
BACHELOR THESIS

**ANALYSIS OF THE MARKETING
OPPORTUNITIES OF ROKUA GEOPARK IN
GERMAN SPEAKING COUNTRIES**

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I hereby confirm that I have written the present thesis independently and without illicit assistance from third parties and using solely the aids mentioned.

All parts, which were obtained literally or in a general manner from published sources, are marked as such.

Sonja König, Vienna 19.08.2016

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DMODestination Marketing Organisation

UNESCOUnited Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNWTO..... World Tourism Organisation

SWOT Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROBLEM

Tourism in Finnish National Parks has increased remarkably since the 90s and is still increasing. Since the primary production has decreased, Tourism and Leisure industry became even more important for the regional development of the national parks. (Puhakka, 2008) The visitors in Finnish National Parks have increased by 15% from 2014 to 2015 (Kajala, 2016) but according to local TV station the visitor number in Rokua Geo Park has decreased between 2005 and 2013. (YLE, 2014) Comparing the visitor numbers of 2013 and 2014 there was no significant change at all. (Metsähallitus A, 2013) (Metsähallitus B, 2014) Rokua Geopark obviously has difficulties to attract visitors and especially visitors from abroad. To specify the thesis German-speaking countries were chosen as the target group due to their importance in the field of tourism and the fact that European countries are often left out in Finnish tourism marketing, since they are focussing mostly on the Asian market.

1.2 OBJECTIVE AND AIM OF THE PAPER

The main objective of this thesis is to give recommendations to the Geopark on how they can improve their marketing actions in order to attract more visitors from German speaking countries. Therefore the current situation is analysed followed by analysis of the preferences of the target groups, trends, strengths and opportunities. The marketing of the Geopark is being compared to the marketing actions of other national parks in order to get inspiration and see how marketing channels can be used differently. All these analyses should answer following questions:

- What is the current situation of the Rokua Geopark in terms of marketing?
- How can they improve their marketing in German-speaking countries reacting to trends and preferences of the target group?
- Which marketing and distribution channels are the most promising ones?

Based on those analyses, recommendations will be given how the Geopark can improve its marketing and which actions can be useful. The assumption is that classic marketing and distribution channels are more fitting for the needs of Rokua Geopark and their target group despite the fact that digital channels are trending now.

The used methods are literature review, secondary data and benchmarking.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

After the introduction the second part of the thesis is a theoretical framework that is explaining the basic terms and theories. First of all the term destination is defined and the basic structures of a destination are explained. Afterwards the fields of marketing and brand management are being approached focussing on the specific needs of a destination. The next chapter is listing the most important communication and distribution channels, which is the base for the analysis following in the later chapters. Afterwards the term tourism demand is explained and defined and the last chapter in this part is shortly highlighting nature-based tourism, due to the fact that this is the main form of tourism of a national park or in that case Geoparks. The third part is called Tourism in Finland and is covering the situation of tourism in Finland in general. Finland as a destination as well as the purpose of national parks is being explained. In the fourth part the Geopark as a destination and as the supply side is being examined. The first chapter is a short overview of the different stakeholders. Afterwards the marketing of the Geopark is being analysed based on the 4ps of Marketing. The fifth part is approaching the demand side starting with a definition of the target group of the Geopark. Then the three country specific target groups are being examined by giving information about their travel behaviour. Three different benchmark destinations are highlighted in part six. Each of these benchmarks is doing their marketing in a different way and can somehow be inspirational for the Geopark. The seventh part is the most important part of the thesis, highlighting the trends and opportunities in marketing, especially in the fields of communication and distribution. Afterwards recommendations for the Geopark are listed. After this part the thesis is coming to an end with a short discussion of the outcome and a conclusion.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

2.1.1 BASICS OF DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

According to Leiper's Tourism System the Destination can be seen as the "tourism receiving area". Outbound tourists, originating from the tourism-generating region, travel across the transit route to the tourism receiving area. (Leiper, 1990) Destinations therefore have the purpose of attracting tourists from the generating regions, by always considering the needs of their local inhabitants and other stakeholders. (Page, 2011) The UNWTO defines a destination as follows:

"A local tourism destination is a physical space in which a visitor spends at least one overnight. It includes tourism products such as support services and attractions, and tourism resources within one day's return travel time. It has physical and administrative boundaries defining its management, images and perceptions defining its market competitiveness. Local tourism destinations incorporate various stakeholders often including a host community, and can nest and network to form larger destinations." (UNWTO, 2002)

In this thesis the destination is defined, according to Bieger (2000), as a geographical area a tourist chooses as a holiday location. This area contains necessary facilities, as accommodation, catering facilities and activity or entertainment facilities. The destination is the actual product in tourism and needs to be managed strategically in order to be competitive.

Depending on the needs and expectations of every individual tourist a destination is defined differently. Especially the geographical area is seen differently from different points of view. An Asian tourist might travel through different countries of Europe, Europe is therefore her or his destination. An Austrian tourist might travel through the south of England and that is her or his destination. The needed facilities of a tourist can also make a difference by defining a destination. Tourists who only need accommodation, food and a beach for entertainment define a holiday resort as destination, whereas people who also need cultural facilities like museums might see the whole city as their destination. (Bieger, 2013) According to this theory both, public or private sector can manage and promote a destination. This can be for example a country (Germany), a region (Bavaria), a city (Munich), a village or town (Garmisch-Partenkirchen) or a private attraction. (Europapark Rust)

Destinations are usually managed by tourism organisations acting at the different levels that have been mentioned before. Those organisations are mostly public. Their main function is to manage, promote and develop the destination while considering the needs of all the stakeholders. Especially the population of a destination should not be influenced negatively by the activities of the tourism organisation. Furthermore the tourism organisation is acting like a company, it has to operate economically and strengthen the competitiveness. A destination has many competitors. Their competitors are not only other regional destinations but due to decreasing flight prices also long-distance travel destinations.

The stakeholders of a destination are influencing not alone the actions of a tourism organisation but also their corporate philosophy and objectives.

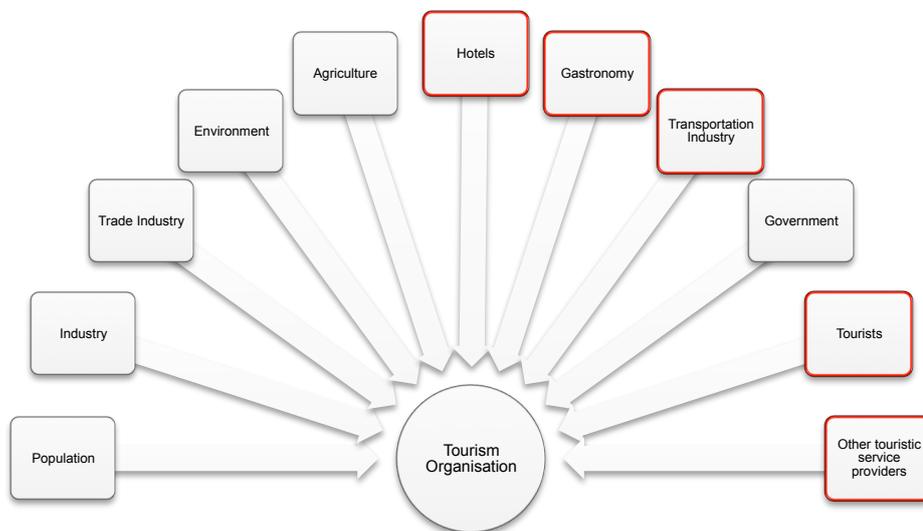


FIGURE 1: STAKEHOLDERS OF A TOURISM ORGANISATION/DESTINATION BASED ON (BIEGER, 2013)

The figure above shows an example for possible stakeholders of a tourism organisation or destination. In terms of tourism all of these stakeholders have different needs, interests and expectations how the tourism organisation is supposed to act. The different actors of the tourism industry are marked red in the figure; the tourism organisation is mainly supposed to represent the interests of those stakeholders and to make a compromise with the other stakeholders. Due to their different agendas, conflicts of objectives are occurring. (Bieger, 2013)

Müller is defining five different objectives that can't result together, at least for a short-term.

1. Subjective Well-being of the inhabitants
2. Economic wealth
3. Intact Nature & conservation
4. Satisfying the needs of the tourists
5. Cultural identity

In the long term most of the objectives have to occur together, economic wealth for example can only be reached if the destination has an intact nature. (Müller, 1993) This is especially important to destinations that rely on their nature, like national parks. In a short-term this might be difficult. If the economic wealth is low and the tourism organisation is aiming to attract more day visitors to fasten up the economic growth, it is likely that those day visitors travel to the destination by individual transportation. Often this type of transportation is not environmental-friendly and endangers the natural balance.

In conclusion the work of a destination management organisation is influenced by a lot of stakeholders but in return it has the chance to influence the stakeholders as well in order to benefit the tourism industry and to establish a successful destination. (Bieger, 2013)

2.1.2 DESTINATION MARKETING

Due to the multi-attributed character of a destination, the marketing is a bit different to the marketing of other products and service providers. The aim of the marketing activities is to attract tourists by highlighting the benefits and unique attributes of the destination. Marketing is often done by a destination marketing organisation, shortened as DMO, which can be the same organisation as the tourism organisation mentioned in the previous chapter. The DMO has to represent and market all the different destination attributes, these can be for example visitor attractions, accommodation suppliers, outdoor activities, gastronomy, nightlife and many more different services depending on the destinations supplies.

To reach their aim a DMO needs to develop a marketing strategy defining the vision and values of the destination as well as the mission and objectives in terms of marketing. Besides attracting tourists a DMO should always keep in mind to maintain the environment and culture of the destination, because these two attributes are the base of a well-functioning destination. Another major aspect of destination marketing alongside the strategy is the market position. The marketing activities need to focus on establishing a strong brand and a positive image in the minds of the target group.

Tourism products are usually services and therefore intangible. Intangible goods can't be tested before, due to that, customers can't be sure if the product meets their expectations and must rely on the image of a service provider. The image is shaped by different factors and is individual for every tourist. Some factors that influence and change the image of a destination for the tourist could be advertising, information received by a tour operator or other sources like news, newspaper articles or blogs and word of mouth reputation of family and friends. The image is also dependent on the individual motivations and expectations of every potential tourist. The destination is supposed to satisfy a need that can't be satisfied at home. Due to the big variety of different motivations it is difficult to address each and every potential tourist with marketing actions. A destination therefore needs to focus on target markets and groups, like every other product.

In order to establish a certain image and to address the potential target groups it is important to position the destination brand effectively on the market. A strong brand position and visibility will lead to an equally strong image. Successful positioning is an important competitive advantage for destinations. Many destinations have a quite similar core product, for example destinations that rely on their beaches, and positioning can help them to stand out of the masses.

The DMO is surrounded by many different stakeholders and is therefore getting advised and influenced in many different ways. The DMO needs to determine which stakeholders and service providers they want to promote intensively and which ones don't need or are not worth the efforts. They need to include and communicate with all stakeholders while deciding on a marketing plan, but they can't please everyone. One of their key goals relating to marketing communication is to build up sustainable customer relationships by enhancing the loyalty of customers. To reach this goal a high-quality service that is meeting the expectations of the customers is inevitable. Furthermore selected long-term customers should get the feeling that they are highly valued in order to increase their loyalty. But also new customers need to be attracted by communication. The marketing activities of a destination have to inform and remind the potential customers about the possible travel destination. Therefore promotion is used to either push the customers towards the destination or pull them to touristic service providers. Another communication goal is to build up a trusting relationship to the stakeholders. The stakeholders are supposed to support the destination brand and the marketing approaches of the destination. Therefore internal marketing within the destination is needed to inform the stakeholders about the activities of the DMO and get supported by them. To achieve those three major goals different marketing

channels including advertising, brochures or a destinations website, can be used. In chapter 2.2 different channels will be discussed more detailed. (Pike, 2008)

Like every other company that is distributing services or products, the base of a successful marketing plan is the marketing mix. The marketing mix is combining four marketing tools, product, price, placement and promotion. In this thesis the better fitting terms product, price, distribution and communication are being used. Based on the general strategy, the destination has to develop activities in those four fields to market the destination successfully. (Bieger, 2013) A few examples for these activities are given in the table below:

Product	Price
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Providing activities based on the interests of the target group • Competent staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable prices • Discount policy • Packaged offers
Distribution (Placement)	Communication (Promotion)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of distribution channels • Competent staff • Distribution through computer based reservation systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising campaigns • Specialised fairs • Digital Marketing through Social Media and a website

TABLE 1: MAREKTING MIX OF A DESTINATION BASED ON (BIEGER, 2013)

2.1.3 DESTINATION BRANDS

Destination brand concepts

Managing a destination brand is slightly different from usual brand management. As discussed before a destination has a complex structure due to the different stakeholders influencing the destination. All those stakeholders are influencing the image of the destination brand too. Due to the information the customers already have about a brand they can make assumptions and form reasonable expectations to the products. Often destinations do not get the positive reputation they might deserve because people have already made up their mind about the image of the destination and it is more difficult to change the consumers mind about a destination than about tangible products. Sometimes only small changes in the concept of a destination lead to the intended increase of visitors but usually it takes many actions and years to change the image of a destination.

Destinations and places do not only compete in attracting tourists but also businesses, residents and students. In order to strengthen the competitiveness it is significantly to have a positive reputation that creates the image that the place is worth visiting, staying or investing. A destination that builds up emotional connections and gets their consumers to trust, respect and expect a good quality has a positive reputation. But to create a positive reputation all involved stakeholders need to commit them to this aim and work together. (Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2011)

Simon Anholt has created a model to give an idea of the six channels communicating the image and the competitive identity of a destination.



FIGURE 2: THE HEXAGON OF COMPETITIVE IDENTITY ACCORDING TO (ANHOLT, 2011, P. 23)

Tourism: The promotion activities of a DMO and the word-of-mouth reputation of current tourists and business travellers are two strong influencers of the competitive identity.

Brands: Exported well-known brands and services can act as ambassadors of a destination.

Policy: The activities and decisions of the local government are influencing the identity and reputation too.

Investment: This is especially important for the aim of attracting business. It is addressing the aims of the destination to support foreign businesses in expansion and recruiting.

Culture: The identity of a destination is also shaped by the culture it is exporting, for example musicians or sports teams.

People: How people behave when they come to a foreign country and how they treat visitors has a strong influence on the reputation of a destination.

In order to change the image of a destination this six communication channels would need to change. With new ideas, products, services, policies, buildings and other innovations a destination can produce a buzz to get the attention of people from other regions. Those innovations do not only benefit the aim of attracting visitors but are often beneficial for the residents too. Money spent on the image of a destination is not wasted but is a strong investment in the economy of the destination. (Anholt, 2011)

But how can a destination brand be market successfully? According to Kotler and Gertner a country needs a strategic marketing plan to promote the desired image. The promoted image needs to be believable and realistic, but it also needs to differentiate itself from other places. An important marketing tool for example is a slogan. But a slogan can't fix a bad word-of-mouth reputation or make an unsafe destination safe. Often destinations have a bad reputation because of natural disasters and the following negative press. The DMO need to fix such problems before they can improve their reputation. Furthermore a destination might be suitable for many different kinds of visitors but while promoting, it is important to focus on a certain target group. The destination needs to ask themselves what aspect they want to promote and to whom. If they do not have the needed infrastructure and activities for their desired target group, the destination might need to build new attractions or host events that will attract the right visitors. The target group needs to be analysed carefully before starting the promotion activities, in order to succeed. (Kotler & Gertner, 2011)

2.2 MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

2.2.1 CLASSICAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

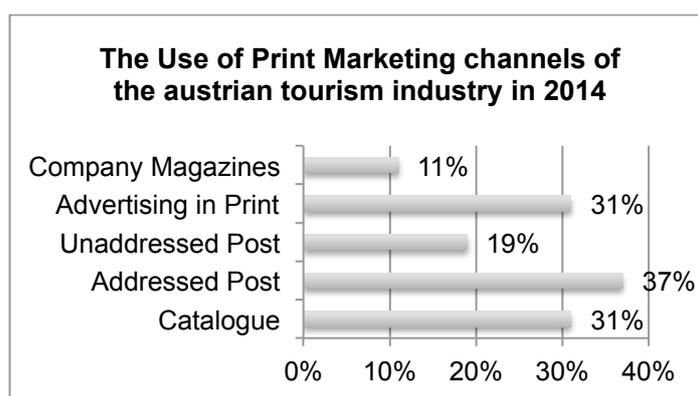


FIGURE 3: THE USE OF PRINT MARKETING CHANNELS OF THE AUSTRIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY IN 2014 (STATISTA-A, 2016)

Print Advertising

According to the statistic above, print advertising is still relevant in the tourism industry. Print advertising can be ads in newspapers, magazines or flyers which are either sent to the customers per post or which are enclosed to magazines or newspapers.

Brochure and Catalogues

Another still popular marketing channel are catalogues and brochures. Catalogues are especially important marketing and distribution tools for tour operators and for travel agencies. Often brochures and catalogues help to make the tourism product or a destination more tangible. They are mostly requested by potential customers and can have a strong influence in the decision making process of consumers. For a destination it is important to differentiate itself from competitors by presenting their supplies in an appealing way. (McCabe, 2009)

Sponsorship and Events

Sponsorship can be used to attract the attention of a very large market to the brand the company is trying to sell. Types of sponsorship are sports, art or event sponsorships. The purpose is to create positive brand associations, publicity or a positive corporate social responsibility profile. It is vital to choose the right sponsorship arrangements that are targeting a similar group or have a general positive image, like charities. Another possible marketing tool is hosting an own event that will attract customers and create a positive brand image. (McCabe, 2009)

Agent Training

Travel agencies are important distribution channels in tourism. To promote a destination or tour operator it is beneficial to educate travel agents about the products, benefits and features of the offered products and services. (McCabe, 2009)

Exhibitions and trade shows

Additional elements of the usual communication mix are trade shows and exhibitions like the ITB in Berlin or the WTM in London. The main purposes of those events are B2B marketing activities like establishing new contacts and relationships, launching new products or observing competitors. The big trade shows are also an important indicator of the general development of the industry. In the last few years trade shows and travel fairs have got attention by the end-customers as well. (McCabe, 2009)

Magazines and Newspapers

Similar to the agent training it is also possible to present the product to journalists to improve the press coverage. Journalists can write articles in the lifestyle and travel section of newspapers or in travel magazines. If the destination targets a specific group articles in specialised journals or periodicals can transport the message of the product as well. (McCabe, 2009)

Television, Cinema and Radio Advertising

Visual and audible commercials were an often-used marketing channel. Especially television and cinema ads can intensify the need of people to go on holiday. Due to the rise of the Internet those channels get less and less important. According to statistics classic advertising like television commercials but also print media are seen as less important in the near future. (Statista-B, 2015)

2.2.2 DIGITAL MARKETING CHANNELS

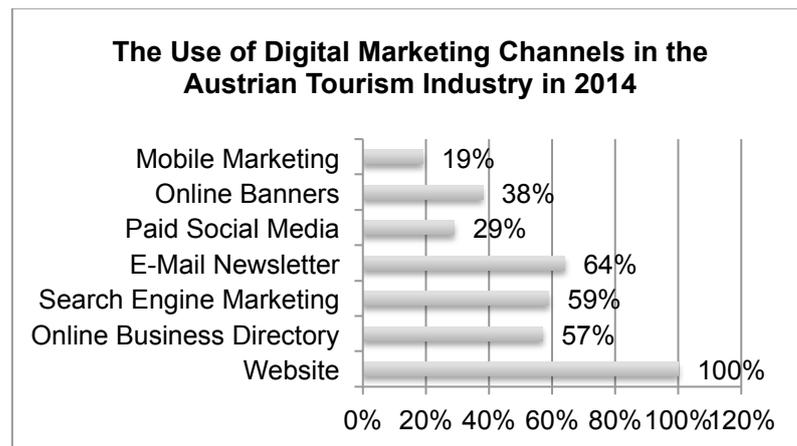


FIGURE 4: THE USE OF DIGITAL MARKETING CHANNELS IN THE AUSTRIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY IN 2014 (STATISTA-C, 2016)

The Internet is the biggest force in marketing channels today. As the statistic above shows, every questioned tourism company in Austria uses some kind of online channel. The most often used channel is the companies own website. The Internet has not only changed the advertising of tourism companies but also the behaviour of the tourists. Companies need to react to the new behaviour of consumers in researching for holiday destinations and purchasing holidays.

The benefits of Online Marketing are obvious. Users have an easy access to any information and a company can provide that information in a user-friendly way. Furthermore it is easier

for the company to communicate with the customers and build up a brand image. Communication and also word-to-mouth reputation works faster on the Internet. Cost-effectiveness is also a beneficial characteristic of E-Marketing. Due to the interactions of the customers with the online appearance of the company, a company can follow their “journey” better and analyse this information. (World Tourism Organization & European Travel Commission, 2008)

Online Advertising

There are three types of online advertising discussed in McCabes (2009) book, search marketing, classified advertising and display advertising. Classified advertisings are usually lists of services offered by a company. They usually don't include pictures or any audible material. An example for display advertising is a banner. They often include pictures or short videos and provide a link to the homepage of the company. Forms of display advertising are interruptive advertisements and pop-ups. Those forms are more often seen as annoying than helpful or appealing to users. The last type is search engine marketing, according to the statistic by Statista, 59% of all questioned tourism companies in Austria use search engine marketing and its importance is still growing. Companies can pay for sponsored links; those links will be placed first to get the users attention below the unsponsored links will be shown. Keyword marketing is also a known technique in terms of search engine marketing, there companies can buy keywords and get their website placed first at the search results. Often different companies want to buy the same keywords, than they have to bid for being the top result.

Website

As the statistic shows every company questioned has an own website. On a website the company can publish as much content as they like, giving the consumer all the needed information. Consumers expect a well-structured homepage and prefer companies that are presenting themselves nicely and detailed on the Internet. It is important that the website is following the customer journey. It should provide information and recommendations during the decision-making process but also support after the trip and a platform to share the customer's experience, for example through uploading photos or buying souvenirs. A good website is accessible, findable and comfortable to use for a customer. The contents are clear and there is a contact section if any information is still needed.

The term “findable” as used before refers to the field of search engine optimisation. Users should find the website of a company by typing in keywords in a search engine. There are a lot of ways how a company can optimize their search engine appearance. While generating

the content of the website it is important to write text providing all the information possible users want to know and that key terms are used frequently, so that the search engine places the website higher in their results. (World Tourism Organization & European Travel Commission, Handbook on E-Marketing for Tourism Destinations, 2008) There are programmes that are supporting search engine optimization like Google analytics.

Direct E-Mail Marketing

On many websites users have to log in, in order to purchase something or they have to register for exclusive content. Either way the customer has to provide the website with certain contact details. The company behind the website can use this data to send the customers direct marketing E-Mails like Newsletters or special offers. The importance of E-Mail marketing is growing since it is almost usual to get confirmations of bookings and purchases via Mail.

User-generated content and Social Media

Travel decisions are mainly influenced by brand image and recommendation. Users not only gather the existing information but also use the Internet as a tool to express themselves and publish their opinions. (World Tourism Organization & European Travel Commission, Handbook on E-Marketing for Tourism Destinations, 2008)

The opportunities in user-generated content marketing have been growing fast over the last few years. Examples for types of user-generated content are blogs or online communities. A blog is displaying the opinion of a single user or a small group of users concerning a topic. So-called bloggers are writing about their activities, purchases, adventures and any other content they want. Those blogs can be useful partners for affiliate marketing since the well-known bloggers often have a big community of fans who are emulating them. Blogs and Social Media are melding into each other and will both be important in the near future.

The second known type of user-generated content are online communities. There are many different communities all over the Internet gathering users who are interested in one certain topic. (McCabe, 2009) A good example in tourism might be tripadvisor.com. The website is providing interested consumers with reviews for nearly every touristic attraction, restaurant, hotel and activity. Furthermore the potential customers are able to book a room or search a flight via the website. It is important to convince the customers who have already visited a touristic sight to write a good review. Other potential guests will read the review and conceive an opinion partly based on those reviews.

A special type of user-generated content is Social Media. Online Communities are part of Social Media, but are covering a certain subject. This paragraph is about Social Media channels like Facebook, Youtube or Instagram, which aren't limited to a certain subject. Companies can use those platforms to present themselves and their product and to expand their customer relationship activities.

Affiliate Marketing

This type of marketing relies on a host website or online publisher who is presenting a link to the company's website. These hosts often provide similar content like the company or have users who are likely interested in the company's products or services. If a user of the host website clicks on the link of the company and purchases something, the host website often gets a commission.

2.2.3 DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS AND TECHNIQUES IN TOURISM

The main functions of distribution in tourism are providing the customers with information and offer them mechanisms to book and pay a holiday. Some examples for distribution channels, which will be explained more detailed later are: travel agencies, tour operators or reservation systems. Those have a much greater power to influence the demand side than customers usually think they have. A distribution channel is defined as "a given combination of intermediaries who co-operate in the sale of a product." (World Tourism Organization, Distribution Channels, 1975) Often tourists use more than one distribution channel, they may only book through one channel but often inform themselves about the offered products through many different channels. In many cases three different intermediaries work together to distribute a product. Outgoing travel agencies are distributing the products of travel operators and those are co-operating with incoming travel agencies at the destination. (Buhalis, 2001) Over the last few years the booking behaviour of many people has changed. Online and direct booking is expanding significantly whereas the distribution channels travel agency and tour operators are stagnating or even decreasing. To underline this statement a few statistics showing the booking behaviour of Germans, Austrians and Swiss can be found in part 5 of this thesis.

Outgoing Travel Agencies

A common travel agency is one of the most important channels of distribution. A travel agency is providing the customers with information, consultancy and the opportunity to purchase a touristic product. They do not only sell packaged tours but also flight tickets, hotels, activities at the destination or travel insurance. Travel agencies do not arrange

holidays on their own and do not sell their own products. They are only informing the customers about their opportunities and provide them with information material as well as placing a reservation at the service provider for the customer. Furthermore they often undertake the process of the payment transaction. The product of the travel agency itself is usually the identification and searching process of suitable travel products, which satisfy the needs of the customers. (Buhalis, 2001)

Tour Operators

The most important products of tour operators are packaged tours. The main activities of tour operators are negotiating offers with suppliers and prepare and sell the packages to the customers, directly or through travel agencies. Packages, which are consisting of at least two different services, are promoted and sold through different channels like the tour operators website, print media or travel agencies. Destinations can offer their products and services within the destination to tour operators or already prepare a package and sell it to them. (Buhalis, 2001)

Incoming Travel Agencies

Incoming Travel agencies are those who are planning packaged tours within their destination and selling those to tour operators. They are acting as intermediaries between the service providers and tour operators. In many destinations incoming travel agencies are also recommending or booking tours for tourists who are visiting the destination. (Buhalis, 2001)

Online Travel Agencies

Online travel agencies have the same purpose as usual travel agencies. They don't have any personal contact but are contacted through the website, E-Mail or phone. The whole correspondence, consultancy and booking process is held through these channels. Users can take a look at part of the offer range or even the whole offer range on the website of the online travel agency.

Destination Management Organisations

Often destination management organisations offer the possibility to book services directly via them. Either in personal in tourism information centres or online through their website or through phone.

Direct Booking

Nearly every service provider or seller of touristic products is selling and distributing their services on their own, either through their website, personally or through phone.

Retail and Newspapers

In the present time many retail shops and even newspapers have launched their own tour operators and travel agencies. Retail shops are distributing their own products or are cooperating with established tour operators. Often these shops are focussing on the low cost sector. Newspapers usually have some kind of travel section where they promote and present different touristic products. In some cases they also distribute some products. Especially specialised magazines often offer their own tours or tours in cooperation with tour operators that are fitting their magazines topic and can be booked by their readers.

Sales Promotion

The general idea behind sales promotion is to drive sales through specific promotions limited to a certain time period. It communicates enticements like price reductions, upgrades or other special benefits through any kind of advertising or promotion campaigns. The consumer is constrained to act in within this time period and does not have the time to compare different offers. The two different forms of sales promotion are value increasing and value-adding promotions. An example for value increasing are price reductions, the customer gets the same service for a lower price, which makes the services more valuable. Upgrades and other additional services are examples for value adding sales promotion; the customer pays the same price but gets extra services. Reasons for sales promotion are to stimulate sales over the short term, react to competitor's actions or to meet long-term marketing objectives and market share. Sales Promotions are possible in B2C marketing and in B2B marketing and are emerging in both fields.

Personal Selling

This is a sales technique most suitable for complex products with a high-degree of risk or a complex decision-making. In that case consumers often need more consultancy and detailed information to purchase the product or service. The seller interacts directly with the buyer, listens to their needs and concerns and provides them with a special tailored and flexible solution. It is important to fully satisfy the consumer to make him or her a loyal customer. Some touristic products need that kind of selling technique for example conferences, long-term travelling or volunteer tourism. The complex structure of tourism products and the focus on services makes tourism the ideal industry for personal selling. A popular form of personal

selling in the B2B sector is a so-called familiarisation trip. Tour operators, destinations or other touristic service providers are inviting either travel agents or press agents to test their product or service. The aim is to convince the travel agents to recommend the product to their customers or in the case of press agents to write a positive review about the product. Word of mouth is one of the most important marketing channels in tourism and if the travel agents themselves have a positive image of the product and share their experience with customers, the customers will also have a more positive image of the product. The same is happening when press agents write an article in favour of the product. But these kind of trips cost money, not only the travel costs have to be taken but also costs for the training of the staff and the research beforehand which companies are the most profitable to invite. (McCabe, 2009)

2.3 TOURISM DEMAND

The aim of this paper is to examine the needs and expectations of the German speaking tourism demand. Therefore it is necessary to define tourism demand in the first place. According to Leiper's model of tourism the demand can be seen as the "tourist generating area". Numerous definitions concerning the demand exist. Cooper et al. (2008) are listing three different explanations, defined from different points of view. In this thesis the economists and geographers point of view is used. The economy-focused definition says, "Demand is the schedule of the amount of any product or service which people are willing and able to buy at each specific period of time." (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Wanhill, & Fyall, 2008, p. 33) The geographic approach is "Demand is the total number of persons who travel, or wish to travel, to use tourist facilities and services at places away from their place of work and residence." (Mathieson and Wall, 1982 cited by Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Wanhill, & Fyall, 2008, p. 33)

Cooper et al. (2008) identified three basic elements of tourism demand. Due to the fact that some people are willing to travel but can't, because of different circumstances those elements are needed.

1. Actual Demand: is the actual number of people travelling
2. Suppressed Demand: is the number of people who don't travel because of different reasons. They are willing to travel in the future or when different circumstances are changing.
3. No Demand: are those people who do not wish to travel at all due to different reasons.

Demand can change due to either substitution or redirection. A service can be substituted by another similar service, for example travellers might prefer staying in a holiday apartment

than in a hotel. Furthermore demand can be geographically redirected. Tourists might want to travel to Spain, but due to over-booking they travel to Italy instead. Those two factors are influenced a lot by the individual needs, expectations and motivations of the travellers, because some might only want to travel to Spain and prefer staying at home rather than going to Italy. (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Wanhill, & Fyall, 2008)

Motivations, expectations and the needs of the tourists are important to analyse. By identifying a certain pattern in their behaviour it is easier to target one special group of tourists. But what is influencing the behaviour of the tourists?

Motivation is defined as a “state of need, a condition that exerts a push on the individual towards, certain types of action that are seen as likely to bring satisfaction.” (Mountinho 1987, p. 16 cited by Page, 2011, p. 59) Tourism is therefore used to satisfy certain needs of an individual. These needs can be totally different for each and every tourist. One has a need for relaxation, the other one for adventure and action. (Page, 2011) There are many different approaches explaining motivation in tourism. McIntosh, Goeldner and Ritchie (1995) have identified 4 different motivator categories, Physical, Cultural, Interpersonal and Status Motivators. The different needs of the demand can be categorized into these four groups. Physical motivators are related to the refreshment of body and mind. Tourists that have physical needs prefer relaxing activities that are reducing stress and health issues. Cultural motivators relate to the ambition of tourists to get to know more about the culture of the country and people they are travelling to. Interpersonal motivators are related to the ambition of people to escape from their routines and meet either new people or visit friend. The travel motive of visiting relatives is part of this category. The last category, Status and Prestige Motivators, is including people who have the need to develop themselves and their skills as well as get the attention and the recognition of others. (McIntosh, Goeldner, & Ritchie, 1995) Companies can change these motivators through marketing and communication. (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Wanhill, & Fyall, 2008)

2.4 NATURE-BASED TOURISM

Goodwin has postulated one possible definition for nature-based tourism in 1996 saying that nature-based tourism is referring to forms of tourism that use natural areas and resources with the purpose of enjoying these areas. (Goodwin, 1996) An exact classification for nature-based tourism doesn't exist. This type of tourism can be anything; the only necessity is that the activities are happening in nature. Nature-based tourism is therefore consisting of many different types of tourism like adventure tourism, sport tourism, rural tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, food tourism and alternative tourism. These types of tourism are usually

special-interest types. The tourists taking such holidays are especially interested in one certain topic like being active in nature or travelling as ecological as possible. In addition to those special interest activities the tourists are also taking part in other activities because they are offered at the destination or are fitting their programme. (Hall M. C., 2004)

Nature-tourism has one big problem; destinations relying on their nature to attract tourists do have to preserve their natural heritage. But by attracting too many tourists it gets more difficult to manage the destination sustainably and sustain the nature. If the destination improves their facilities and accessibility the original values that attracted people are lowered. Scientists and politicians have had many different ideas for successfully combining tourism and sustainability but there is no definite solution that works for every destination yet. (Hall M. C., 2004)

Especially in the Nordic region nature is one of the main attractions in tourism and an important part of the Nordic experience. Due to the growing popularity of nature-based tourism and related types of tourism, not only the economy but also the social and ecological issues in northern regions have developed. For many wild regions it wasn't rentable anymore to fully rely on traditional industries and they are starting to invest in tourism. Those touristic wilderness areas are a part of today's societies and economy. Due to the development of wilderness and a more positive image the demand in nature-based tourism has increased. (Hall, Müller, & Saarinen, 2009)

3. TOURISM IN FINLAND

3.1 FINLAND AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

Finland has a lot to offer for tourists who want to explore a destination afar from mass tourism. As a northern country it is not suitable for sun worshippers but for adventurous and cultural interested people. Some general beneficial characteristics that are making Finland a favoured destination are the safety, stable social conditions and the distinguished infrastructure. The multilingualism of the Finns and especially those who are working in tourism contributes to the simplicity of travelling in Finland. Like mentioned above, Finland is particularly suitable for tourists interested in nature, wildlife, culture and extreme experiences. The most popular destination within Finland is the capital Helsinki. With its stunning architecture influenced by Western and Eastern Europe, its international flair and numerous cultural events it attracts lots of visitors from all over the world. Apart from Helsinki Finland can offer a stunning nature suitable for many different outdoor activities like hiking, canoeing and fishing. The recommended area for wildlife watching is the Kainuu region in the centre of Finland, being the habitat of bears and many other animal species. But the Kainuu region is also known for their cultural events for example the known Kuhmo chamber music festival. In summer different cities all over Finland are hosting music and cultural festivals reviving Finnish culture and presenting music and culture from all over the world in unique Finnish surroundings.

Another opportunity for Finland is the growing importance of Finland as a winter destination. Cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, snowmobile safaris or dog-safaris are popular touristic activities during the winter months and at the end of the year visiting Santa Claus is another popular activity. After an exciting day with different activities the tourists can relax in Spas or Saunas. Finland is the leading Spa operator in the Nordic countries and particularly winter sport resorts often host high quality Spas. (Tiitta, 2008)

Due to the size of Finland, the tourism industry isn't homogenous. Finland can be divided in different parts according to their geographical and climatically characteristics, those are southern and south-western cultural Finland, Central Lake region, Ostrobothnia, Eastern Hill region and Lapland. Of course this is just one out of many classification. The most important touristic regions in the foreign and domestic travel industry are Helsinki, located in the southern cultural Finland, and Lapland. Helsinki is the cultural and economic centre of Finland. The region around Helsinki is a popular destination for weekend tourism. The region offers not only outdoor recreation centres but also lots of small towns, attracting tourists with

their unique charm. The closest national park to the Finnish capital is Nuuksio, making it popular for day trips for habitants and tourists located in Helsinki. (Vuoristo, 2002)

The visitor numbers in Finland have been quite constant over the last few years. In 2012 and 2013 the numbers reached their peak with about 20.2 million nights spent in Finland. Since 2013 the numbers are decreasing slightly reaching only 19.7 million nights. It needs to be highlighted that most nights spent in Finland are caused by the domestic tourism, from the 19.7 million nights spent, 14.2 million were spent by other Finns. Another statistical highlight are the changing numbers depending on the season. In the winter season in 2016 (November to April) 8.1 million nights were spent whereas in the summer season 2015 (May to October) 11.4 million nights were spent. It can be said that the summer season is slightly more popular than the winter season. Foreign tourists represent 27% of the nights spent in summer, in the winter season the percentage is 29%. Most of the foreign visitors are either from the European Union or Russia. Asia is a big source market too. Within the European Union, Sweden, Germany and the United Kingdom are the Top-3 countries of origin. Relevant for this thesis are the nights spent by visitors from the German speaking countries, unfortunately Austria isn't listed in the official statistics, but Switzerland is.

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Germany	510.280	541.031	534.239	501.650	500.057	543.294
Switzerland	107.859	118.009	132.900	128.771	131.076	158.805

TABLE 2: ANNUAL TREND FOR NIGHTS SPENT IN FINLAND BY GERMANS OR SWISS (MAJOITUSTILASTO-A, 2016)

As the table illustrates the visitor numbers of both countries have reached their peak in 2015, after a slight decrease in 2013 and 2014. (Majoitustilasto-A, 2016; Majoitustilasto-B, 2016; Majoitustilasto-C, 2016) The full statistics can be found in the Appendix.

Climate

Due to the climatic conditions in Finland some activities are only seasonal. The difference between the Finnish seasons is big depending on the region. The summers are considered warm whereas the winter is cold with temperatures down to over minus 20 Degree Celsius, depending on the measuring location. The average temperature in Helsinki is 5.3 Degree Celsius. (Botschaft von Finnland, 2012) But the temperatures in Lapland are different. Above the polar circle the sun never goes down in the summer months and never rises in winter. The average temperatures in the winter months are about minus 15 degrees and about 4.8 degrees in the summer months. (Fernreisen, 2016)

Scandinavian countries are especially popular for the emerging natural phenomenon “Aurora Borealis” also known as northern lights. The Aurora Borealis is caused by electrically charged particles from the sun that are entering the earth atmosphere and colliding with different gas particles. Due to the different gas particles the lights are appearing in different colours. The lights are emerging in an oval shaped region above the magnetic poles. (Centre, 2016) In Lapland tourists have a high chance to take a look at this phenomenon during the colder season. The months with the highest chance are not as many people think the winter months but September, October and March. (Himmelsereignisse.info, 2014)

Geography

Finland is located in northern Europe at the height of the 60th and 70th parallel. About one quarter of the Finnish land mass is located above the polar circle. It is surrounded by Russia in the east, Sweden in the west, Norway in the north and the Baltic sea in the south and west. About three quarters of the total area of Finland are covered with forest. Finland is also known as the country of lakes, situating over 190,000 lakes. The Taiga scenery also known as boreal forest mainly shapes the Finnish nature. The ecological region “fell” shaped Lapland’s scenery; it is a heritage from the Ice Age. In Finland this scenery is called Tunturi, meaning the rounded mountains and rugged landscape. (Botschaft von Finnland, 2012)

3.2 FINNISH NATIONAL PARKS

In the past the purpose of Finnish forests and national parks were mainly traditional, for example forest industry or traditional ways of living. Due to the growing interest of tourists in nature tourism and related forms of tourism, the importance of national parks in the Finnish tourism industry is growing and has a strong impact on the regional development. Today’s goal of national parks and the affected stakeholders is to combine nature conservation and economic goals by implementing a sustainable management strategy. (Puhakka, 2008) The official definition of a national park is a “protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation”. (IUCN & UNEP, 2003) The Finnish national park management agency Metsähallitus has defined that for Finnish national parks the aim of nature conservation has priority over the recreational and touristic aspect.

In the year 2014 the 39 Finnish national parks attracted 2.286.500 visitors. The most popular park is Pallas–Yllästunturi National Park in Lapland close to Kittilä with over 500.000 visitors, it is also the fastest growing national park in terms of visitor numbers. Comparing to the numbers of 2013, the visitor number increased by about 30.000 visitors or better 5,4%. If all

parks are taken into account the growth is not that significant, with 2 259 800 visitors in 2013 the number only increased by 1,2%. (Metsähallitus A, 2013; Metsähallitus B, 2014)

Due to the increasing popularity of sustainable and nature-based tourism, the Finnish national park agency Metsähallitus has developed plans to combine the needs of tourism and conservation. Despite restrictions those plans are mainly focussing on co-operation in order to increase the visitor numbers and the socio-cultural, ecological and economical benefits for the regional area. In order the parks are more connected to the region and its surroundings and nature tourism got more accepted by the public. In general tourism is seen as beneficial for protected areas today because of the positive opportunities it creates. (Puhakka, 2008)

4. THE SUPPLY SIDE - ROKUA GEO PARK

4.1 STAKEHOLDERS

The Rokua Geopark is part of the Humanpolis Ltd., which is a company founded by the municipalities Muhos, Utajärvi and Valaa. Together with Metsähallitus and the Rokua Health and Rehabilitation Foundation, Humanpolis Ltd. founded the Rokua Geopark. Those owners are also the financiers of the Geopark. The purpose of Humanpolis Ltd. is the regional development of the area. (Krökki, 2016)

Other stakeholders of the Geopark are all the local companies, service providers and accommodation providers that are listed in the next chapter. The inhabitants of the area and the surrounding cities like Oulu and Kajaani are stakeholders too. Due to the few tourists by now they are not affected negatively, but neither positively. The Kainuu region is the economical weakest region in Finland and would need the regional development as well as the Oulu region.

One of the most important stakeholders of a national park is the environment, due to the fact that nature is their main product. Rokua Geopark doesn't only have to protect the fauna and flora of the area but also the geological heritage.

The last main stakeholders of the Geopark are the tourists themselves. They want their needs to be fulfilled at the Geopark and the park needs to react to those needs.

4.2 THE PRODUCT AND ITS SERVICES

4.2.1 THE PRODUCT

The main product of the Geopark is the Geopark itself with its unique nature, geology and natural setting for activities. It is supported by different services making the park a proper destination.

As defined by the UNESCO Global Geopark Network a Geopark is a "geographical area where landscapes and sites of an international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development." (Global Geopark Network A, 2015) A Geopark has some kind of geological heritage that they use to raise awareness about ecological issues. Furthermore not only the geological, but also the cultural and nature heritage, raise the awareness of the local habitants and enhance their pride and identification with the area. 120 Geoparks are a member of the Global Geopark Network, most of them are located in Asia and Europe. (Global Geopark Network A, 2015) The mission

of the Global Geopark Network is to encourage and assist the local societies to conserve their natural and geological heritage and ensure that any used resources are used sustainably. Another mission of them is to support the locals developing their cultural heritage and the value this heritage and their identity. (Rokua Geopark A, 2016) The members of the Geopark network are obliged to work together, exchange ideas and establish new projects to enhance the quality standards and reputation of all products and practices. The members have to operate according to the regulations of the UNESCO. (Global Geopark Network B, 2016)

Each continent has a sub organisation, in Europe the European Geoparks Network called EGN. Their mission is similar to the mission of the Global network. They are missioned to protect and promote the geological heritage to the public. Although they focus mainly on the geological heritage they also encourage their members to promote their cultural and natural heritage as well. (Rokua Geopark B, 2016) 69 European Geoparks are member of EGN. (European Geoparks Network A, 2016) An important principle of the EGN is to establish and develop Geotourism in cooperation with the local inhabitants. (European Geoparks Network B, 2016)

Concerning tourism their main activities are as follows:

- Supporting tourism as a tool to develop strategies of sustainable nature conservation
- Creating new forms of marketing that meet the requirement of the global market
- Support less developed regions to establish a competitive tourism destination
- Enhance the cooperation between regions and countries
- Raise the awareness of negative impacts the growth of tourism can have on society and the nature

(European Geoparks Network C, 2016)

The Rokua Geopark is the only Finnish Geopark, located on the border between the Northern Ostrobothnian region and the Kainuu region. The park is known for its geological heritage from the ice age. Finland was covered in kilometres thick ice that shaped the three main landscapes in the Geopark, the Oulu River Valley, Rokua and Oulujärvi. All over the Geopark, visitors can find numerous geological formations like drumlins, hummocky moraines, terminal moraines, esker ridges, kettle holes, ancient shorelines, dunes, ravines and bogs. These formations give information about the past and explain the history of the area. The geological heritage has also influenced the living nature in the past, influencing the creation and development of the Oulujärvi and the river Oulu. The three landscapes are

slightly different from each other. The Oulu river valley is shaped by its agricultural past. On the north side there are forested ridges and in the south hummocks, free fields, dry boreal forests and deep streams. The Rokua area is shaped a bit differently. Kettle holes, glacial ridges, dunes and deep lakes are characteristic for this area. Old pine forests that are still in their natural shape cover the whole area. The Oulujärvi is Finland's fourth biggest lake. Its shoreline has rocky bluffs as well as sandy beaches. Inside the lake the island Manamansalo is located, the fifth largest inland island of Finland. The island, as well as the other parts of the Geopark, offers many travelling services and touristic products. (Rokua Geopark C, 2016)

The Geopark offers many hiking and skiing trails as well as natural settings for other activities like swimming, paddling, fishing or berry picking.

4.2.2 THE INFORMATION CENTRE

Located at the core of the Geopark the travel and information centre Suppa can be found. The centre provides interested visitors with general information about the park but also hosts a permanent exhibition with detailed information about the history, geology and nature of the park. A guide from the centre gives additional information and guided tours by request. Visitors get information about the possible activities in the national park and information material such as maps and brochures. Furthermore the information centre offers different lodging possibilities like cabins or vacation houses for rent, they are also offering information about other accommodations within the Geopark. The centre also organizes special activities like dining in the nature or special themed-guided tours. Due to their close contact to other service providers, other activities by those providers can be booked through the centre. The centre facilities can also host smaller events and meetings. The hall offers space for 50 people whereas the meeting room fits 20 people. Furthermore visitors can get small snacks, drinks and coffee in the visitor centre. They also offer a small shop with local goods and handicraft work as well as souvenirs.

The information centre is the first contact point for visitors to get information about the park, its facilities and touristic services. Part of the services of the visitors centre can also be accessed online. (Rokua Geopark D, 2016)

4.2.3 ACCOMMODATION

Besides the cabins and vacation houses, which are distributed through the Information Centre Suppa, there are many other possibilities where to stay in Rokua.

Rokua Health and Spa

The hotel, which is located a 20 minutes hike away from the Information Centre, has 135 rooms in total. 17 of those rooms are suites with a private Sauna, 79 are standard double rooms and the others are either family rooms or handicap-accessible rooms. All rooms have free Wi-Fi and most of them have a minibar. It is also possible for guests to camp at the Rokua Health and Spa with their trailer or van. The properties of the hotel like the breakfast buffet and the usage of pools and the Sauna is already included in the price of 22€ per Person. Room prices start at 50€ per person, the usage of the Spa area costs about 15€ extra. Rokua Health and Spa offers Packages, which are including different services, like massages, dinner buffet, accommodation or different treatments. The Spa is equipped with two heated activity pools, an exercise pool, a children pool, Saunas, a therapy pool and Saunas that are suitable for handicapped. Part of the hotel is also a restaurant offering natural local dishes. Food is also offered in the Rantakota Hut, which can accommodate 20 people and has a campfire in the middle of the hut. Rokua Health and Spa also offers different services in well-being tourism and exercising, like fitness courses, health coaches and wellness analysis. They also organize different tours and activities for their guests, for example cross-country skiing or guided hiking tours. (Rokua Health and Spa, 2016)

Rokuanhovi

The close-to-nature hotel Rokuanhovi is located close to the visitor centre next to a lake. It is suitable for guests who mainly want to enjoy the peace and quietness of Finnish nature and do activities in the middle of the Finnish wilderness. Rokuanhovi offers 10 cottages, a lakeside sauna and a traditional smoke sauna. Furthermore they offer 24 rooms in the main building that is made out of wood. (Rokua Geopark E, 2016) The properties also include facilities for meetings and events up to 100 guests. Their restaurant offers American food, like Burgers, as well as local dishes. The prices for the rooms start at 75€ and the prices for the cottages at 80€. Rokuanhovi helps with activity planning and is hosting dance evening and other events all season. For these special events they offer packages including accommodation and the entry fee. (Rokuanhovi, 2016)

Merilän Kartano

Merilän Kartano is a small 4-star hotel at the river Oulujoki close to the municipality Utajärvi, but still on the countryside. They offer rooms for up to 40 people and have space for events up to 270 guests. Furthermore the facilities include 3 Saunas. Merilän Kartano also provides guests with different services concerning activities, like equipment or guides, and celebration or conference packages. (Merilän Kartano, 2016)

Montta Active Camping

Montta Active Camping is a campsite close to the river Oulujoki and only 30km away from the city of Oulu. The campsite offers 40 trailer spots and 14 cabins as well as a sauna and play areas. They also organize activities. The campsite is only opened during the warmer months. (Montta Active Camping, 2016)

Laukanranta B&B

Laukanranta B&B offers an apartment and a guest cottage with four rooms to rent. As usual for a B&B they also offer breakfast and provide their guests with equipment for different nature-related activities. Furthermore they offer trailer spots for camping. (Laukanranta, 2016)

Wanha Tylli

Wanha Tylli is offering a self-catering cottage close to the river Oulujoki. The main building offers space for 10 guests and can also be rented for parties. There is a second cottage that can accommodate another 10 guests. (Wanha Tylli, 2016)

Karkaravaara

This company is offering holiday cottages close to the lake Lianjärvi. The cottages are equipped with all necessities. (Kakaravaara, 2016)

Summer Camps

Two Summer Camps are located in the Rokua Geopark, which can be rented for bigger groups, the YMCA of Oulu Summer Camp and the Evangelical Lutheran congregation of Oulu Summer Camp. They can be rented for celebrations, events or accommodation. (Rokua Geopark F, 2016)

4.2.4 TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESIBILITY

The Geopark is located at the border between Northern Ostrobothnia and the Kainuu region. The closest bigger cities are Oulu and Kajaani. Both, a bus line and a train line are covering the route between those both cities and have a station at the Geopark. The station closest to the information centre is called Vaala and is about 18km away from the Information centre. It is recommended to take a taxi to the Information centre.

For international guests the Geopark is easily reached by plane. Planes are leaving several times a day from Helsinki, Turku or Riga to Oulu. From the airport of Oulu tourists can travel

to the bus or train station and take one of these to Kajaani. Every train or Bus has a stop at Vaala.

The Geopark can be reached by car. The central axis of the Geopark is Highway 22. Most of the sites within the Geopark are located close to this Highway. From Kajaani to the Information centre guests have to drive a distance of 100km whereas the distance to Oulu is 90km. (Rokua Geopark G, 2016)

Tervan Tie

Tervan Tie is a themed touristic travel route called tar route in English. It goes from Oulu to Kajaani via the Highway 22 and further to Kuhmo. It is known as a route fitting most for nature and wilderness tourism. The Rokua Geopark is not the only national park alongside the route, there is the Hiidenportti national park and some other nature reserves close to Kuhmo. Visitors cannot only enjoy the nature but learn details about the Karelian and Kalevala culture along the route. Many small historical villages still exist along the Tervan Tie and many of them are representing traditional livelihoods as part of their touristic products. The Rokua Geopark is part of this travel route due to its history, heritage and geographical location. (Tervan Tie, 2016)

4.2.5 WINTER ACTIVITIES

Rokuas nature is suitable for a wide range of winter activities. Due to the variety of hiking tracks Rokua is also a good place for cross-country skiing. Guest can either do short or longer tracks, take breaks at one of the numerous campfire sites or even sleep outdoor. Most of the accommodation opportunities offer cross-country skiing equipment. The best tracks are situated in the Rokua area close to the Information Centre.

Other typical Finnish winter activities include snowmobiling, guests can either book a tour or take a trip independently, ice-fishing or snowshoeing. Additionally ice-diving is offered for guests who already have diving experience. Another activity offered is kite boarding or better snow kiting. This activity can be booked through the Oulu-located kitesurf school Lappis. (Rokua Geopark H, 2016)

4.2.6 SUMMER ACTIVITIES

The Rokua Geopark is an excellent place for hikers. Due to the variety of hiking tracks beginners and advanced hikers can find a suitable route. Both, short and long tours are being offered within the area of the Geopark. Due to the size of the park and the accommodation offers it is possible to hike longer than one day and sleep outdoors in cabins

or tents. A well-known route is the Emperors route, a 20km long hike, which leads the hikers to all popular sights in the area. The hiking tracks can also be used for other physical activities like mountain biking; there are routes for beginners and more experienced mountain bikers. A typical Finnish summer activity is picking berries or mushrooms. A wide range of berries like cloudberries, lingonberries or blue berries can be found and can be eaten right away. The area of Rokua Geopark has the best substrate for some eatable mushrooms like northern milk caps or boletuses.

Due to the numerous lakes and kettle holes, Rokua Geopark offers many different water activities like swimming, diving or fishing. Most of the needed equipment can be rented at the accommodation services. Other businesses also offer the opportunity to go paddling, kiteboarding or boating at lake Oulujärvi. (Rokua Geopark I, 2016)

4.2.7 OTHER BUSINESSES

Rokua Geopark does not only offer a big variety of different activities and a unique nature but also lots of local shops that are showing and selling art, crafts or other cultural goods. At the shop Savi-Jonttu tourists can buy goods made of ceramic. The Kankari Art Villa hosts art exhibitions and offers painting courses. Sienestä Oy sells local food like berries, mushrooms and other natural products. Other companies that are selling local food are the Utajärvi Bakery and the Viskaalin. Viskaalin is a shop located next to a farm and butchery and sells meat as well as other products from local producers.

Furthermore businesses that are offering meeting and celebration facilities are located in the Geopark, like the farm Kanttura, Los coyotes ranch, Huovisen Navettasali or Rokuan Lomahuvilat. Some of them are also offering accommodation. The restaurant Ruununkartano is offering food, meeting facilities and accommodation too.

Some businesses also provide programme services. The company Naturally Lake Oulujärvi specialised on nature-related activities at the Oulujärvi. Atteson is offering fishing and boating experiences. Suitable services for golf-interested visitors are also offered at the Rokua Geopark. Oulunjokilaakson Golf is located in the middle of the woods and offers an all-natural golf course; the lanes are shaped by nature and the ice age. They do not only offer the facilities and equipment, but also courses and events.

Manamansalon Portti is located on Manamansalon island in the middle of Lake Oulujärvi and is a holiday village. Their services include cottages for rent, a village shop, a restaurant and sandy beaches nearby. (Rokua Geopark J, 2016)

4.3 COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The Rokua Geopark is using different communication channels to promote their product and is focussing a lot on strategic partnerships with other companies, like Visit Oulu. Their partnership with the city of Oulu and their destination management organisation Visit Oulu is being intensified by the establishment of a tourism master plan called Attractive Oulu region 2018. (Virta, 2016) The aim of this plan is to strengthen the position of the North Ostrobothnia region in the touristic market and promote and distribute the region Oulu, with the areas Oulu, Syöte, Kalajoki and Rokua as one touristic region. Due to this partnership these areas are working closer together and are planning promotion and distribution activities such as packaged tours or exhibition appearances together. Another partner within this project is Metsähallitus, the Finnish national park organisation, whose aim it is to increase the popularity of national parks as touristic products while preserving the natural heritage of the region. (Metsähallitus C, 2016)

Another partner in terms of marketing is the Geopark network. The Geopark brand is well known in nature-enthusiastic sections in Asia as well as in Germany. They are hosting events like workshops or conferences to strengthen the partnership between the Geoparks and to raise awareness of the public. The Rokua Geopark had the honour to host the 13th European Geopark Conference in September 2015. (Global Geoparks Network C, 2014) (Nordic Marketing, 2016) The Geopark network gives the Rokua Geopark the UNESCO brand, which gives them credibility and visibility. (Krökki, 2016)

The company Nordic Marketing is doing different marketing activities for the Rokua Geopark in German-speaking countries. Their services include the active selling of the products to tour operators and travel agencies, furthermore they are organising FAM trips to northern Europe and are frequently informing tour operators and travel agencies about new products and services at the destinations. Nordic Marketing is representing many Finnish destinations as well as Norwegian regions, Swedish, Russian, Danish regions and the city of Tallinn. Information about different products, services and packages of Rokua can be found on their website.

Below Rokuas use of different communication channels as defined in chapter 2.2 will be explained.

Exhibitions and trade shows

A big part of Rokuas communication is the appearance at touristic exhibitions. They are exhibiting at Finnish exhibitions like Helsingin matkailumessut or Erämessut in cooperation

with VisitOulu as well as at international exhibitions as the ITB Berlin in cooperation with Nordic Marketing. (Krökki, 2016)

Agent Training

Nordic Marketing is undertaking the communication activities for this channel. They are representing the Geopark and its products to tour operators and travel agencies in German speaking countries. (Nordic Marketing, 2016)

Sponsorship and Events

In 2015 the Rokua Geopark hosted the European Geopark Conference and accommodated representatives of different European Geoparks. Furthermore they are hosting different sports events, for example Rokua MTB, Rokua Marathon, Geopark Challenge or Terva Trail, an ultra distance trail run. (Virta, 2016)

Brochure and Catalogues

Rokua is offering different brochures concerning the Geopark and possible activities within the park in different languages. All of these brochures can be found at the Information Centre. Some brochures can also be downloaded on their website.

Website

The Rokua Geopark has an easy to find and well structured website. It is detailed and is gathering information not only about the Geopark itself but also about many businesses located in the Geopark area. They are presenting all the activities tourists can do at the Geopark and list service providers who are offering those activities. The website is available in three different languages, Finnish, German and English.

Most of the businesses that are presented on the Geopark homepage have an own website too, giving more detailed information about their services and prices. Many of them are not only available in Finnish but also in English or even more languages.

User-generated content and Social Media

The Rokua Geopark can be found on one social media channel, Facebook. On Facebook they are frequently posting information, news and pictures of the Geopark, the events and the work of the Information Centre. Their Facebook page is only available in Finnish and currently has 1380 Facebook Fans. Videos about the Geopark and its events can be found on YouTube, those are uploaded by Visit Oulu or sports-related channels.

Rokua Geopark itself is not present in social travel communities, like Tripadvisor. But some of the hotels and services can be found. The Rokua Health&Spa has 8 reviews and an average score of 4 points out of 5. Rokuanhovi, Oulujokilaakson Golfklubi Ry and Merilan Kartano are presented on Tripadvisor too but they don't have any pictures and maximum one review.

The Rokua Geopark is mentioned on some blogs on the Internet. Most of those blogs are about topics such as outdoor activities, hiking and adventure. The bloggers are writing about their experiences in Rokua and some of them have participated in sports events hosted by the Geopark. Many of those bloggers are from Finland, but also bloggers from Germany or Spain have written about their experiences.

4.4 DISTRIBUTION

The Rokua Geopark distributes itself and its services mostly through the Internet and Online platforms. A strong partner in terms of communication and distribution is Visit Oulu, products and services of the Geopark are distributed through the homepage of Visit Oulu. Rokua is also part of the "Attractive Oulu Region 2018 plan. Furthermore they work closely together with the B2B marketing agency "Nordic Marketing", who is distributing the products, services and packages of the Geopark to tour operators in German speaking countries. The last important partner is "Suomen Keskusvaraamo". Suomen Keskusvaraamo is hosting a booking platform for the area around Kalajoki and is currently developing a similar platform for Rokua and Syöte. The company is offering cottages, apartments, hotels and activities on their platform. (Virta, 2016)

Outgoing Travel Agencies

The Rokua Geopark itself isn't distributing their product through classic travel agencies. A national park itself isn't suitable for this kind of distribution. Travel agencies might distribute packaged tours that were compiled beforehand, which are taking place at Rokua or some hotels, like the Rokua Health&Spa, are being distributed by them.

Tour Operators

The Rokua Geopark is cooperating with Nordic Marketing in order to persuade tour operators to include the Rokua Geopark or services that are located at the Geopark in their packaged tours. (Krökki, 2016) A few specialised tour operators are already offering packaged tours to Rokua. Especially bike tours are popular. The only tour operator selling a packaged tour at the moment is "Sisu Aktivreisen". Their tour starts in Kajaani and goes all the way to Oulu.

Visitors are experiencing the Geopark in its eternity. Other tour operators were offering packaged tours to Rokua in the past years like fintouring or Huskytrack. The tour operator of Nordic Marketing, finland-rundreisen is currently not distributing a packaged holiday that is including a visit to Rokua, so there is still a lot of potential.

Online Travel Agencies

Different online travel agencies are selling the products and services of the Rokua Geopark. The first one to mention doesn't exist at the moment but is already in development. The online travel platform Suomen Keskusvaraamo is currently developing a booking platform for Rokua. Their booking platform Kalajoki Keskusvaraamo already gives an impression how the Rokua platform might look like. In the Kalajoki area they are currently distributing accommodation, programme services, activities and equipment as well as packages for conferences and meetings. The website is available in five languages, unfortunately the booking itself is only available in Finnish.

Some of Rokua's accommodation products are already offered through booking platforms like booking or expedia. Rokua Health&Spa, Rokuanhovi and the Manamansalo camping site can be booked through these online travel agencies. Furthermore smaller accommodation providers in Utajärvi and Vaala are offering their products through the online booking platform booking.

Some products can also be found via metasearchers like Kayak or Trivago. Those metasearchers are comparing the prices of all online travel agencies that are currently offering the product.

Destination Management Organisations

Three destination management organisations are distributing the Geopark and some of its products and services. First the Rokua Geopark itself and the Information Centre, secondly the DMO of Oulu "Visit Oulu" and last the tourism agency of Finland "Visit Finland".

The Rokua Geopark is mainly focusing on all the marketing aspects and distributing the Geopark itself through their own homepage directly to the customer and to service providers like Nordic Marketing and Suomen Keskusvaraamo who are communicating the products to their customers.

The Geopark works closely together with Visit Oulu in terms of Marketing. Different accommodation and activity products are promoted on the Visit Oulu homepage. (Krökki, 2016)

Like Visit Oulu, Visit Finland is promoting Geopark services as well. They have links to many different packages and activities on their homepage; most of them are leading to offers from Rokua Health&Spa.

Direct Booking

Every business has their own website where potential visitors can find information about the services and products as well as contact information or booking options. Most of the websites are available in English. Some of the homepages can easily be found through search engines. People who are interested in visiting the Geopark can find links to nearly all service providers on the homepage of the Geopark. Furthermore the Information Centre itself is distributing cottages and activities through the homepage of the Geopark.

4.5 PRICE MANAGEMENT

Rokua Geopark doesn't charge any fees for entering the park. It is free for every person to visit the park and do activities there such as hiking. Visitors only have to pay for the rent of equipment or accommodation, if they want to stay overnight or do some activities that require special equipment. Due to the big variety of accommodation services, people with every budget can stay in the area of the Geopark.

Because of the Finnish "Everymans right" it is free for everyone to enter Finnish national parks. The Everymans right says that it is allowed to enter an area without the permission of the landowner and without payment if the visitor doesn't cause any harm or disturbance.

5. THE DEMAND SIDE

5.1 THE TARGET GROUP

As stated in an E-Mail interview with an employee of the Information Centre Suppa, the target group of the Geopark are people who are interested in nature and nature-related activities. Due to the focus of the Geopark on their natural heritage this kind of target group is obvious. But Rokua is also communicating other aspects of the area to other target groups, like their culture or local food. Mainly the supply side is focussing on those nature-interested people and people who are interested in national parks in general. Many visitors aren't only visiting the Rokua Geopark but also other national parks on their tours. Furthermore Rokua is offering adventure tours like kayaking and is also trying to attract more visitors who are interested in fishing. With many sports events like the Rokua Marathon, Geopark Challenge or the Terva Trail they are targeting sport tourists as well, who are interested in challenging competitions in a unique environment.

Geographically the target groups come from different regions all over the world. Due to the Attractive Oulu Region 2018 plan the Geopark is focussing on tourists from China, Central Europe, northwest Russia and Japan. Of course domestic tourists are important too and they are communicating their services to them through media and trade exhibitions. (Virta, 2016)

5.2 THE GERMAN TOURIST

In 2015 53,4 million Germans were on a holiday for more than 5 days and 31,7 million were doing a short holiday. Their preferred travel destinations are Germany itself, the Mediterranean Sea and long distance journeys. Especially the popularity of Mediterranean destinations such as Spain or Italy and long distance travels is growing. The most popular countries are presented below. The most popular long-distance travel destination is USA with 1.9%.

1. Spain	13.1 %	4. Austria	5.3 %	7. France	2.9 %
2. Italy	8.2 %	5. Croatia	3.2 %	8. Poland	2.5 %
3. Turkey	7.3 %	6. Greece	3.0 %	9. Netherlands	2.1 %

TABLE 3: TOP 10 HOLIDAY DESTINATIONS OF GERMAN TOURISTS (FÜR FORSCHUNGSGEMEINSCHAFT URLAUB UND REISEN E.V., 2016)

The preferred transportation of tourists from Germany is the car, 45% travel by car. The second most popular vehicle is the plane, 40% travel by plane. But there are important differences between domestic and international tourism. When going abroad 56% of the

German tourists are going by plane whereas only 32% are going by car. Bus or train are only used by 12%.

48% of the German tourists prefer staying at a hotel whereas 23% like to stay at a holiday apartment or house. Only 6% are choosing camping as their accommodation.

While on holiday most of the Germans prefer to relax and enjoy the sun. But already the third most popular tourism form is nature tourism. Other popular forms are family holiday, active tourism and adventure tourism. The importance of nature tourism and family tourism is growing while the importance of adventure tourism is decreasing.

In 2015 the preferred booking channel were online channels. Channels like personal conversations or telephone bookings decreased. Packaged tours lost a bit of their importance over the last few years while the importance of individual tours increased.

German tourists are using different channels for inspiration and information. Their number one channels are brochures and catalogues, followed by travel agencies. (FUR Forschungsgemeinschaft Urlaub und Reisen e.V., 2016)

1. Brochures and Catalogues	28 %	6. Online Booking Portals	15 %
2. Travel Agency	22 %	7. Travel Guides	15 %
3. Website Destination	21 %	8. TV Documentation	14 %
4. Website Accommodation	19 %	9. Tour Operators	11 %
5. Google	16 %	10. Newspapers and Magazines	11 %

TABLE 4: PREFERRED INSPIRATION AND INFORMATION CHANNELS OF GERMAN TOURISTS (FUR FORSCHUNGSGEMEINSCHAFT URLAUB UND REISEN E.V., 2016)

5.3 THE AUSTRIAN TOURIST

The travel intensity of Austrians amounted to 75.9% in 2015 that are 5.5million Austrians older than 15 years that have travelled at least once. People from 15-24 years are fonder of travelling than the class of population that is 65+. Slightly more than a half of the holidays were spent in Austria. The average duration of stays is 3.5 nights in domestic destinations and 6.9 nights in destinations abroad. The most popular countries abroad are Italy (20.9% of journeys abroad), Germany (17.4%), Croatia (10.7%) and Spain (6.3%).

The preferred transportation of Austrian tourists is the car. The car was used at 63.8% of all journeys and 80.7% of all domestic journeys. When going abroad most of the Austrians are going by car too while the plane is the second most used vehicle with 35.8%.

The most popular accommodation abroad as well as in domestic tourism are hotels, 53.5% of all tourists stayed in hotels. In domestic tourism staying with friends and family as well as private holiday homes are preferred by 26.4%, this kind of accommodation comes second after hotels. (Statistik Austria, 2016)

The result of a survey that was performed in 2014 was that Austrian tourists prefer individual tours. Nearly half of the questioned people were planning an individual trip whereas only 17.5% are planning to book a packaged holiday.

The most popular tourism forms are as follows:

1. Culture, city trips and events	74.0%	4. Nature tourism, Rural tourism and food tourism	26.6%
2. Beach and Relaxation	55.7%	5. Wellbeing and Health Tourism	22.7%
3. Active Tourism	31.4%	6. Educational Tourism	6.7%

TABLE 5: TOURISM SEGMENTS PREFERRED BY AUSTRIAN TOURISTS, (CORPS TOURISTIQUE AUSTRIA, IMC FACHHOCHSCHULE KREMS, & BUNDESANSTALT STATISTIK ÖSTERREICH, 2013)

Austrians are mostly using online travel agencies and booking platforms for booking. 36.9% of the questioned people were indicating the use of these channels. But 33.9% were indicating that they are planning to book at a classic travel agency. 31.2% are planning to book directly at the provider.

In Austria word-of-mouth recommendations are the most important information and inspiration channel right after personal experience. (Corps Touristique Austria, IMC Fachhochschule Krems, & Bundesanstalt Statistik Österreich, 2013)

1. Personal Experience	46.1%	6. Travel agencies	14.1%
2. Word-of-mouth recommendation	28.6%	7. Websites of DMOs	11.8%
3. Website of service providers	27.6%	8. Brochures and catalogues	10.6%
4. Travel Guides	18.0%	9. TV	4.4%
5. Travel Platforms	17.7%	10. Newspapers and Magazines	4.1%

TABLE 6: INFORMATION CHANNELS RATED AS VERY IMPORTANT BY AUSTRIAN TOURISTS, (CORPS TOURISTIQUE AUSTRIA, IMC FACHHOCHSCHULE KREMS, & BUNDESANSTALT STATISTIK ÖSTERREICH, 2013)

5.4 THE SWISS TOURIST

In 2014 Swiss tourists were travelling 19.5 million times abroad. 71% of these journeys were done for the purpose of leisure, 10% for the purpose of business. The most popular countries for trips abroad are Germany (22% of all leisure trips abroad), France (18%) and Italy (18%).

The average duration of holiday trips is 6.7 nights. Swiss tourists prefer higher priced holiday trips and staying at hotels with 4 to 5 stars. (DZT-Schweiz / Zürich, 2015) The most popular accommodations are hotels followed by holiday apartments, cottages, camping sites and other hotel related products.

The car is the most popular transportation when going on holiday in Switzerland and abroad. When travelling abroad the plane is nearly as popular as the car. (Bundesamt für Statistik BFS, 2015)

Individual tours are far more popular than packaged holidays, 60% of all Swiss tourists are booking individual tours. (DZT-Schweiz / Zürich, 2015)

Their preferred booking channels are digital channels, 67% of the Swiss tourists are booking their holidays through the Internet, 24% are booking through a travel agency. (DZT-Schweiz / Zürich, 2015)

6. BENCHMARK

6.1 OULANKA NATIONALPARK

6.1.1 THE PRODUCT

The Oulanka national park is one of Finland's most visited national parks. It is located close to Ruka between the regions of Kuusamo and Salla in Lapland. Finland's most popular hiking route, Karhunkierros, is located in the park as well as other shorter routes. The park attracts 179,000 visitors yearly with its hiking routes and natural heritages.

Oulanka's services include a visitors centre, that is located in the centre of the park and offering services like guided tours, an exhibition and information about the activities and hiking routes and a separate visitors centre for the Karhunkierros hiking route, which is providing interested visitors with information material, exhibitions and guided tours. Another visitors centre is located in Kuusamo. Different accommodation services can be found in the national park. First to mention is the Oulanka basecamp offering 18 rooms that are equipped minimalist and further services like rental equipment and activities. A camping site with space for 110 tents and small huts is also located in Oulanka, they do not only offer accommodation but also renting equipment, a sauna and a kiosk. More than 50 campfire sites are located mainly around the Karhunkierros and 6 open wilderness huts. Furthermore private cottages can be rented all over the national park. Programme services and rental equipment companies are located in the area too.

6.1.2 COMMUNICATION

Oulanka is using different communication channels. Of course they are publishing different brochures, some of them can be downloaded in English for example a brochure of the park itself or about their hiking trails Karhunkierros and Kanjonin kurkkaus. (Oulanka National Park, 2016) Oulanka national park was portrayed in an article for the magazine National Geographic in 2009 (Klinkenborg, 2009) and mentioned in an article about the 10 best European national parks people haven't probably heard about by the British newspaper "The Guardian". (Coldwell & Choat, 2015) Furthermore different hiking magazines have published articles about the national park, which is increasing the popularity of the park in the target group of hikers. Another well functioning marketing channel are the events they are hosting for example the NUTS Karhunkierros, an Ultra-Marathon over the distance of 160km. (Nuts Karhunkierros, 2016)

Besides classic channels they are also communicating the park through online channels. Oulanka doesn't have an own website, they are only publishing information through the website nationalparks.fi, a website hosted by Metsähallitus. Despite of the unconventional way, the website is detailed and provides visitors with all the information needed. (Oulanka National Park B, 2016) Another website publishing information about the national park is the website of the destination Ruka. The user-generated and Social Media Marketing is more mature. Their Facebook page has about 7000 Likes, where they are sharing pictures of the nature and the variety of activities as well as videos and different events happening at the park. But it is only in Finnish. Furthermore they are reviewed positively on tripadvisor and are mentioned in different blogs, mostly about hiking.

6.1.3 DISTRIBUTION

The Oulanka national park is distributed through different tour operators, most of them are specialised in hiking but offer other activities in Oulanka too. Different incoming travel agencies are operating in Oulanka, their services include booking accommodation and organizing activities. Through online travel agencies and metasearchers it is easy for visitors to find accommodation in the park itself or close to the park in Ruka or Salla. The destination management organisation "Ruka! Kuusamo" is presenting the national park on their homepage and is distributing accommodation possibilities and programme services through their website. The website of VisitFinland is presenting the Oulanka national park and possible activities too. Those activities are not distributed directly through Visit Finland, but they are connecting the customer with the company selling the service. Most of the accommodations and programme services have an own website where visitors can book their services directly.

6.2 FULUFJÄLLET NATIONALPARK

6.2.1 THE PRODUCT

Fulufjället nationalpark is located in the Älvdalen region in Sweden. Its natural heritages include primeval forests, one of Sweden largest faunas and waterfalls. The park is divided in 4 different zones: wilderness, low activity, high activity and establishment. Their visitor centre offers services like exhibitions, information about activities, accommodation and hiking routes as well as guided tours and various event tours. Rental cottages and overnight cabins are offered within the park. The cabins with sleeping accommodation can't be booked before the trip, visitors have to find a free cabin. Due to the Swedish everyman's right, visitors can put up their tents everywhere they want in zone wilderness, high and low activity, but there are

campsites too. Activities in the park include fishing, hiking, snowmobiling, cross country skiing and bird watching. The highlight of the park is Njupesjär, Sweden's largest waterfall.

6.2.2 COMMUNICATION

Brochures about Fulufjället National Park and the highlights and must-sees are downloadable through their website. They also offer hiking maps and basic information about the flora and fauna of the park. Fulufjället is also represented at trade shows with information material about the Dalarna region. Their online communication is also limited. Fulufjället doesn't have an own website anymore. Information about the park can be found on the website of "Sveriges Nationalparker". The purpose of this website is to promote all Swedish national parks and give detailed information for visitors. Due to the similar design it is easy to find information about different parks. The homepage is easily found through search engines. Users can follow Fulufjället National park on Facebook. Unfortunately the information is only in Swedish. The national park has 36 positive reviews on tripadvisor and many users have uploaded pictures of the park. Furthermore the park is discussed in different German hiking and outdoor communities as well as blogs.

6.2.3 DISTRIBUTION

The used distribution channels are limited. Fulufjället National Park can only be found in the programmes of nature-related tour operators that are offering tours primarily to Scandinavian countries. Beside the usual online agencies and metasearchers the German online booking website atraveo, which is part of TUI, is distributing holiday apartments and cottages. Through the websites of the Dalarna region or VisitSweden, different activities and accommodations close to the national park can be booked. The booking tools are a bit complicated due to the small range of search parameters. Programme services or accommodation providers can't be found easily through search engines and therefore it is difficult to book their services direct.

6.3 SNOWDONIA NATIONALPARK

6.3.1 THE PRODUCT

Situated on the West Coast of Britain in Wales, Snowdonia is the largest national park in Wales and is visited by around 10 million visitors each year. 350.000 people are walking up Mount Snowdon each year, the highest mountain in Great Britain. Mountains and natural lakes primarily shape the landscape. Other touristic highlights are the unique culture that is characterized by the Welsh culture of the citizens as well as the historic buildings. Snowdonia

has a coastline of around 80km and many small tourism friendly towns and villages. Due to its closeness to bigger English towns like Liverpool, Manchester or Birmingham, the national park attracts many tourists not only from the UK but from the USA or Australia too. Tourists come and visit the park because of the big variety of activities, to visit friends or because they want to escape the city life for a while. The park received a boost in visitor numbers when the infrastructure got enhanced and the A55 highway got built that connects Snowdonia with Liverpool and Manchester.

Due to its size of 2131.56km² the supply of accommodation and programme services is big and there are offers for every type of tourist existing. Typical accommodation types within the park are cottages, campsites, guesthouses, farms and hotels; in total there are 138 different accommodation possibilities in the area of the national park. Most of them are located at the coast and at the border of the national park. Possible activities are sportive activities like hiking, cycling and different water sports. The Snowdonia national park offers activities for less active visitors too, like visiting different heritages, villages and craft workshops.

6.3.2 COMMUNICATION

To increase the popularity of Wales and the Snowdonia National Park as a destination for adventure tourism, press inserts in German media titles have been published in the beginning of 2016. Furthermore VisitSnowdonia is offering brochures with different topics like activities, recreational routes, fishing guides and more general brochures. Those are downloadable through their homepage and can also be found offline at the Park. There are many different exhibitions, sports and cultural events happening throughout the year. Besides marathons, triathlons and other races, also water sport events like sailing competitions are happening. Different villages within the area host smaller events like Food Festivals or specialised guided tours. VisitWales is taking place in different travel trade shows, primarily in Great Britain, but also in Germany and Mallorca. Due to the importance of Snowdonia national park for the Welsh tourism industry it can be assumed that they have represented the park their as well. The Snowdonia national park is mentioned regularly in the travel sections of different magazines and newspapers like National Geographic Traveler, GEO, the British newspaper The Guardian and German newspapers like Spiegel or Merian. According to the website of the Welsh Government, Visit Wales has produced a TV and cinema advert for the German market. The advert aims to make Wales a leading destination for adventure tourism. (Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government, 2016) The website of the Snowdonia national park and Wales as a destination can be easily found through search engines and is giving detailed and easy to find information for visitors. As part of the 2016 campaign in the German market, VisitWales has initialised a direct marketing campaign

targeting all German customers in the VisitWales database. The Snowdonia national park has a Facebookpage with over 7600 Likes. They are posting updates about the activities, events and companies in the park on a daily base in English and Welsh. Furthermore they have a Youtube Channel where they upload mostly panoramic videos of the park. They have a twitter profile too. Snowdonia national park is very present on Tripadvisor with more than 100 activities listed and more than 75.000 reviews.

6.3.3 DISTRIBUTION

The Frankfurt based agency “Expert PR” is representing VisitWales in all German-speaking countries. They are responsible for the communication of Wales towards outgoing travel agencies and tour operators. (Touristik Aktuell, 2015) The Snowdonia national park is a popular destination for hiking tours. It is a permanent part of Wales tours and tours through parts of Great Britain. One incoming travel agency for Great Britain is incoming UK. They offer services for groups and organize tours to resell them to tour operators. Hotels in the Snowdonia national park and around the park can easily be found via the most common online travel agencies like booking.com, expedia and smaller companies like zleepinghotels. Metasearchers like Kayak do also distribute services in the Snowdonian area. VisitWales doesn't have an own booking tool for accommodation or programme services; they redirect the visitor to the websites or the contact information of the service providers. On the homepage of VisitSnowdonia a searching tool is implemented but it is also not possible to directly book on the website. On many websites of the service providers it is possible to book a service directly or via contact information. The region Snowdonia has their own discount pass called “Snowdonia-Pass”. The pass can be either purchased online at their website, at the websites of different DMOs or at the tourist information in Snowdonia for 5 pounds. Partners are many different companies from the categories of accommodation, food, retail, activities and getting around. They all offer discounts off approximately 10% off the usual price. <http://www.snowdoniapass.co.uk/>

7. OPPORTUNITIES IN MARKETING

7.1 SWOT-ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-user friendly and easy findable website • German speaking staff • Unique nature • Wide range of possible activities • Strong partnerships • Good Social Media Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Accessibility • Missing awareness of the park itself by tourists • Specialised on Geological heritage, ordinary people do not know about • Not mentioned in Media • Finland's weak popularity for tourism
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Booming nature, sports, adventure and sustainable tourism • Increasing importance of Online Marketing • Willingness of tourists to discover new destinations • Increasing importance of safety • Individual booking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsustainable Journey there • Political Issues in Europe • Increasing popularity of long-distance journeys • Increasing popularity of domestic tourism

TABLE 7: "SWOT-ANALYSIS OF THE ROKUA GEOPARK" OWN ILLUSTRATION

7.1.1 STRENGTHS

The biggest strength of the Rokua Geopark is their unique and quiet nature, nature enthusiasts will find an interesting flora and geological heritage. Due to the few tourists the Geopark is quiet but still adventurous. Local companies offer a big variety of outdoor activities and the local conditions are ideal for many different sports.

Beneficial for German tourists is that they have German-speaking staff, which is especially helpful for the understanding of the complex geological landscape, tourists can find in Rokua.

In terms of Marketing the digital Marketing of the Geopark is good. Especially their website is easily findable and user-friendly. Furthermore most of the local companies offer their own websites with detailed information at least in Finnish and English. The Finnish social media

marketing is very well; the Facebook page is easily findable and is updated regularly. The international Facebook page is also updated regularly, but not that easy to find.

7.1.2 WEAKNESSES

A major weakness is the accessibility and location. To reach the Geopark by public transport, tourists have to use at least three different means of transportation. The accessibility by car is good, but a bit further away from Finland's touristic regions Helsinki and Lapland. Furthermore Finland itself is only a minor tourism destination for tourists from German-speaking countries.

Another weakness is that Finnish people often don't know about the existence of the park and therefore tourists don't know about it either. It is not mentioned in any German speaking Media as well as travel guides.

Another weakness may be the focus on the geological heritage, which is of course the fact that makes the park unique, but ordinary nature tourists can't really relate to those geological forms and may visit a park that is promoting other aspects.

7.1.3 OPPORTUNITIES

Due to the increasing popularity of nature and sustainable tourism, destinations such as national parks are gaining more importance. Furthermore the increasing health consciousness is benefitting destinations that are suitable for different outdoor sports and active holidays. The increasing interest of people to experience soft adventures is also a major opportunity for national parks in general and the Geopark. Many tourists nowadays prefer to travel to new destination they haven't been to before and that are far away from mass tourism.

Opportunities in terms of Communication and distribution, that will be explained more detailed in the next chapters, is the increasing importance of digital channels and online marketing. Another opportunity in terms of distribution is the wish of tourists to book their holiday individually and adjust their stay exactly to their needs.

Another opportunity is the increased need for safety during holiday. Finland is known as a very safe country and especially in the Geopark it is not likely that anything really dangerous will happen.

7.1.4 THREATS

The increasing popularity of sustainable tourism is not only an opportunity but also a threat, due to the location of the Geopark and the journey there. It is nearly impossible to get to Finland without a plane from the German speaking countries and in Finland itself, going by plane is quite popular due to the distances.

Another threat that is somehow related to an opportunity are political and safety issues in Europe. Due to those issues more tourists from German-speaking countries prefer to go on holiday within their country. But as said in the chapter opportunities, Finland as a country isn't known for political or safety issues.

The last threat is the current trend of long-distance journeys. Especially younger tourists want to travel to other continents to experience other cultures and see something else than Europe.

7.2 PRODUCT OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to VisitFinlands website the Syöte national park in Finland is the only park that has special equipped paths for mountain bikers. This is a niche Rokua Geopark can use for their own product too. Due to the already existing partnership with Syöte, they can support the Geopark with their expertise and cooperation in communication and distribution matters is also possible.

7.3 COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.3.1 TRENDS IN COMMUNICATION

The trends in communication are currently all about digital channels and user-generated content. Many destinations are working together with popular bloggers or are intensifying their Social Media Marketing. Renowned personalities of the tourism industry have listed their trends for 2015, which are still accurate in 2016 and the following years.

Of course most of the trends are related to the Internet and Social Media. Especially the importance of channels that are approaching to the emotions of the users with visual content, such as Youtube or Instagram, is growing. Videos are a new and often used medium to promote destinations and touristic products. These videos shouldn't be long; a duration of a few minutes is sufficient to communicate the idea of the destination and its activities. The important thing is to attract the attention of the users in the first few seconds and keep it by an interesting story or unique shots. In Social Media, videos are gaining more and more

significance. Videos on Facebook are starting immediately when the users scroll through their timeline. To keep them watching the video it is important to capture their interest in the first few seconds and to make the content and purpose of the video understandable without audio.

Another trend or important aspect of communication is content marketing. The content of a website needs to be clear and short but still detailed. All possible questions users can have should be answered and those answers should be found easily and in a logical way. Furthermore the content needs to be somehow unique in order to keep the attention of the user for a longer timespan.

In terms of branding, destinations have to establish a unique brand and communicate the characteristics of this brand distinctly. Therefore the different service providers have to act mutual and support the same goals.

Trending topics in communication are safety and a slow lifestyle. The news is filled with political and social crisis every day. While travelling people want to escape those crisis and feel safe. Many destinations are losing their customer due to political and safety issues. Destinations should care about the concerns of the tourists and communicate their safeness and their possibilities to escape from daily life and struggles and anxieties. These needs of the tourists are also part of the current trend for slower lifestyles and slow tourism. People want to escape their daily busy life, enjoy nature, experience something new and just relax. One of the major trends in this field of tourism is to be offline; this is pretty controversy with the trend to be online the whole day. But apparently people want to take a break from their online life during holidays and enjoy the real life. (Wehmeyer, 2015)

Furthermore the term “travel like a local” is trending. Tourists want to experience the real destination and many are declining artificial destinations and holiday resorts.

Another trend is the growing importance of forms of holidays. Tourists take a look at what they want to do and experience first and afterwards look at the destination that can fulfil their unique needs.

Tourism and communication channels are changing a lot during current days and it is important to always be informed about trends and react to them rapidly.

7.3.2 PREFERENCES OF THE TARGET GROUP

The preferred communication and inspiration channels of Austrian and German tourists are quite different, as it can be seen from the earlier chapters. The number one channel for

Germans are brochures and catalogues, catalogues are the common channels for tour operators to present their packaged tours. This medium might not be that popular in nature tourism. Another important channel are travel agencies and personal consultancy. In Austria people get inspiration from their own experience or from experiences of their friends and family. Important channels for both countries are the websites of the destination as well as the websites of the service providers at the destination. Search engines, travel platforms and online booking platforms are also used by both target groups. Another important and often forgotten marketing medium are travel guides. Many tourists are using those guides and the content has a big influence on their choices before or while they are travelling. Other channels that were placed in the Top-Ten inspiration channels of Austrian and German tourists are newspapers, magazines and TV documentations. The Swiss tourists are not mentioned here due to the lack of useable statistics.

7.2.3 OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reacting to the future trends the online marketing can be improved. The search engine marketing is pretty good if the users already know the area and the park. If they enter the right keywords, it is the first result. But many people don't know about the term "Geopark" and use the more common term national park. Even if the park is an officially a Geopark, the term national park should be used more often to place the website higher in the results. The content of the website is very detailed and much information about the park and its service providers can be found. The usage of visual information material like maps and pictures is really good.

In Social Media Marketing the Geopark is already active. They have two Facebook pages, one in Finnish and one in English. The page in Finnish is easily findable whereas the English page is nearly impossible to find. On the website only the Finnish version is linked. To increase the popularity of the English page it should be linked as well. Furthermore it needs to be updated more often. At the moment all the content is just about events. To really promote the area as a tourism destination, the page should focus on the emotions of the users and attract them by posting pictures of the nature, outdoor activities and short videos. These short videos can include panoramic pictures but also short explanations about the unique geological forms or plants in the park.

The Rokua Geopark has a strong brand due to its focus on their geological heritage. Unfortunately not that many tourists are attracted by this brand. The heritage is a big bonus but many tourists are focussing on the activities they can do at the park. Rokua could focus on one activity besides the geological heritage and promote themselves as the ideal location

to do this activity. Possible activities are fishing, wildlife watching or mountain biking. In winter Rokua can promote their perfect slopes for cross-country skiing.

Many trending topics are perfect for promoting the Geopark. As stated in 7.2.1 the tourism form slow tourism is trending now. People want to experience the real destination and the culture of the native people. Rokua offers many possibilities for slow travel and travelling like a local. Typical Finnish summer huts and cottages can be booked in the park and popular activities like Berry picking; hiking or cross-country skiing can be done. Furthermore Rokua has an interesting local craft scene. Furthermore Finland is one of the safest countries in the world and a visit to Rokua Geopark is quite peaceful. Rokua can be promoted as a peaceful but still exciting new destination where people can enjoy the nature without thinking about their daily struggles at home, while doing fun activities. They can promote their quality as an insider tip for nature tourism.

Taking a look at the preferences of the target group, it is obvious that they prefer different channels. A homogenous communication strategy is still possible. Brochures aren't that important anymore; especially in Austria they are quite unpopular. But brochures can still attract the attention of possible guests. A recommendable strategy can be to take advantage of the Geopark network and send brochures to the Geoparks in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. Those Geoparks have visitors that are interested in nature and are therefore the target group and many of them are from the targeted country specific groups.

Many people in Germany and also a big amount of people in Austria are still relying on the expertise of travel agents. To improve the communication of the destination in travel agencies, travel agents should be provided with detailed information about the park, its services and activities. A so-called Fam Trip for travel agents is also recommendable. To save costs the Geopark can cooperate either with Oulu or with other national parks.

Since tourists who are also visiting other parks mostly visit the Geopark, it is beneficial for the Geopark to work together with other national parks in the area and focus on communicating Finnish national parks as a general destination. Finland is often not considered in the planning process of German-speaking tourists. Talking about nature tourism in Scandinavia, many tourists only focus on the opportunities in Sweden and Norway. Finland in has to improve their touristic communication in general. The key to success is cooperation. Instead of trying to promote only one national park it would be better to promote the national parks together. For the Rokua Geopark it would be beneficial to look for strong partners in other national parks that recommend the park to their visitors or devise a special route through Finland's national parks including the Geopark.

An often forgotten communication and inspiration channel in tourism are travel guides. Even if books are getting out-dated more and more, travel guides are still an often use medium for tourists to plan their trip. The Rokua Geopark is not mentioned in any popular travel guide about Finland. Maybe it is successful to contact the authors of travel guides and send them information about the Geopark or even invite them to the Park for their next trip.

Other inspiration channels often used by potential tourists are TV documentations and magazines. Especially in nature tourism, those mediums can be very inspirational and a good promotion. With its geological heritage and the unique nature Rokua has an interesting topic to offer. A TV documentation doesn't seem to be realistic. But articles in specialised magazines, for example hiking or fishing magazines or general science magazines like National Geographic seem to be doable. Journalists or Photographers can be contacted and invited to the Geopark.

Another important channel that can be used even better are sports events. Rokua Geopark is already offering different sport events, but nobody in German speaking countries knows about them. To make them more popular those events should be promoted in specialised magazines and Social Media. It can also be helpful to invite popular athletes to participate in the event. Especially adventure races, that are quite popular in Finland, are not that known in German-speaking countries and the opportunities to participate in such events are limited. But there are many possible athletes, since adventurous outdoor activities are getting more popular. A possible way to increase the knowledge about such events in German-speaking countries can be in a cooperation with German, Austrian and Swiss Geoparks. The parks can host adventure races. The Rokua Geopark can help organizing the events with their experience and expertise and use the events as promotion for their own park.

Online Advertising, for example Google ads, isn't seen as necessary in the case of Rokua. Such ads wouldn't really increase the popularity or improve the image of the Geopark and the success doesn't stand in comparison with the costs.

To increase the popularity and the knowledge about the Geopark, the Park can cooperate with different partners and use affiliate marketing. Some possible partners were already mentioned above, other possible partners are outdoor, hiking and fishing portals or bloggers who are specialised in this kind of content. These partnerships can be structured differently depending on the parties involved.

Other possible marketing strategies can be copied from the benchmarks. For example the Snowdonia Pass in the Snowdonia national park is an interesting idea to signal a unity as a destination and offer benefits for the visitors. Because of the offers and discounts tourists

may visit service providers they wouldn't have visited without the card. Such a card can be established together with the Oulu region or with other national parks.

Oulankas success is mostly based on their popular hiking route. The Geopark has an interesting hiking route too, the Emperors Route, but it isn't promoted that well. There could be an own section about it on the website, showing information about the route and the activities and accommodations along the route.

Another route that can be promoted more effectively is the Tervan Tie. The route along the historical tar route gives an impression of the historical Finnish culture. It can be promoted as an authentic route to experience the Finnish culture and nature. Therefore cooperation between the regions along this route is necessary.

7.4 DISTRIBUTION OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.4.1 TRENDS IN DISTRIBUTION

Due to political issues in Europe, strikes in the travel industry and other factors a forecast for trends in distribution in the next several years can't be made. Compared to the first half of 2015, the first half of 2016 was weaker in bookings by a total of 7% in the sector of tour operators. It must be mentioned that this decrease is mostly caused by the decrease of bookings in troubled regions like Turkey or Tunisia. Travel agencies are still demanded in troubled times due to their expertise of alternative destinations and their knowledge about the variety of possibilities in tourism. Due to their flexibility and rapid reactions to customer demands the online distribution channels are also seen to be successful in the next few years. (Lanz, 2016)

The travel agency is still a demanded distribution channel in Germany. In 2015 the total revenue has increased slightly compared to 2014 and also in 2016 their revenue is stable. Customers value the expertise of the agents and their big variety of products in different destinations. (Lanz 2, 2016) Especially consulting intensive products are booked frequently in travel agencies.

Online travel agencies have established themselves as a powerful distribution channel over the last few years. The market is fluctuating a lot with new companies entering and others leaving. Their variety of products is nearly unlimited, but the biggest players are focussing on the distribution of accommodations. Despite of their high results in the distribution market the revenue of the online travel agencies in total is only growing steady. This can be caused by the decrease of bookings in general.

In general the bookings of packaged holidays are stagnating whereas individual holidays are getting more popular and still have a lot of potential. Especially online travel agencies and portals have the possibilities to react fast to these trends. (Kaszian, 2016)

7.3.2 PREFERENCES OF THE TARGET GROUPS

As stated in the chapters about German, Austrian and Swiss tourists all of these geographically divided groups prefer online booking channels such as online travel agencies or direct booking. Especially the Swiss tourists are booking more than half of their holidays online. In Germany the travel agency is still a popular booking channel, but it loses importance in the other two countries. In all three countries the bookings of individual tours are increasing whereas the bookings of packaged tours are decreasing.

7.4.3 OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated the online distribution channels importance is growing and is also forecasted to grow in the future. The establishment of a booking platform that is distributing all local accommodation providers is highly recommended and is already implemented by the establishment of Suomen Keskusvaraamo.

Direct booking is a promising channel too and it is favourable that many accommodation providers are already using this kind of channel. In order to increase the direct bookings it is necessary to improve the search engine marketing so that it is easier for possible tourists to find the accommodation opportunities they have. It is good that the website of the Rokua Geopark is listing all the accommodations, so that users have an overview. But they can only find the website of the Geopark, when they are searching for it explicitly.

As stated in the recent chapter tourists from the specific countries prefer individual tours to packaged tours. Especially in nature tourism the tourists want to choose freely where to go. Therefore a usual packaged tour with flight, accommodation and a detailed planned trip isn't recommendable. Possible alternatives for packaged, but still kind of individual tours are listed below:

- Packaged journey to the Geopark: Due to the complicated journey to the Geopark by public transport a packaged tour with flights, train tickets and a taxi ride may be a profitable idea. This can also be an interesting idea for day tourists from Oulu.
- Package with flights, rental car and accommodation for the first night: A package that is organising the perfect start to Finland's nature. The guests arrive at the airport of Oulu and get their rental car. They will sleep one night in the Rokua Geopark and can

travel freely after their organized arrival to Finland. The Geopark or the region Oulu is a perfect start for people to travel to Lapland and experience authentic Finnish nature.

- Packaged tour through different national parks: Another possible packaged tour is tour through different national parks, including the Rokua Geopark. Accommodation in the different parks or close to the parks can be included as well as typical activities and a rental car. Therefore the national parks have to work together and establish an appealing product.
- Hiking package – There are many tour operators that are offering packaged and guided hiking tours. A package focussed on the needs of hikers should be established. It can include flight tickets, transportation and a route with accommodation or camping equipment. A guided tour for the tourists about the natural and geological heritages can also be included.

These packaged tours can be offered to tour operators in Germany, Austria and Switzerland so that they include the Geopark in their portfolio.

To strengthen the distribution in travel agencies it is recommended to invite travel agents to the Geopark, so that they can see the product by themselves and sell it better. Nordic Marketing, which are distributing and representing the Geopark to travel agencies are offering the organisation of those trips. To keep costs down low and attract more travel agents it will be better to cooperate with other destinations in Finland and invite the agents to a small round trip.

Many magazines that are specialised in nature, hiking or science offer special tours for their readers. Due to its history, heritages and unique nature the Rokua Geopark and Finland can be an interesting destination for such trips. This distribution channel only has a small target group, but shouldn't be left out in this discussion.

As mentioned in the chapter 2.2.3 Distribution Channels, Sales Promotions are a possible sales technique. Online websites that are specialised in looking up cheap holidays and facilitating these offers to customers are quite popular. It is recommendable to offer accommodation or packaged tours for a cheaper price. Not only to sell the products but also to communicate the product and attract the attention of customers. Another possible sales technique is a discount card people can buy or get freely. With this card visitors can get discounts on different services in the Geopark.

8. CONCLUSION

After analysing the current marketing of the Rokua Geopark it can be said that they are already working hard to improve their marketing. They established strong partnerships with the city of Oulu and municipalities from the area of the Geopark and have an established marketing company promoting them in German speaking countries. But in awareness of marketing trends and the preferences of the target groups many more opportunities exist that are currently not taken into account. According to the trends the Rokua Geopark has a very well sellable product, but potential tourists don't know about it. To attract more visitors the popularity of the Geopark has to increase using the given recommendations based on the analyses. Compared to the benchmarks, the Geopark is already promoting the park in a very professional way. Especially their digital marketing and their website is superior to the ones of similar parks like Fulufjället or Oulanka. One problem that needs to be taken into account is the general popularity of Finland as a tourism destination. Compared to the other Scandinavian countries, Finland isn't as popular. To increase the popularity of the Geopark, Finland or better the Finnish national parks need to communicate their destination and products better. Therefore cooperation in terms of marketing is necessary, the Geopark can have an impact on this cooperation. Other main recommendations are increasing the popularity of the Geopark with the help of Media channels, like magazines or travel guidebooks.

As stated in part 7 there are many different ways and actions to try to improve the marketing activities of the Geopark. Due to current trends digital channels are superior to classic marketing channels, but those shouldn't be left out either. The target groups are using classic channels as well, especially for inspiration. Based on the increasing popularity of nature tourism, escape from the daily life and untouched destinations the Geopark has a promising product that should be communicated based on those trends. Based on the current preferences of the target groups, classic marketing channels are more promising. But due to the general trend of digitalisation, digital channels should also be taken into account and are surely the future of marketing. To improve the distribution through travel agents so called fam-trips are recommendable. The travel agents need to know the product in order to communicate it and distribute it positively. Another great opportunity in communication mentioned is event sponsorship. Together with Geoparks in German-speaking countries sport events can be organized and can be used as a promotion campaign. Such events get positive attention and are promoting the brand Rokua Geopark.

The Rokua Geopark has a lot to offer to its visitors, they have a wide range of different accommodation and activities in summer as well as in winter. The park only needs to be promoted more aggressively and active to gain the attention of potential visitors.

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APPENDIX

TOURISM STATISTICS FINLAND

Nights spent by country of residence at winter season (11-04) 2008-2015								
WHOLE COUNTRY								
	Nights spent							
	Winter season (11-04)							
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total	8.197.60 3	7.906.51 2	7.862.58 4	8.236.47 8	8.588.59 0	8.551.05 7	8.478.79 0	8.249.52 8
Domestic	5.675.84 0	5.599.42 8	5.675.39 0	5.849.10 7	5.932.02 9	5.874.33 5	5.761.90 9	5.802.56 1
Foreign	2.521.76 3	2.307.08 4	2.187.19 4	2.387.37 1	2.656.56 1	2.676.72 2	2.716.88 1	2.446.96 7
Foreign excluding Russia	1.942.64 4	1.702.35 0	1.612.55 1	1.693.60 0	1.826.50 7	1.809.17 8	1.878.39 4	1.978.05 9
Europe	2.134.98 2	1.975.23 8	1.855.28 2	2.039.94 6	2.241.66 0	2.253.00 0	2.236.29 6	1.954.31 9
EU-28	1.431.16 4	1.258.96 9	1.174.60 3	1.219.40 8	1.269.60 5	1.234.45 7	1.241.42 7	1.326.31 6
Scandinavia	282.206	237.749	226.682	264.024	273.278	260.284	269.732	287.891
Asia	180.107	157.902	169.559	164.183	196.949	223.608	248.413	271.883
Oceania	14.374	14.271	13.174	14.870	16.006	18.565	20.871	19.857
Africa	8.116	7.423	8.458	8.832	9.754	8.758	9.135	10.400
America	95.406	71.989	72.572	85.797	87.779	81.282	88.439	90.950
Russian Federation	579.119	604.734	574.643	693.771	830.054	867.544	838.487	468.908
Sweden	170.039	154.197	145.192	167.715	168.412	158.355	163.101	170.711
Germany	205.742	191.719	182.802	185.600	197.561	189.339	188.797	202.157

Nights spent by country of residence at winter season (11-04) 2008-2015								
WHOLE COUNTRY								
	Nights spent							
	Winter season (11-04)							
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
United Kingdom	395.534	334.394	260.851	243.314	257.218	286.259	291.117	298.913
France	135.362	127.856	122.210	128.539	133.358	135.457	129.172	141.696
China and Hong Kong	38.304	32.233	31.894	29.651	37.939	41.233	50.434	62.182
Japan	66.064	58.976	61.090	63.505	84.364	97.635	91.297	80.889
United States	73.586	53.341	53.737	62.515	63.023	58.121	63.954	66.209
Estonia	102.660	84.913	97.900	100.237	119.848	95.103	89.391	89.614
Norway	63.296	50.767	50.057	58.717	67.103	67.887	68.968	73.922
Netherlands	80.508	76.151	80.951	85.891	82.476	85.354	84.330	80.812
Switzerland	41.365	40.578	40.124	47.379	53.835	57.169	56.993	59.796
Italy	61.904	56.772	53.329	55.723	55.166	49.977	46.886	54.463
Spain	53.025	44.363	42.083	51.087	46.129	45.161	42.775	45.695

(Majoitustilasto-C, 2016)

Nights spent by country of residence at summer season (05-10) 2008-2015								
WHOLE COUNTRY								
	Nights spent							
	Summer season (05-10)							
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015

Nights spent by country of residence at summer season (05-10) 2008-2015								
WHOLE COUNTRY								
Nights spent								
Summer season (05-10)								
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total	11.273.269	10.804.668	11.189.180	11.666.557	11.665.519	11.650.120	11.402.675	11.441.949
Domestic	8.286.401	8.132.833	8.424.955	8.610.583	8.559.599	8.520.164	8.334.591	8.402.452
Foreign	2.986.868	2.671.835	2.764.225	3.055.974	3.105.920	3.129.956	3.068.084	3.039.497
Foreign excluding Russia	2.560.700	2.264.599	2.320.615	2.500.281	2.463.645	2.391.189	2.450.741	2.667.877
Europe	2.375.030	2.141.828	2.204.661	2.420.510	2.422.737	2.412.601	2.336.787	2.193.054
EU-28	1.741.500	1.548.816	1.563.566	1.656.814	1.560.627	1.474.312	1.515.456	1.583.030
Scandinavia	599.961	508.067	535.249	565.716	544.333	534.755	537.740	556.327
Asia	257.685	213.731	241.747	284.808	300.990	349.783	334.996	440.174
Oceania	39.455	29.775	30.055	34.595	35.754	36.649	40.616	40.789
Africa	10.826	12.212	13.394	14.025	15.268	14.028	14.164	14.792
America	175.434	155.538	165.033	187.428	189.880	176.926	191.870	189.969
Russian Federation	426.168	407.236	443.610	555.693	642.275	738.767	617.343	371.620
Sweden	406.292	342.768	365.155	385.148	370.773	370.403	370.340	376.237
Germany	375.330	335.476	330.048	355.005	337.018	310.998	309.462	336.139
United Kingdom	167.761	163.314	152.235	144.082	134.640	151.344	149.657	159.070
France	93.829	84.771	88.194	85.894	87.091	79.148	81.306	81.643

Nights spent by country of residence at summer season (05-10) 2008-2015								
WHOLE COUNTRY								
Nights spent								
Summer season (05-10)								
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
China and Hong Kong	55.774	42.186	52.142	68.862	73.933	97.821	98.035	140.366
Japan	89.903	74.459	76.302	78.075	89.916	106.567	103.762	119.517
United States	134.381	113.772	123.727	137.762	136.988	127.181	139.616	133.685
Estonia	104.996	85.399	106.775	121.348	118.825	96.110	109.456	101.258
Norway	120.659	100.299	108.276	111.858	114.515	106.836	107.556	114.360
Netherlands	100.296	93.597	83.455	81.626	82.049	71.092	74.889	75.955
Switzerland	67.349	66.652	66.803	71.673	76.814	71.635	72.919	95.993
Italy	106.036	96.286	87.502	99.934	78.640	68.711	72.356	73.155
Spain	74.326	66.290	68.231	78.791	52.976	52.460	58.487	58.908

(Majoitustilasto-B, 2016)

Nights spent by country of residence 2009-2016 (cumulative)								
WHOLE COUNTRY								
Nights spent								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	18.567.3 38	19.248.0 57	19.987.8 71	20.317.5 82	20.241.0 57	19.785.4 12	19.738.1 23	4.419.5 51
Domestic	13.677.3 32	14.242.9 89	14.480.4 03	14.514.6 23	14.380.6 10	14.075.0 72	14.227.7 73	3.036.4 00
Foreign	4.890.00	5.005.06	5.507.46	5.802.95	5.860.44	5.710.34	5.510.35	1.383.1

Nights spent by country of residence 2009-2016 (cumulative)

WHOLE COUNTRY

	Nights spent							
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	6	8	8	9	7	0	0	51
Foreign excluding Russia	3.910.480	3.948.644	4.220.870	4.296.059	4.240.028	4.370.814	4.727.502	1.165.683
Europe	4.033.708	4.112.427	4.501.036	4.703.927	4.699.318	4.486.065	4.127.712	1.059.078
EU-28	2.759.468	2.748.811	2.878.849	2.829.777	2.728.286	2.783.398	2.945.136	743.496
Scandinavia	740.278	771.678	831.128	816.468	796.935	814.064	845.626	144.156
Asia	375.174	406.708	459.446	504.328	584.668	591.342	728.806	186.710
Oceania	43.679	43.575	49.618	52.926	56.356	61.744	63.199	9.879
Africa	20.226	22.169	22.902	24.924	23.133	23.844	25.248	4.460
America	228.390	239.187	276.093	275.908	259.675	281.175	294.503	59.135
Russian Federation	979.526	1.056.424	1.286.598	1.506.900	1.620.419	1.339.526	782.848	217.468
Sweden	494.002	517.849	552.129	537.002	531.375	534.358	549.870	83.195
Germany	525.880	510.280	541.031	534.239	501.650	500.057	543.294	125.674
United Kingdom	464.292	406.272	389.037	405.541	454.604	446.792	471.869	124.322
France	212.887	213.414	213.588	217.886	214.248	215.393	230.090	109.350
China and Hong Kong	73.701	83.037	101.891	112.591	142.802	150.271	210.535	44.998
Japan	134.363	136.804	146.433	176.919	205.988	192.007	203.411	50.618

Nights spent by country of residence 2009-2016 (cumulative)								
WHOLE COUNTRY								
	Nights spent							
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
United States	166.893	178.482	201.854	198.725	187.245	204.036	202.546	36.930
Estonia	167.816	205.429	228.187	235.482	187.295	196.277	188.899	47.853
Norway	149.279	159.377	173.254	182.639	174.147	178.956	185.995	37.216
Netherlands	169.213	165.779	164.593	164.918	158.668	158.801	159.568	68.545
Switzerland	107.621	107.859	118.009	132.900	128.771	131.076	158.805	45.480
Italy	151.658	142.389	156.509	130.847	115.681	123.145	127.757	29.885
Spain	109.240	113.804	130.046	96.820	96.876	104.451	106.477	26.536

(Majoitustilasto-A, 2016)

INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS VIRTA

1. How would you define your target group?

Internationale Kunden mit Schwerpunkt auf China, Mitteleuropa (vor allem Deutschland), Nordwest-Russland und Japan. Dies sind die Schwerpunktländer des Attractive Oulu Region 2018 –Projekts, welches momentan das wichtigste Marketingprojekt für den Rokua Gepark ist.

Auch innerhalb Finnlands wird Marketing weiterhin vorangetrieben mittels Teilnahme an nationalen Messen, Präsenz in den Medien etc.

Ansonsten sind die Zielgruppen sehr weit gefächert. Was wohl wesentlich ist, ist die Tatsache, dass die Attraktion des Geoparks auf seiner landschaftlichen Schönheit und geologischen Einzigartigkeit beruht. Menschen, die sich überhaupt nicht für Natur begeistern können und lieber Shoppen / Städte besuchen, sind somit nicht unsere Zielgruppe. Neben der Natur werben wir in folgenden Bereichen:

- Kultur: alte Kirchen, Wasserkraftwerke und zu diesen gehörenden, teils

denkmalgeschützte (Leppiniemi, Muhos, Architekt Aarne Ervi) Wohngebiete und Schulen (Utajärvi!)

- lokales Essen: da gibt's sogar ein Video zu <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kB7MMGeyo14>. Vesa kann dazu mehr sagen

- Geopark und Nationalpark –Menschen. Hier in der Ecke gibt's den Rokua Nationalpark – es gibt überraschend viele Menschen, die von Nationalpark zu Nationalpark fahren und dann Tagestouren absolvieren. Sowohl Aus- als auch Inländer sind dafür zu begeistern

- Sport: insbesondere Rokua ist für Wander- und Skilauftouren perfekt und wird auch als solches Gebiet vermarktet. Interessant sowohl für richtige Sportler (für die gibt's entsprechende Events wie Rokua MTB, Rokua Marathon, Geopark Challenge, Terva Trail (ultra distance trail run)) als auch Familien, für die sich einfache/kurze Loipen und Wanderwege finden. Auf dem Rokua in Arbeit: Sommerskilaufroute (Skilaufen mit Rädern unter den Skiern), MTB –Routennetz (über 40 km ausgeschildertes Wegenetz für MTB -Fahrer

- Fischen, Angeln: Z.B. Atteson Fishing hat bereits internationale Kunden und ist ein sehr beliebter Partner z.B. für Firmen hier im Geopark, die Herberge bieten und zusätzlich Aktivitäten für ihre Kunden anbieten wollen. Atteson bieten geführte Fischtouren im Geopark –Gebiet und in Oulu an.

- Erlebnisurlaub: Kajaktouren, Fischen

- Fotosafaries: Finnature bieten Fotosafaries (z.B. Steinadler, Birkhähne) in Utajärvi an

2. Do you have any statistics of the origin of your visitors and the reasons why they are visiting the Geopark?

Hier im Besucherzentrum Suppa führen wir Buch über die Gesamtzahl unserer Besucher sowie deren Nationalität. Die Gründe ihres Besuchs halten wir statistisch nicht fest, aber internationale Besucher sind sehr oft auf der Durchreise in Richtung Norden, viele wollen bis zum Nordkapp. Häufig mit dem Wohnmobil unterwegs.

3. Why do you personally think, people should visit the Geopark?

Gute Zwischenstation auf dem Weg nach Lappland. Hier kann man sehr gut 1 – 7 Tage verbringen und auch einen Oulu –Besuch mit einbauen. Die Natur hier ist ein Hauptgrund hier mal vorbeizuschauen. Was wir noch mehr brauchen, sind Aktivitäten für die Menschen.

4. What are your current Marketing activities and channels in the
 - a. Domestic market Messen (Helsingin matkailumessut, Erämessut)
 - b. Foreign market Messen (ITB Berlin), NordicMarketing vermarktet Geopark-Dienstleistungen in Deutschland
 - c. Especially german speaking market s.o.

5. How do you benefit from the Geopark network in terms of marketing and internationality?

Geopark-Netzwerk ist recht bekannt in Deutschland aber auch in China. Somit ist der Rokua Geopark ein sehr guter Weg zum effektiven Marketing.

6. You are closely working together with the city of Oulu. How is this collaboration working and what are your benefits from it? What marketing activities are you doing together?

Mehrere Unternehmen des Geoparks (z.B. Besucherzentrum Suppa, Gutshof Merilä, Rokua health&spa) sind auf den Seiten von VisitOulu. Zusammenarbeit (z.B. in Form von gemeinsamen Produkten (Rundreisen)) ist jetzt im Rahmen des Attractive Oulu Region 2018 –Projekts intensiviert. Innerhalb von Workshops sind bereits gemeinsame Rundreisen entwickelt worden, in welchen Oulu, Rokua Geopark, Syöte und Kalajoki mit eingebaut sind.

7. Do you have any national park or Geopark as a role model in terms of internationality and marketing?

Natürlich gucken wir allgemein, wie andere Geopark operieren. Dieses Jahr waren Vertreter von Humanpolis und der Schule von Utajärvi im Geopark Schwäbische Alb und sind mit ner grossen Tüte neuer Ideen zurückgekehrt.

8. What are your marketing and distribution plans for the near future?

AOR 2018 ist auch in den kommenden Jahren von zentraler Bedeutung. Eine wichtige neue Firma in Sachen Marketing und Verkauf ist Suomen Keskusvaraamo (Finnlands Zentralvermittlung), die die Vermittlung von Herbergen (Sommerhütten, Hotels) und Erlebnisdienstleistung in Kalajoki und nun auch in Syöte und Rokua vorantreiben. Verkauf im Internet. Geplant ist, immer mehr neue Dienstleistungen in Vermittlung zu bekommen. Natürlich dann auch Sprachversionen, in naher Zukunft auch Deutsch.

9. Which distribution channels are used within the Geopark and what are the most successful ones? (Travel agencies, Online, ...)

VisitOulu, NordicMarketing, AOR 2018, Suomen Keskusvaraamo (Finnische Zentralvermittlung)

10. Can you give any comment on your Social Media activities? Why is your FB page only in Finnish?

Aktivitäten in Sozialen Medien könnten grösser sein und alles sollte am Besten sowohl in Finnisch als auch in Englisch sein. Auch sollten wir die deutschsprachigen FB –Seiten von NordicMarketing nutzen.

11. What are your expectations of the outcome of my thesis?

gute Entwicklungsvorschläge aus mitteleuropäischer Sicht bezüglich Marketing, Internetpräsenz und Dienstleistungsverkauf

INTERVIEW WITH VESA KRÖKKI

1. How would you define your target group?

Rokua UNESCO Global Geopark is a destination in which we have several operating companies. The companies have their own target Groups.

But in general I'd say that we have the same target group as Finland in General: The marketing activities are targeted towards modern humanists. Modern humanists have already seen the world's metropolises. They appreciate quality of life, pure nature and responsibility. Visit Finland.

2. Do you have any statistics of the origin of your visitors and the reasons why they are visiting the Geopark?

Suppa Information centre keeps up a survey on the nationalities visiting the Geopark. We haven't been asking about the reason for travel

3. Why do you personally think, people should visit the Geopark?

Special outdoors sites in the only Unesco Global Geopark in Finland. The sites are well interpreted and the geological explanations are specially detailed and good compared

to any other Finnish outdoors destination. Good opportunities for outdoors activities all around the year. Special reasons are also the architectural features of the area.

4. What are your current Marketing activities and channels in the

a. Domestic market: VisitOulu joint marketing, Oulu region City guide

b. Foreign market: VisitOulu joint marketing and the activities in the Attractive Oulu Region 2018 project

c. Especially German speaking market: Attractive Oulu region project: Sales runs, ITB Berlin, Product manual.. Nordic marketing Ltd takes care of these

5. How do you benefit from the Geopark network in terms of marketing and internationality?

It gives us the UNESCO brand, which gives us credibility and visibility. The marketing (information) tools of the Geoparks network are the websites of Global Geoparks, European Geoparks and Unesco Geoparks. Furthermore every European Geopark is obliged to have a Geoparks corner to promote the network's sites.

6. You are closely working together with the city of Oulu. How is this collaboration working and what are your benefits from it? What marketing activities are you doing together?

Not really with the City of Oulu... We are a member in the Visit Oulu marketing company. The Visit Oulu is our main partner in marketing and most of our activities are guided through their marketing tools: magazine, website, social media, videos and contacts with tour operators. We benefit through visibility and cooperation between the Oulu region.

7. Do you have any national park or Geopark as a role model in terms of internationality and marketing?

Not really

8. What are your marketing and distribution plans for the near future?

Until the end of 2018 most of our marketing activities go through the attractive Oulu region project. In that the work consists mainly of the operations done in the markets of central Europe, China, Japan and Russia. Most actions are operating with tour operators and building products.

9. Which distribution channels are used within the Geopark and what are the most successful ones? (Travel agencies, Online, ...)

The Geopark doesn't really have own products (ones with a price tag). The Geopark provides routes, information, marketing to the local companies who then sell the Geopark as part of their end product.

10. Can you give any comment on your Social Media activities? Why is your FB page only in Finnish?

We have also an FB site in English: Rokua UNESCO Global Geopark.

11. What are your expectations of the outcome of my thesis?

More information on the German speaking markets.

12. Who are the stakeholders? What are the roles of Humanpolis and Metsähallitus? Who is the owner of the park?

Rokua Geopark is part of Humanpolis Ltd. Humanpolis Ltd is owned by the municipalities of Muhos, Utajärvi and Vaala. Rokua Geopark is founded by the three municipalities and Rokua health and rehabilitation foundation, and Metsähallitus. The founders are the financiers. Ownership of the status goes to the founders.

Humanpolis Ltd is a regional development company.