this, the author presents the companies he interviewed for the empirical part.

5.3.1 INTRODUCTION OF ARCTIC ESPORT

Arctic eSport is Finnish eSport organization, which was founded in 2008 by Jere Alanen. Arctic eSports aims to support Finnish eSports teams and players, who have the required talent to reach the global scene in eSport environment. The company is currently the most successful eSport organization in Finland, and have achieved the podium internationally over 60 times. (Alanen 2015; RCTIC 2015)

The year 2010 were especially rewarding for Artic eSport, since they achieved excellent sponsors behind them. After this the company itself had resources to build up teams and started organize events and participate in them. RCTIT mission is to

support, coach and inspire Finnish professional gamers, who strives to be best among their field. (Alanen 2015; RCTIC 2015)

Arctic eSport works like any other professional club or team. Members of the teams are required to play as professional rather than just for “fun” or as a “hobby”. ESport as an industry is rapidly growing industry on global level. In Finland it is also. Arctic eSport want to provide good environment for the young potentials in order to develop themselves. The support the company gives doesn't only concern just gaming, but encourages and helps their members to perform well in other challenges as well related to their life. (Alanen 2015; RCTIC 2015)

In this thesis the founder and CEO of Arctic eSport Jere Alanen was interviewed. Alanen is passionate towards eSports and regarded as professional eSport gamer. He is responsible that the whole entity operates successfully. He takes care of all the marketing and is responsible for the sponsorship agreements with their existing customers and acquires new customers. A while ago he was manager of their Counter-Strike: Global Offensive team, but recruited some staff behind those tasks. The industry has grown tremendously which has meant that Alanen has recruited several employees in order to share the work. (Alanen 2015)

5.3.2 INTRODUCTION OF MESSUKESKUS

Messukeskus is the biggest convention center in Finland and organizes annually over 1500 events. Messukeskus is founded 1919 by Suomen Messut Osuuskunta and they created their first facilities 1935. Currently Messukeskus' headquarter is located in Pasila, Helsinki. The events they provide attracts annually over million visitors around the world. (Messukeskus 2015; Kantola 2015)

The largest events Messukeskus organizes are The International Boat Show, Helsinki Book Fair, Digital exhibition and Travel fair. The event premises has a surface area of total 74 000 square meters. The building itself has a surface of 272 000 square meters which includes seven exhibition halls and 40 meeting rooms

of various sizes. Many companies use their facilities for meetings or for recreation sessions. (Messukeskus 2015; Kantola 2015)

In this thesis the author interviewed Niko Kantola, the sales manager of Messukeskus. Kantola organizes and sells annually 17 different events in Messukeskus. The events varies from sizes all from few hundred thousand to few millions euros. Kantola is in charge of International Boat Show, Digital Exhibition and Motorbike Exhibition. Kantola has a long experience of how to organize and sell events and knows the secrets of how to create a successful event in different industries. (Kantola 2015)

5.3.3 INTRODUCTION OF PULP AGENCY

Pulp Agency is a Finnish marketing company that produces and designs interaction between brands and people. With total of 17 employees, Pulp Agency offers relevant and contemporary marketing services from company's strategic branding to tactical promotional level. They have organized several of events alone, together with others and participated in events throughout the company's history. (Keskitalo 2015; Pulp Agency 2015)

The company is specialized in creating and rebuilding a company's strategic branding. Pulp Agency strives to be up to date in all of the marketing activities where consumers are, and help their clients to reach the maximum potential of customers. Their total offer covers branding, advertising, engagement marketing, evangelism and promotion. They believe that everything begins from a great brand, and they consider themselves as experts in that field. (Keskitalo 2015; Pulp Agency 2015)

Joona Keskitalo, the head of sales of Pulp Agency, were interviewed in this thesis. He is in charge of several sales people and responsible of customer acquisitions. He has organized few events such as Board Exhibition, Fightback Run and Boxbattle. Joona has also organized several events for their clients like DNA and Sonera. Joona has the experience about what steps it requires to create an efficient

and memorable event, so that as wide audience as possible will achieve the information regarding the event.

5.3.4 INTRODUCTION OF NEOGAMES FINLAND

Neogames is a Finnish non-profit organization, which aims to support development of Finnish gaming industry. One of the main members of Neogames is the Finnish Game Developers association, whose member are almost all the gaming companies from Finland. In addition to this, Neogames works tightly with gaming development clusters and academies. (Luoto 2015; Neogames 2015) The company's mission is to accelerate, coordinate and support the gaming cluster in Finland. Neogames works tightly with the gaming developers, educators, investors and public sector. They are the voice of gaming industry of Finland to the Ministry of Culture and Education. (Luoto 2015)

Events are an essential part of Neogames' service. Each year Neogames organizes, participates and promote events both nationally and internationally. They support Finnish gaming companies' and players by funding applications for export. Neogames works by the needs of the gaming and eSport industry, and support directly and indirectly both companies and gamers in development and improvement. Neogames is considered as the information center of the Finnish gaming industry. (Neogames 2015)

In this thesis the author interviewed Neogames' Office and Community Manager Emma Luoto. Emma has worked in the company for few years and are responsible for organizing all the activities that facilitates so that the company runs smoothly. Emma takes care of the marketing of the company, organizes events, discusses with the members and people by email, writes reports for both management and customers etc. Emma has organized few events for gaming industry, participated in several big events, and potentially has some insight of the future trends in both gaming industry. (Luoto 2015)

5.3.5 INTRODUCTION OF COMPANY A

Company A is a Finnish eSport company that organizes several events on an annual basis. The company is founded 2010 in Helsinki and their task is to develop and bring out eSport as an industry in Finland to a global level. They focus tightly on making eSport in Finland more aware to the audience and support the gamers on their daily basis. Company A has had a very strong presence in the Finnish eSport industry during the past years and will most likely continue to do so.

In this thesis, one of the founders of Company A was interviewed. In the beginning of the interview, both parties agreed on that neither interviewed person's name nor company will not be published in the research. The author chose to interview this person because he has knowledge about the eSport industry in global level. This person also has organized several online and live events for big audiences.

5.4 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The quality of the research is tested and analyzed through validity and reliability. However in case of qualitative research, alternative concepts should be used to secure the validity of the research (Stenbacka 2001). Validity in qualitative research is achieved first when the respondents in the given area has the right to speak freely according to her knowledge. Many times the interviewer controls the flow of the interview and therefore the respondent usually can't talk as freely as he/she wants. (Stenbacka 2001) There has been discussions whereas if the term validity is applicable to qualitative research (Golafshani 2003). Creswell & Miller (2000) however suggests that the validity is affected by the researchers own perceptions.

Based on this proposition alone, the author can state that the validity of this study is secured. The author used the semi-structured approach to the research and all the interviewees were personalized. There was no specific control during the interview and the participant were able to talk very freely and open-minded. There were also several occasions when the participant stated that some of the phrases should not

be included in the research, because it could harm their position or the company itself. This request was honored.

A total of seven companies that meet the case selection criteria were contacted. Out of them, total of five of agreed to participate to the study and were interviewed. According to Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (2009, 58) five analyzed cases should generate somewhat convincing results and could be determined valid. The five companies that has been chosen represents both experts and somewhat novice in in their fields. The reason is that the industry of eSports is somewhat new and therefore there are no long history in the field. All of the selected companies are located in Finland.

In case of reliability, the basic concept refers to the method's ability to produce the same result in many repeated researches (Stenbacka 2001). In order to reach and ensure reliability in qualitative research, the research should be done visible all from the introduction, data gathering and analysis (Stenbacka 2001). When looking at this proposition, the research could be said to be reliable. The process of introduction, data collection and analysis is presented and analyzed in great detail. However, the conclusions of the research is made by the authors own assumptions from the collected data. This might affect the interpretation of the data because every individual has his/her own opinions.

6. EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This section of the research illustrates the findings from the empirical data collection. The sample consists of five different companies from both event organizers and exhibitors perspective. Four of them are presented openly with names and one anonymously. This chapter illustrates the empirical findings based on the topics event marketing, brand awareness and eSport. In order to illustrate answers to the relevant empirical findings, not all of the cases are referred in every section.

6.1 EVENT MARKETING FOR THE CASE COMPANIES

Event marketing were present in all of the interviews, and questions regarding to the topic were customized based on the flow of the interview. The questions however conducted following themes; what is the purpose of event marketing, how and why they organize events, how they promote themselves, and what does the sales process look when they try to achieve exhibitors and attendees to their event. Some of the interviews does both organizing and participates as exhibitors, few only organizes and one only participates as exhibitor in events.

6.1.1 EVENT MARKETING

Arctic eSport. Jere Alanen mentions that in such a small industry in Finland as eSport, the purpose of event marketing play a big role for them from a marketing perspective. Whether they organize or participate as exhibitors in events, the main goal is to share information about the industry and about what it requires to be professional. (Alanen 2015)

“For us, the main purpose of event marketing is to make the brand more known, achieve more members, sponsors and communicate with our community”

By this, Alanen refers that during an event, the communication with customers is way more efficient than through social media. He points out that the other promotion mix elements like advertising and direct marketing are important, but event marketing is most beneficial for them. (Alanen 2015)

The benefits of organizing an event in such a small community is that the people who comes there, are already interested in the industry. Even though the industry has not grown in Finland compared to other countries, sponsors has started to be active regarding financing the event. (Alanen 2015)

“Finland comes always after. However, now that we have got visibility in YLE, sponsors has started to contact us and provide their supports. Organizing an event has become now much easier, especially when we have financial backup behind us.”

The main risk when organizing an event is that that people doesn't attend to the event. This is usually the outcome of poor marketing and promotion. The second risk is that if the exhibitors fail in their job. If the exhibitors does their job poorly and are not attractive towards the audience, it can be both financial and social risk for both Arctic eSport and the exhibitor. (Alanen 2015)

“Event organizing is always expensive. We take some calculated risks, of course. Fortunately nothing big has occurred to us. We are happy to stay this way”

Messukeskus. Event marketing for Messukeskus differs a bit when compared to other event organizers. Messukeskus is a cooperative corporation, so therefore their objectives is more humane rather than financial. Messukeskus organizes hundreds of events annually, and each of them has their own objectives. Niko Kantola believes that the traditional way of marketing, like event marketing is still perhaps the most efficient way to promote. (Kantola 2015)

“I believe in event marketing very much. During events, the participant get a real experience of topics they are interested. The objectives can be categorized in three segments, the number of participants, customer experience and financial objectives”.

Niko Kantola continues that one of their objectives is also to help the industry as much as possible when they organize an event. If one industry have an exceptionally poor prognosis for the future, Messukeskus analyzes together with the main companies of that industry. They discuss together about how to wake up the industry again with the help of event marketing. (Kantola 2015)

Pulp Agency.

“Event marketing creates the possibility of creating some amazing experiences for the customer, where he is dealing with a certain brand”

Joona Keskitalo refers to that the event organizer has the opportunity to provide some unique approach to the event. If executed successfully, the event organizer have to chance to provide a great experience to the customers and exhibitors that will be resonated in their minds. Everything comes down if the organizer are willing to do things differently. (Keskitalo 2015)

Joona Keskitalo believes that by either organizing an event or participating as an exhibitor, the company has the chance to communicate with the customer in a much deeper level. He believies that the power of communicate face to face is still the best approach to talk with people. This applies in both promotion and sales process. (Keskitalo 2015)

“It’s the best place to tell about your company. People deals with people. No social media can replace this”

According to Keskitalo (2015) there are few objectives when Pulp Agency organizes an event. However the financial objectives is the most important.

“The result must be profitable enough so that it’s worth the effort. The second objective is that it has to be memorable for the customer and they have had a great time”

Neogames. Emma Luoto, community and office manager from Neogames, mentions that the main objective of event marketing is to get audience to the event. (Luoto 2015)

“That’s the most important objective. For those who doesn’t participate in the event, the objective is to give them a message that this sort of event is held”

She points out that, the objective for them is to give the audience a clear picture beforehand about what will happen during the event (Luoto 2015).

Company A.

“With event marketing you are able to get a large number of people assembled in one place”

The representative of Company A continues that every time he organizes an event he asks “What if no-one turns up?” Everything comes down to great promotion so that their concept is acknowledged by their community. He continues that if the organizer strives to achieve the best possible outcome from the event, it has to be well planned. (Company A)

“I don’t believe things happen accidentally. If you want print a memorable picture about the event to the audience, you have to plan the event well before it happens”

In Finland event organizing, especially in eSport industry, is very risky business. He continues that live events are pretty expensive to organize. Even though the eSport industry has grown, we are currently happy to break even when we organize a live event. To split the risks, Company A also provides and organizes online events, such as streams. (Company A)

6.1.2 EVENT PLANNING

Arctic eSports.

“The planning process begins by defining the target audience. The purpose is to plan the event for them, not us”

The next steps is to define objectives, get as many potential exhibitors and attendees. The event has to be interesting and comprehensive, and there needs to be activity all the time. Jere Alanen amplifies that the planning process has to be simple. He continues that the content of the event should also be constructed simple and should be begin early enough. (Alanen 2015)

“Immediately when we have decided the date of the event, the real planning. We usually begin defining the date about six months ahead”

When they organize an event or participate as exhibitor, location of every exhibitor or employee is planned thoroughly. By this they prevent pointless mistakes of employees. Also they focus only areas where they know where people and customers move. (Alanen 2015)

“If we are as exhibitors, our stand should be on places where the maximum of people moves in order to obtain best visibility”

In this spot, the next step is to be active and talk with lot of people and do the most important work, talking about the eSport industry itself. If the event is focused more for young players', Arctic eSport activates their professional gamers as well. Attendees are able to play against the Finnish top in one vs one for instance in Counter-Strike. (Alanen 2015)

“This is very good marketing, because it activates the participants and their experience regarding professional gaming increases”

Arctic eSports has the biggest eSports community in Finland and they want to grow even more. Alanen mentions that event marketing is extremely good way to share information regarding the industry, and they will continue to do it in the future. (Alanen 2015)

Messukeskus. The steps of event planning depends whether it's a new or an old event (Kantola 2015).

“The first steps when organizing a completely new event is to determine the base. We have to put our objectives to lean towards the base. We go through the main actors of the industry, ask them about if there are demand for such an event and what is the target group”

Kantola continues that after these steps the budget, marketing strategies will be defined and schedule will be concluded. If the event has been organized before, the planning process differs a bit. (Kantola 2015)

“First we analyze the feedbacks from the previous event. From here we create something new, clarify our target group and products”

According to Kantola, their planning process differs a bit from other event organizers. The steps of the process are done simultaneously all from promotion, sales, marketing, and the planning the flow of the event. The reason behind it is because all the members of Kantola's team organizes several events on annual level. It's started to become a routine. (Kantola 2015)

Pulp Agency.

“Event planning begins from defining the idea”

There is a certain pattern that Pulp Agency follows. Their planning elements are done simultaneously like calculating financial numbers, time schedule, determining

the demand and how can get exhibitors to their event. Keskitalo admits that they usually starts the event planning too late;

“We start the planning too late. All this planning becomes in addition of our own routine work. We know it’s important, but the motivation to start early is not there. We know we could avoid many unnecessary problems if we would begin the planning early”.

Neogames. Emma Luoto has a bit different approach, when planning an event.

“We begin the event planning five months ahead. For us it’s enough of time. The first step is to find a presenter and front man, who will drag audience and companies to the event”

She highlights that the time schedule during the event is very important for achieving goals. Their goal is that the audience knows exactly where to go next and what program will be next. She points out that the event promotion and the coordination of visual effects doesn’t play as important role as planning the flow of the event itself. (Luoto 2015)

Company A.

“First we determine if we should make an online or live event. After this we think about the financial side”,

According to the representative of Company A, it’s clear that an online event is cheaper compared to the traditional. With online events, organizers can provide their existing exhibitors and sponsors to involve with the brand throughout the year because they may be organized on a more frequent basis. They however will not disband the traditional event marketing. (Company A)

“It’s very important. When we begin the planning process, we think about the agenda of the event. We want to promote our company and the industry and

communicate with live audience. The customer experience is the most important thing. However, the event must be planned so that it will be profitable”

6.1.3 EVENT PROMOTION

Arctic eSport. According to Jere Alanen, the power of social media has had an enormous impact on their small business (Alanen 2015).

“In social media we can with a relatively small budget get access to a very big crowd of people and this is the place where our fans are”

They start to promote an event well in advance and slowly feeds information regarding the event. When the event itself starts to become closer, they accelerate the information to the audience. However, every message into social media is carefully thought through. The key ingredient in promotion to social media is by being in consistent, especially in eSport industry. (Alanen 2015)

“If you are passive in social media, where your active target group occurs, it can be fatal for you company”

Through hard work and becoming the biggest Finnish company in the industry, sponsors has started to activate themselves for Arctic eSport. They have started to market themselves together with beverage company Olvi’s brand Teho. They have created mutual marketing campaigns, which is in the piloting phase at the moment. Arctic eSport has also promoted in television and have participated in online tournament that has been casted on YLE. It has been a great promotional tool where tens of thousands of people watch their professional gamers play for the Finnish Counter-Strike championship. The TV broadcast of eSport in Finland is hard to attain even though it attracts big amount of visitors. Alanen predicts that there will be change in this, and even more events will be broadcasted through television. (Alanen 2015)

Messukeskus. According to Niko Kantola, event promotion is a must do, especially in fair business (Kantola 2015).

“We use widely all the promotion channels. Our mission is to get people and companies to rendezvous points, so marketing is everything. If we would stop it, we would be pretty stupid”

Even though industries are moving towards digital era, the traditional way of promoting an event is as equally important.

“We have presence in the streets, magazines and radio. Thinking fast, there is no promotion tactics or channels we wouldn’t use. I believe we use them all”

Kantola has noticed that the power of social media is not just talk, it’s true. He points out that social media is very powerful when used both properly and consistent. However, he suggests that companies should not only focus on social media, because the goal for the company should to make the business and brand remarkable. The focus should be on deliver value to the content. (Kantola 2015)

“You have to be however careful in about what and when you communicate. You should not get too confident there. We have digitalized our brochures, and event maps. We focus much on the content”

Pulp Agency. According to Keskitalo, they focus on being creative when they promote. He continues that the key thing is to promote in a memorable way, so that the target customers remembers it. A company should have a marketing strategy and should use a wide variety of promotion channels. (Keskitalo 2015)

“We use social media, radio, printing materials and also promote in streets where we can talk with the customers”

Pulp Agency usually begins the event promotion about three months before the event is held. Joonas Keskitalo (2015) thinks that this is a bit late.

“In mine opinion we could begin it a bit earlier. When the day of the event become closer, we pace up our promotion in several social media channels. Sometimes I think the promotion is not well planned”

Pulp Agency has started to also to promote during the event itself. They document all the main things what happens during the event and update information to different channels. He highlights that it's important to share information about the event to exhibitors, sponsors and visitors all the time. (Keskitalo 2015)

Neogames. According to Emma Luoto (2015) the power of social media should be emphasized.

“The social media channels are very important for us. We actively post on Facebook and Twitter when something big is going to happen. From there we attract people to our webpages”

Luoto mentions that they focus intensively in these channels, because almost every gaming company in Finland uses social media. Neogames however uses also printing material as promotional tool. (Luoto 2015)

“We have a brochure about us and the Finnish game industry. I think it's the best marketing material to achieve attention. We achieve our necessary customer and company base by sending direct emails to them. We don't use cold calling that much”

Company A. According to the representative of Company A, they use social media as their primary platform to promote events. The reason behind it is because their customers, fans and the industry itself spends time in these channels. They also use a lot of video promotion because it provides unique opportunities experience for an upcoming event. (Company A)

“We provide videos on multiple social media platforms”

Even though many people don't believe in emails, Company A believes otherwise. They also use a lot of emails when they promote an event. (Company A)

"We send them information regarding the event as detailed as possible. It's a relatively small investment for us"

When the event itself is starting to approach, the representative mentions that they start to tease the target group and exhibitors. Their strategy is to create a hook and make the feeling that they can't resist coming to the event. The steps are carefully planned through and are done also consistent. (Company A)

6.1.4 SALES PROCESS

Arctic eSport.

"Five years ago, when both we and eSport were totally unknown, we had to do tremendous amount of work just for getting one small sponsor"

In year 2011, the moment when the industry started to thrive, Arctic eSport were at the top in Finland, when measuring the results in tournaments. Spectatorship in eSport through Internet and social media started to explode and that has had a positive impact on the sales process. (Alanen 2015)

"Thanks to our strong brand and gamer's achievements, the company has acquired big sponsors like Olvi, Logitech and JIMM's and Cooler. Few years back, we had lots of sales meetings with potential customers and sponsors".

Jere Alanen (2015) continues that because of the industry has grown and success in international level has been good, things are now much different.

"The situation have changed vice versa and the negotiation position is on our side. Companies and sponsors tries now to contact us for collaboration on for becoming our sponsor. We are a very interesting company in eSports in Finland"

Messukeskus. According to Niko Kantola (2015), their sales process is very clear when they try to acquire both exhibitors and visitors. They have categorized the main actors of an industry into different segments in order to ease the sales process. (Kantola 2015)

We have A, B, C and D customers in our CRM system. The salespeople's task is to set up a meeting with either A or B as fast as possible. Category C or D is done by either phone or email. C's and D's are important and may add value to the event, but don't necessarily deal anything with the industry itself. For instance, a category D company may sell candy in Digital Exhibition"

In fair business, having a strong brand helps tremendously in the sales process. In these occasions, Kantola are usually able to sell the event one year ahead. When creating a complete new brand, the set-up is completely different. (Kantola 2015)

"I like those kind of challenges. First we prospect our clients, we cold-call them, meet them few times and get the conclusions"

He highlights that the salesperson attitude and motivation is putted into test during the sales process. If the salesperson don't believe in the product, neither will the customer. During the sales meetings, the salesman describes what the benefits are for them if they participate as exhibitors. Kantola continues that it's important that both parties understands what are the goals and objectives of each other when the event is held. (Kantola 2015)

"In some events, the exhibitors must deliver us in written form their concrete objectives and how they will measure it. There is too many companies who exhibits with only their feelings. They don't know what to do there"

Pulp Agency. According to Joonas Keskitalo, their sales process begins by prospecting the clients. They have divided their prospects into different categories, where some are more important than others. He points out that it's extremely important to get companies in the event, which complies with the target group. Pulp

Agency sales process follows pretty much the same pattern as Francis (2013, 3-7) theory sales funnel model. (Keskitalo 2015)

“First we prospect. After this we qualify the prospects together with our team. Before the cold call, we think about the story about how the prospect could benefit for meeting us. After this we meet the person. It usually takes few meeting before there will be a sale”

Keskitalo (2015) continues that they provide promoters to the exhibitors, because usually the target exhibitor don't know how to promote their own products.

“At least they have a hunch about what it needs to be done in order to achieve the goals”

6.2 BRAND AWARENESS FOR THE CASE COMPANIES

Brand awareness were present in the interviews, and questions regarding to this topic were customized based on the flow of the interview. All the interviews comprised the following agendas; meaning of brand awareness, how to build a brand and what are the benefits of having a strong brand.

6.2.1 BRAND AWARENESS

Arctic eSports. According to Jere Alanen, one of their main goal is to make themselves aware for as many people as possible. He believes that for those fans that think Arctic eSport as a top of mind, is one the reason why the company still operates. (Alanen 2015)

“It's important that there is a company in Finland that are attached to eSport industry, and we are the number one here”

When analyzing the awareness pyramid (Aaker 1991), most people are still in the “unaware of the brand”-level. Even though Arctic eSport is active in different social

media channels, they take risks in their business in order to create their brand aware for the large audience. One of their benefits compared to other companies is thinking out of the box. (Alanen 2015)

"We were asked to join Simerock music festival and having a tent, where we exhibited our business. Even though it was a music festival, we did our own thing and had professional gamers tell about the life of a professional gamer. The feedback were excellent. Simerock generated revenue from there and they asked us to join next year"

According to Alanen, there are born multiple brands in eSport each year. He points out that there should be a voice from Finland to make the gamers aware. It's important that Finland doesn't fall behind in this rising trend and one big motivator to believe on their own business. (Alanen 2015)

Messukeskus.

"The importance of brand awareness differs between industries. For us we need to understand how consumers change their attitude towards the brand in an annual basis. However, creating and achieving brand awareness is the main things"

In the fair business, it's important to constantly develop its brand. Even though the themes stays relatively the same, the customer preferences may change during one year. A company must know if its current product meets the customer's demand. Niko Kantola mentions one example. (Kantola 2015)

"We are in a situation, whereas we don't know if Digital Exhibition serves longer as it currently stands. Digital environment changes so fast, and we are unable to keep the pace. We are always few steps behind"

Kantola mentions that achieving brand awareness is crucial in all matter. However, if the product doesn't meet the customer's expectations, something has to be done differently and reconsider the brand itself. (Kantola 2015)

“You have to constantly analyze what is the brand range, is the brand still unknown, and is the name catchy, what the future trend is and where the customers are”.

Pulp Agency.

“If customers are aware of your brand, it creates possibilities to do things differently and more creatively”,

Even though Pulp Agency is not that big, they have understood that the keystones for getting customers attached to its brand, starts by identifying the core values of the target customer. Everything should be created around those values. (Keskitalo 2015)

“When the customers’ demands something from the brand, your mission is to deliver it”

Company A.

“When we organize an event, the first thing that comes into mind is how we can create our brand more aware”

The representative continues that the brand can be developed all the time because the customer preferences changes. He points out that the company must be aware about the trends what happens around them. He mentions also that the customer usually is right about their own experiences towards the brand. (Company A)

“If our target group is moving towards one direction, we must follow them. Your brand is exactly what your target group think it is”

6.2.2 BUILDING A BRAND

Arctic eSports.

“A brand is created from different elements. It needs to be accessible, easy to remember, good looking and the message needs to be spot on”

According to Jere Alanen, behind every brand there needs to be a story behind it. When companies only think about selling and growing, what usually happens? Promotion is extremely important, but there should always be a reason behind everything. Before selling anything, there is a need of an emotional connection between both parties. (Alanen 2015)

“Our logo tells much about us. It’s Nanu the eskimo, which comes from a movie. It’s memorable and our partners and sponsors loves it”

The brand also is created from different elements. Arctic eSport actively promote themselves in different social media channels, they participate in both small and big events where they try to reach as big audience as possible. In those event they strives to give the message about the eSport industry and stories of professional eSport gamer’s life. They want to share their story and make connections from here. The second side of building a brand is the achievement and the success of their gamers. (Alanen 2015)

“If our gamers do well in tournaments and events, our brand name is strongly visible in different situations”

The brand needs to be constantly updated. The goals should be set high, because it ultimately motivates the gamers and personnel to move towards the goals. He mentions also that they constantly analyze their fans. Some of the fans follows Arctic eSport for fun, some for educational purposes and some strives for attaining a spot in one of their teams. (Alanen 2015)

“Much work has been done, but now the real job begins because people are starting to be aware of the brand already. For some we are already top of mind and we are active towards them. We provide daily live gaming material for our true fans.”

Messukeskus.

“In our industry, the brand is created definitely through the supply”

The base and the frame of the brand must be well planned and defined before even thinking about the content. The key thing in fair business is to achieve the exhibitors and participant to the event. Niko Kantola is very realistic about how customer's sees a brand in general. (Kantola 2015)

“Our brand is as strong as what exhibitors and event visitors believes”

Messukeskus constantly develops and strengthen its brand. Kantola believes that the brand is one of the most valuable assets of a business. The questions to ask is about how the brand is doing and does it have an identity. If the brand is new or not strong enough, changes has to me made. (Kantola 2015)

“We want constantly to develop ourselves and we learn from our mistakes. We do feedback-based measurements and we change the major things for the next time. For instance, we have to think whereas Digital Exhibition will carry the same name next year. I'm not sure if this is a strong brand anymore because the name doesn't serve as it should”

Pulp Agency. Joonas Keskitalo from Pulp Agency takes a little different approach when talking about creating a brand.

“The ultimate objective is make the brand aware for the big audience. It's created on by doing things differently. I believe in the power of word-of-mouth.”

He refers to the Finnish markets where public references, especially in sales, plays a very big role. Pulp Agency pursues making all their services memorable and catching, so that they talk about it to others. He points out that customer experience of a service is all that matters when talking about building a brand. (Keskitalo 2015)

Neogames. Emma Luoto (2015) admits, that the company has not thought about the brand as much. She also continues that if the Finnish gaming industry does well, so will the brand of Neogames also. (Luoto 2015)

“To be honest, I have no idea about how to create a brand. Our brand is pretty strong, thanks to Supercell and Rovio”

Neogames uses other brand names in social media, such as Play Finland. In Facebook they have over four thousand members where members publish actively posts about gaming industry. According to Luoto, Neogames doesn't actively develop their social media channels. The members are active there and that's the most important thing. She is however quite optimistic about their brand and gave a grade for it. (Luoto 2015)

“I would give our brand a grade of nine. In order to achieve ten, we should combine our business platform together with Play Finland”

Company A.

“When we began all this, we didn't exactly know what we were doing. The first thing what we did for our brand was to define it”

The representative thinks that a brand is created over time. If you want to strengthen your brand, you have to be active towards the community the company operates within. He believes, that being active in the community, the company may hear important things about what concerns them. Company A also has noticed that being consistent in the community is a positive thing for their brand. (Company A)

“We talk actively with the community and customers. We try to post some material every day to different channels”

The representative however states that in Finland it's very hard to achieve followers, customers or companies. Even though the eSport industry is growing, much work has to be done in order to achieve brand awareness. The representative believes that when the gamers in Finland start to stand up in the global level, more followers will follow the gamers. (Company A)

“I believe the industry will be more interesting then to the audience. From there hopefully we will get more followers and customers”

6.2.3 BENEFITS OF HAVING A STRONG BRAND

Arctic eSports. Jere Alanen believes that having a strong brand helps the company in all matters. He continues that the company should be patient on creating it, because it most likely takes a long time. Those who does their work well in the long term, will most likely achieve something. Alanen says that they are no exception. (Alanen 2015)

“Immediately after we started to have a strong brand, companies from Finland were interested towards our business. Few years back, all out sponsors were very small. I remember that one of the sponsors only covered one server in Counter-Strike. It was however important for us, because the sponsor provided us our own platform where to train”

Now when the company has attained relatively strong brand, the contracts with sponsors are bigger and has enabled Arctic eSport to even pay salaries to the committed players. Arctic eSport even achieve applications in a frequent basis in order to join one of their teams. According to Alanen, Arctic eSports has to refuse multiple of applications. (Alanen 2015)

“Even though we would like to hire new gamers, it’s sadly too expensive in Finland to hire professional gamers”

A strong brand has led to fan base growth and the online spectators has increased exponentially during last years. By this, companies and sponsors has activated themselves towards the Arctic eSports. This has led to revenue increase, more personnel and has provided the more opportunities, like having broadcasts with YLE. (Alanen 2015)

Messukeskus. According to Niko Kantola (2015), a strong brand helps a company in every possible way, especially in sales.

“In sales it helps tremendously. If you have a strong brand, customers buys it almost no matter of what. For instance, it’s not hard for an Apple seller to sell a product to the fan of the company. People buys when the benefits exceeds the price”

Messukeskus has over 100 events that they held annually. Some of them have a very strong brand whereas some of them have not. Those who has a strong brand, selling is relatively easy. (Kantola 2015)

“If we talk about the International Boat Show, both exhibitors and participant have in mind that they have to attend. It’s that strong brand. Many exhibitors competes about the positions they want to be in”

Kantola points out that even though the brand is strong, it have to been strengthened and developed every year. He refers that people get bored easily, and therefore the brand needs to be constantly developed and updated. He highlights however, that a company should not change just for change’s sake. The brand needs to be fresh, because the business depends on it. (Kantola 2015)

Pulp Agency.

“It means that you have proven you are credible. That alone makes the promise that you are good at what you are doing”

Joona Keskitalo knows that there are only positive effects for the company if the brand is strong. He is however a bit frustrated because according to him, their company has not worked that much on developing a brand. (Keskitalo 2015)

“It’s a bit paradox. We do brand and event promotion for our customers and we do it extremely well. We talk to others how it should be done, but our own back is not where it should be”

Company A.

“Everything from sales to promoting becomes much easier”

He mentioned that their bargaining power in sales has increased a bit during last years. Everything doesn’t come however for granted. The salespeople must know how to sell the idea to the potential exhibitor or sponsor. He refers to that only a handful of people know them in Finland. (Company A)

“We are still a small company and unknown for majority of the companies. We don’t have any official salesperson in the company”

The company has a relatively strong brand presence among the professional eSport gamers in Finland. Company A have had created many tournaments, which has mainly been successful. The more their brand becomes stronger, the easier they get both participants and sponsor to their online tournaments. (Company A)

“There has been several occasions where the tournaments have not been filled. It has been little disappointment, because we thought it would be full”

6.3 ELECTRONIC SPORT FOR THE CASE COMPANIES

Electronic sport were present in three of the interviews. Questions regarding to this topic were customized based on the flow of the interview. Companies like Arctic eSport and Company A are daily working in the industry whereas Messukeskus only indirectly. Questions regarding eSport consisted of the industry itself, spectatorship and online watching, and about the prognosis of the industry.

6.3.1 ELECTRONIC SPORT

Arctic eSport.

“It’s the same for me as ice hockey for a hockey player. In traditional sport it’s called competitive sports, in eSport competitive gaming”

Even though Alanen thinks that it’s not the same as traditional sport, it consist of some elements that is required also in traditional sport. He highlights, that it takes years of practice in order to even reach a decent level. (Alanen 2015)

“The gamer must have good physical and mental condition if they want compete in the top level. A good physical condition contributes mental wellbeing”

ESport as an industry has become a main stream in global level, but in Finland it’s relatively unknown. According to Alanen, he is a little bit worried, but believes in the industry growth. When Arctic eSport were founded, their mission where to share to information regarding eSport. The missions has not changed during last years. (Alanen 2015)

“Our mission is to bring the message of eSport as humanely as possible to the Finnish community, because is a really new concept in Finland”

Arctic eSport has done much promotion in Finland for the industry. They attracted over 100 thousand visitors when they played in YLE. The feedback was great. (Alanen 2015)

“People in Finland noticed that this is pretty big and that it’s a true phenomenon around the globe”

Messukeskus.

“ESports is clearly a form of a sport”

Niko Kantola mentions that it requires both competitive attitude and social skills. Some games are played in single player modes, but even more games are played in teams. Kantola were totally surprised when he entered the gaming event Assembly. (Kantola 2015)

“When I arrived there for the first time, I thought it was only nerds there. Immediately when I walked there, mine mind was blown. It was huge and the participant were all from young children to business adults.”

He continues that it has started to become a mainstream in the global perspective. Finland will follow slowly after the trend like in most of the other industries as well. Even though many are skeptical of the rise and popularity of eSports, Kantola is surprised about the level of depth of interest towards the industry. (Kantola 2015)

Company A. According to the representative, eSport is a competitive and professional side of video games. Whether it’s a team based or individual game, it tests the ability to work as a team, requires high concentration and skills. According to the representative, eSport especially in professional level should be recognized as traditional sport. (Company A)

“ESport should be recognized as a genuine sport and should achieve this status. It will lead to the larger scale of appreciation of those who are skeptical about it”

The representative also mentions the fierce competition between players. Only few gamers get paid, and one requirement to reach top level is to have patient. He continues that a professional gamers usually have very good physical and mental condition. (Company A)

“They need these attributes in order to be able to focus for a long time”

6.3.2 SPECTATORSHIP

Arctic eSports.

“The industry operates primarily via the Internet”

Jere Alanen continues that the spectators watch the eSport games exactly for the same reason as fans in traditional sport watch their favorite club play their games. Alanen thinks it’s relatively sad to see how little people watch in Finland the industry. When analyzing how small proportion in Finland spectate eSport compared to global level, the statistics are worrisome. Arctic eSport has however the biggest fan base in Finland. (Alanen 2015)

“We are the most followed eSport company in Finland with 7000 monthly visitors to our webpage. In addition we get tens of thousands visitors in our streams annually”

According to Newzoos studies, over 200 million people watched live stream gaming during 2013 (Popper 2013). Alanen (2015) however is confident about that the direction in Finland is looking bright.

“The number of fans and online visitors is increasing all the time. There is a clear growth curve. The more we expose ourselves, the more we get fans and followers”

Messukeskus.

“Playing for a live audience is a big thing for the professional gamers. Playing at the major tournaments finals for the live audience is like NHL finals for the ice hockey players”

Kantola has followed the industry, and have noticed that big companies have started to sponsor gamers, companies and event (Kantola 2015).

“When there are millions of spectators watching eSport gamers playing, it leads usually to the huge prize money”

Some of the gamers get their salaries from tournaments, and some get their salary through other channels. Kantola mentions that currently the industry provides big opportunities for gamers, especially when talking about salaries. (Kantola 2015)

“There are tons of gamers who earn their salary from social media channels like YouTube. They earn because of they are interesting people and they entertain watchers. They don't necessarily need to be professional gamers.”

Company A. The representative of Company A, mentions that the accessibility of streaming today is far easier than it was long time ago. He has noticed the explosive growth in the industry, which has led more pressure among the gamers. He continues that even tournaments that are not even on major level, reaches thousands of live audience. (Company A)

“There is pretty high pressure among the players when the play. The amount of spectators has increased tremendously and from there the prize money from tournaments”.

Even though the industry is growing, amount of professional gamers increasing, and the pressure rising, the representative recommends gamers to focus on other life

areas as well. Unless the gamer is ready to sacrifice everything to the industry and in a specific game, the player should reconsider his options. (Company A)

“You have to know your skills. Currently only 1 % of the professional gamers maybe have the potential to earn something”

6.3.3 PROGNOSIS OF ESPORT

Arctic eSport.

“If the trend continues at this rate, in ten years eSport professional gamers in Europe are national heroes like in other sports I would not be surprised if the industry would be in the Olympic Games in near future”

If analyzing the statistics of how the industry has grown in the past five years, there is no tell of in what position the industry is in human mind. He continues that soon people around the globe has accepted the industry like any other sport. According to Alanen, where there are massive amount of people, money is always involved, and it creates opportunities. (Alanen 2015)

“ESport industry will become a significant employer in near future. It creates jobs for gamers, coaches, commentators, event organizers etc”

Big price pools of tournaments attracts all new gamers. The prize money for winners of major tournaments has increased in five years from tens of thousands up to few million dollars. According to Alanen, the participation in major tournaments will come. However the current mission is to deliver the message about the industry to the Finnish communities. (Alanen 2015)

“We are not in that level yet, but some day we are”

Messukeskus. Niko Kantola (2015) is a bit sceptic about the rising trend in eSport industry.

“The rise of the industry will keep rising, that’s for sure. The question is that how long will the growth last? The growth is now steep, but there will be some point in near future that it will stop. That’s how business and trends works”

He believes however that eSport as a sport in peoples mind will have a much clearer position in few years. Kantola thinks majority of people may accept eSport as an alternative sport in near future. He continues that media will play a big role in the process, because it may shape people’s attitudes towards something. In Finland the media has not taken the industry as granted. However, there are some casts done irregularly. (Kantola 2015)

“Ten years from now, every person for sure knows what eSport is. At the moment, it’s very marginal. I think media has done good job in this but should cast events more frequently. There are some serious demand for this”

Company A. The representative have strong beliefs that the industry will keep growing like it has during last years (Company A).

“It will grow. It’s hard to predict where it will be in near future. I believe it will explode really soon”

Statistics from U.S has shown, that eSport has started to expand from online streams to sport channels. The changes does not however happen during one night. He even believes that the live events, such as stadium tournaments will be common in future. (Company A)

“Things change slowly. I believe that in about ten-fifteen years eSport is side by side with traditional sport. I believe that major tournaments will be held in stadiums in future”

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this research was to find out how event marketing affects brand awareness in eSport industry. In order to understand this, the research questions were divided into three sub questions. The following sections will illustrate the theoretical and managerial implications of the research. In the first part, the research questions will be opened by comparing the theoretical and empirical parts with each other. The managerial implication part conducts of the authors own ideas about how event organizers should promote an event in order to create brand awareness. The last section of this chapter will conclude the recommendations and suggestions for future studies.

7.1 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

In the introduction chapter, the research questions were defined to how event marketing helps creating brand awareness for companies in eSport industry. The answer for the main research questions will be analyzed from both theoretical and the empirical part. However, before answering the main research question, the sub-questions will be answered. According to the author, answering first to the sub-questions leads to the answer for the main research question.

The questions were analyzed in the empirical part of the research by performing a semi-structured interview for five companies that has been dealt tightly with event marketing. The main research question was approached by dividing it to event marketing, brand awareness and eSport. Not all of the answers will be found in the interviews, but most important answers were examined. One of the interviewed had only been as an exhibitor in events and not as an event organizer. However like mentioned in the beginning of the research, it's important that an event organizer understands also the exhibitors perspective. This is why the author decided to take this person to the interview. Three of them were dealing with eSport industry and two were not. In Finland there are only a few companies that are dealing with eSport on a daily basis. This created some challenges for the research.

The first sub-question in the research is stated in following:

What are the most critical steps in event planning?

According to three of the interviewed persons, the event planning begins by analyzing the previous events and learning from mistakes. After that the process continues by defining the event and the target audience. Three of interviewed mentioned that after this step they define the objectives of the event. This step contained both financial and social objectives. The literature mainly suggests that defining both objectives and the idea of the event should be the first steps in the planning process (Behrer & Larsson 1998: Cox 2009). According to two of the interviewed persons, an event should not be arranged without any reason behind it. Vallo & Häyrinen (2008) and Wolf et al. (2005) agrees on this, and companies should think about the five W's when organizing an event.

There was clearly differences between the case companies' resources, which led to the fact that they had different starting points in the event planning itself. ESport as an industry is small, and for some of the companies, there are only few employees who organize the events. Even though this was the situation, every interviewed persons agreed on Lanner & Söderbergs (2006) point of view that, careful planning is the key for success. The companies had however some variations about how the event planning process looks like. Some of them focused mainly on the flow during the event. Some focused on the sales process, and how to obtain exhibitors, sponsors and attendees.

In four of the interviews the following planning steps where included; objective, target audience, timing, budget, and idea. Lanner & Söderberg (2006) had exactly the same steps in their model. One point however was missing, location. Two of the interviewed persons highlighted the financial planning and risk management as one of their most critical parts. As Bowdin et al. (2011) and Robinson et al. (2010) suggests, event planning should consist of careful financial planning, risk management and evaluation.

The second sub-question in this research focused on promotion. The question is conducted in the following matter;

What channels to use when promoting an event in order to achieve brand awareness?

All of the companies mentioned that social media is their prior promotion tool. However, some of the companies lacked promotional strategies, and posted information regarding the event in channels without any thought behind it. According to Lanner & Söderberg (2006) in promotion, the background work must be done, so that the event organizer finds out the audience habits, values and attitudes. According to Shone & Parry (2004), some event organizers may have a small budget on marketing, and should therefore focus on public relations rather than advertising. One of the companies used only social media as their promotional channel. In this particular company, they didn't usually reach their event goals.

One of the companies however used actively other promotional tools in daily basis. Four of them used other promotional tools such as public relations, emails, cold call, sales meetings and internet pages as their promotional tools. They knew that being active, consistent and passionate towards the business makes the brand ultimately become more aware for the audience. Three of the companies identified the elements of Aaker's (1991) awareness pyramid in their process. Those three mentioned that their goal was to become top of mind in their industry. However, the first steps to achieve that level requires that promotion needs to be consistent, appealing and precise (Allen 2015; Shone & Parry 2004; Tuominen 1999).

Last sub-question is focused on the sales process of an event;

How does brand awareness help when prospecting and selling an event?

Acquiring both exhibitors and participants to the events was challenging in all of the cases. One reason behind this was that eSport as an industry is relatively weak in Finland. Another reason is that some of the case companies had not enough of

resources to be allocated to sales. Only two of the case companies had a sales model that guided them. The rest of the case companies lacked a systematic approach, and didn't exactly know how to get the exhibitors and participant to the events. B2B environments usually involve a variety of different marketing approaches, sales meetings and support steps before the customer is acquired (Skok 2010). A few of the case companies clearly believed that, acquiring exhibitors and sponsors to the event, the promotion through different channels was enough. Acquiring these companies usually means consistent sales meetings. Like Francis (2013) mentions, many companies and sales managers have difficulties in getting products sold and they focus on other things rather than acquiring exhibitors and participants to the event. Without them, there is no event. Two of the case companies understood this.

All of the case companies recognized, that having a strong brand helps the sales process tremendously. Like Aaker (1991), Keller (2001) and Cobb-Walgen et al. (1995) mentions, having a strong brand, the customers are more loyal, associated to the brand, and are willing to pay for it. Three of the case companies understood this and were focusing heavily on making their brand more appealing. Those same three case companies were also using the traditional sales funnel (Francis 2013) in their sales, in addition to other promotional tools.

From there we are able to answer the main research question of the research;

How does event marketing help creating brand awareness in eSport industry?

As a conclusion, the answer to the main research question is that if event marketing is organized thoroughly, understanding both exhibitors and customer's preferences, and being consistent and precise in promotion, it will for sure help creating brand awareness. Having a passion towards the business combined with a patient mindset, the desired brand awareness will eventually come. However having a tough attitude is not enough. The resources must be targeted on the right things, in places where it has most impact on the customers and communities. Even though eSport is at its infancy level, the same principles occur in eSport as well as in other

industries. The difference compared to other industries is that the road of eSport is most likely much harder. However, now when the industry has started to exponentially grow, being in that road may have a great impact in near future.

The results of the research are twofold. In one side, where sadly most of the companies struggle, is that the companies are not really in touch with the customers and they lack risk taking. According to Bettger (1992), if a company aims for growth, things usually have to be done differently and it often requires risks. The customers hold the key to success and the companies should understand their values and behaviors. Posting in Facebook alone doesn't solve this matter. Many companies have no differentiation strategy, meaning that there is noise and chaos without uniqueness. Another issue is in the company's story, promotion and sales. They lack providing value proposition in a clear, compelling and concise fashion.

On the other hand, a few of the case companies understood that the event marketing helps in creating brand awareness. They realized that even though event marketing is only one marketing approach, it most likely is the most efficient way to promote their business and industry. Event marketing has perhaps the biggest impact on eSport industry, because for the majority of the people it's unknown. According to a few case companies, they have realized that events are overall an efficient way to create brand awareness because it's relatively cheap, especially online (Alabama 2015). Also events allow the organizer or exhibitor to cut through the clutter. Customers today are looking for more specific and new products that provide new experiences. In events these face to face discussions are real (Williams 2006). Also, events in general helps creating brand recognition (Sneath et al. 2005). The goal is to make the brand a part of the memory. The last part is to gather feedback immediately about the event in order to do things differently next time (Ahluwalia 2002).

7.2 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

For managers, the author suggests that the research question should be divided into two parts. The first part is to focus on how to make best possible event for the

target group. The second question is to how to increase as much brand awareness, and how to maintain it. Both of these questions should be viewed in eSport industry.

According to the prognosis of eSport, the managers should consider a few important things. The industry growth is steep, and will grow tremendously in the near future. This attracts even more gamers, sponsors, companies and event organizers to the field. The question is how to be different and provide value to the customers. Secondly, the gamers actively use digital channels, and digitalization merged with eSport will most likely be present soon. Currently eSport fans spend hundreds of dollars per month on games and hardware. The biggest portion of the money goes to in-app purchases. This could provide opportunities to the managers.

According to the author, event organizing should consist of some crucial steps. However, now when the markets are changing, so are the customer's behavior. Companies should analyze carefully where their customers spend their time, and determine whether the event should be organized online or in the traditional way. However, if the event is totally new and the event organizer has not a wanted brand position, these steps should be included.

1. Creating the idea and defining the objectives.
2. Picking up the date defining the deadlines.
3. Listing exhibitors in different segment levels.
4. Heavy sales and consistent promotion in accurate channels.
5. Involving the team in different matters.
6. Tracking the progress all the time.
7. Able to being flexible.
8. Delivering a memorable finished product.

Achieving brand awareness is not an easy task. The author reminds that in order to get a brand recalled, it requires time and patient. Every company and event organizer has a value proposition. Most of the companies have not just clarified theirs, even though it exists. The value proposition may be lowest price, customer service, and fast delivery, uniqueness in services or packaging. Currently in the

digital and e-commerce world, the traditional way of promoting is not enough. The author suggests a few steps, with which the managers can achieve success and by that win loyal customers to their business.

- **Identifying the audience.** The product or service may appeal to another customer segment, where the company currently operates.
- **Creating an identifiable and memorable brand.** Telling the brand's story, emphasizing the company's core values and making an appealing logo.
- **Optimizing the website.** Using SEO, and making the website accessible in different platforms.
- **Social media presence.** Should consider which platforms to use and how consistent. The marketing strategy should be created and every action measured.
- **Using referrals.** Excellent tool in B2B environment. Create stories around the referrals and share them to the audience.
- **Competitions.** A great starting point, when trying to trigger the brand to a whole new audience.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This research set out to explore how event marketing helps in creating brand awareness in eSport industry. Companies in the industry are starting to realize the importance of understanding the values of the gamers, customers and sponsors is very important for the companies in order to stay alive. However, there is not that much literature about eSports but the author believes there will soon come. Since the research was limited to event marketing in eSport industry and the respondents were kept small the author suggests two things. Firstly, one future research could focus on other promotion elements rather than event marketing. Also the perspective could be limited to gamer's or exhibitors perspective. Another suggestion would be to wait a few years when more companies have entered the industry. The author suggests that by this a wide quantitative research could be conducted to support this research.

In future, eSport teams could be studied and to understand their business model in the industry. Analyzing the current eSport companies, most of them are only doing with a “feeling” without any strategical approach behind it. By researching the business models behind the companies, more insights could be gained that could help to understand why they operate. Another interesting study could be that how Finnish companies are able to keep themselves in the competition, when Korea, China and U.S gamers are dominating the current field. Also how live streaming can provide revenue or engagement in eSport are interesting research suggestions for future.

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INTERVIEWS:

Jere Alanen, Arctic eSport, Interview, Skype 12.11.2015. Duration 59 minutes.

Niko Kantola, Messukekus, Interview, Helsinki 10.11.2015. Duration 59 minutes.

Joona Keskitalo, Pulp Agency, Interview, Helsinki. Duration. 47 minutes.

Emma Luoto, Neogames, Interview, Helsinki 10.11.2015. Duration 38 minutes.

Founder, Company A, Interview, Skype. Duration 1 hour, 14 minutes.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Questions

Event Marketing

1. How would you define event marketing?
2. What are the first steps when you start organize an event?
3. What are your typical objectives when organizing an event?
4. When do you start planning the event and why?
5. What steps does event planning include?
6. What promotional tools do you use to achieve the necessary visibility?
7. How does you sales process look when you try to achieve both exhibitors and participants?
8. What are the benefits and risk when organizing an event?

Brand Awareness

1. What does brand awareness mean to you?
2. Importance of having a strong brand?
3. What is your target segment?
4. How do you make your brand recognizable?
5. Can the customers recall your brand?
6. In the sales process, does brand awareness help you?
7. Do you have a brand goal?
8. How is a brand built?
9. How do you create a brand?

ESports

1. How would you define eSports?
2. Why are you operating in this field?
3. Spectatorship in eSport? How important is it?
4. What is your prognosis for the future eSport?