

TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
Tallinn School of Economics and Business Administration  
Department of Business Administration  
Specialization in Marketing and Management

Madli Allikmäe

**EXPORT MARKETING MANAGEMENT OF ESTONIAN COMPANIES: A STUDY  
OF RESOURCE COMMITMENT BEHAVIOUR OF TRADE FAIR PARTICIPANTS**

Master Thesis

Supervisor: Dr., Prof. Urve Venesaar

Tallinn 2014

I hereby confirm that I have written and compiled the thesis independently.  
All of other authors' work, statements and data has been adequately referred to.  
Madli Allikmäe

.....

(signature, date)

Student ID: TATM123148

Student's e-mail address: madli.allikmae@gmail.com

Supervisor professor Urve Venesaar:

The thesis is in compliance with the requirements of thesis.

.....

(signature, date)

Chairman of the defence committee:

Permitted to the defence of the thesis.

.....

(profession, name, signature, date)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Prof. Urve Venesaar for the useful comments, remarks and engagement through the learning process of this master thesis. Furthermore, I would like to thank all of the experts for contributing with their time, knowledge and know-how. Also, I like to thank the participants of my questionnaire, who have willingly shared their precious time. Of course, I appreciate the support from my family and friends, who have been understanding and supporting throughout entire process.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	5
INTRODUCTION .....	6
1. Literature review .....	9
1.1. Motives and rationale.....	9
1.2. Strategies and trade show management .....	12
1.2.1. Pre-show phase .....	14
1.2.2. On-show phase .....	20
1.2.3. Post-show phase .....	22
1.3. Performance .....	23
1.3.1. Performance evaluation models.....	25
1.3.2. Drivers of performance.....	27
1.4. Summary of the literature review .....	31
2. Research design and methodology .....	33
2.1. Research design .....	33
2.2. Sampling procedures.....	33
2.3. Respondent profile .....	34
2.4. Data collection procedures.....	36
2.5. Data analysis procedures .....	37
2.6. Research design of the qualitative part .....	39
2.7. Verification procedures.....	41
3. Results and discussion.....	43
3.1. Trade show motives .....	43
3.2. Trade show resource commitment and performance .....	45
3.2.1. Planning .....	45
3.2.2. Personnel .....	47
3.2.3. Budget.....	50
3.2.4. Follow-up .....	51
3.2.5. Sales related performance.....	53
3.2.6. Non-sales related performance .....	54
3.2.7. Relationship between resources and performance.....	57

CONCLUSION .....	60
KOKKUVÕTE .....	63
REFERENCES .....	67
APPENDICES .....	70
Appendix 1. GDP at current prices and international trade from 2009 to 2013. ....	70
Appendix 2. Detailed information about the respondent profile. ....	71
Appendix 3. Details of the questionnaire and its design. ....	72
Appendix 4. Details of tabulation analysis. ....	84
Appendix 5. Detailed Pearson’s correlation matrix. ....	90
Appendix 6. Wilcoxon signed ranks test results .....	91
Appendix 7. Indicative interview questions .....	92
Appendix 8. Transcribed interviews. ....	93

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this thesis is to address resource dependency to trade show performance based on the experience of Estonian companies. Estonian companies see that poor contact network abroad, sales competences and access to sales channels hinder their development in export sales. Adding to previous quantitative studies, this thesis will use an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, where qualitative part that follows the quantitative part seeks explanations for initial findings in the quantitative phase. In the quantitative phase, a questionnaire will be distributed to Estonian companies who have attended a foreign trade show in the past three years. Their resource commitment, follow-up work and trade show performance will be evaluated to analyse what may hinder their trade show performance maximisation. Further on, it will be tested whether resource commitment and follow-up work is related to sales and non-sales related trade show performance aspects. The second, qualitative phase will include semi-structured interviews with company representatives to help explain the quantitative results.

Key words: trade shows, performance, resources, trade show management, export marketing.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Estonian Government's National Reform Programme "Estonia 2020" describes objectives for 2015 and 2020 to improve competitiveness of Estonia companies in international trade. It also determines that one aspect for establishing it is that Estonian share of export in world trade should be increased from 0.085% in 2009 to 0.110% in 2020. This assumes export volumes increase by 2% to 3% more than average increase per annum. (Vabariigi Valitsus 2013) According to Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2010) (further on abbreviated to ECCI), this is an ambitious plan, which needs cooperation between the government and enterprises. It is essential to analyse and acknowledge exporting problems and propose solutions to them (ECCI 2010).

Estonian balance of foreign trade has been negative for at least the past five years with rare exceptions during some particular months. As of December 2013 (Appendix 1), foreign trade balance (not considering for re-export) reached a negative 1 374 million euros (Statistics Estonia 2014a). Thus, foreign trade deficit does not contribute to Estonian GDP growth objectives. According to the National Reform Programme "Estonia 2020" (Vabariigi Valitsus 2013), the share of export to GDP should be over 120% in 2020.

According to the survey, at least three problems for developing export listed in the top ten are related to trade fairs. Respondents included problems such as poor contact network abroad, sales competences and access to sales channels as the most significant ones that hinder their performance abroad. (ECCI 2010) Even though participating in a trade fair is not an optimal strategy for all companies, many exporting companies can find effective solution to before mentioned by participating in a trade fair as part of export marketing strategy.

According to research done by ECCI (2010) for Estonian companies, participating in trade fairs was the least common out of top four actions for improving competitiveness in a foreign market. Introducing one's products and services in a trade fair was used for improving competitiveness by 50.8% of the respondents. Finding access to sales channels, researching customers demand and entrance to a new foreign market were used by 62.6%, 56.4% and 55.1% of total respondents. (ECCI 2010)

Several authors have analysed different drivers of trade show performance as well as trade show management aspects. Various different performance evaluation models have been discussed, of which only some include both sales and non-sales related objectives. Trade show phases have been covered in the literature with most of the focus on pre-show phase. However, on-show and post-show phases have been discussed in less detail. Additionally, there is less empirical research and this type of research does not exist about Estonian companies. Namely, there is no empirical research about trade show exhibitors' resource commitment and preparation of Estonian companies.

Li et al (2011) bring out the importance of further research in the field of strategic approach on trade fair participation. It helps to acknowledge both theorists and company managers how to maximise benefits from trade shows. Successful participation will play a crucial role in export marketing, export performance and also defining competitive advantage. Therefore, the aim of this research is to seek what hinders trade show performance maximization of Estonian companies and whether there is a connection between theoretical and empirical trade show management process and performance.

The author seeks to analyse how Estonian companies can maximise the benefit of trade show participation by finding export partners, getting to know the target market and also increasing brand and product awareness in export markets. As a result, this comes down to generating export revenue and increasing competitiveness. This study will contribute to fill the gap in Estonian export management literature of how to plan and allocate resources in export marketing, namely trade fairs, to maximize benefits and return.

The author of this thesis will focus on foreign trade shows. Foreign trade shows will be defined as events outside of Estonia, where a company can introduce their product and/or service, gather necessary contacts and partners for export development (for example Imm Cologne furniture trade fair in Germany in 2014).

According to Li et al (2011), "as part of managing trade show strategy, firms should make decisions about the timing of allocation financial and other resources to the various activities that constitute the planning and execution cycle of a trade show's inception-to-performance life span". The author defines resource commitment behaviour similarly to Li et al (2011) – it refers to the tangible and intangible resources that a company is ready to allocate in order to achieve its objectives in a trade show. The resource commitment will be separated into four sections: 1) personnel commitment (how much people are involved in the planning



process and trade fair booth), 2) budget commitment (how much financial resources are allocated and where), 3) planning commitment (how is the planning process organized and timed), and 4) follow-up work (how much effort is put to generating sales from the leads).

Additionally, trade fair performance's sales and non-sales related objectives should be evaluated in order to link them with the resource commitment behaviour. The author will use a pre-developed performance scale to integrate both aspects of trade fair performance. Thus, in this survey the author will base trade fair performance evaluation on a five-dimensional framework by Hansen (2004): 1) sales related dimension, 2) information-gathering, 3) relationship-building, 4) image-building, and 5) motivation of personnel dimension.

Therefore, in order to analyse trade fair strategy as an export marketing instrument of Estonian companies, the author proposes the following research question: **How Estonian companies affect their trade show performance and what are the key resource problems that hinder their maximisation of trade show performance?** Additionally, the author proposes to give an **exploratory overview of previous literature, to bring out aspects that yet have to be investigated in case of Estonia.**

The author will use mixed methods research method. More precisely, explanatory sequential method will be used. First of all, quantitative analysis will be done based on the results of self-administered online questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of general items, resource commitment Likert items and trade show performance Likert items. Likert questions will use 5-scale items. Secondly, the authors will conduct a semi-structured interview with four industry experts, who also filled in the questionnaire. Interviews topics will base on the outcomes of the quantitative analysis. Any unclear parts that need more clarification will be asked in the interview phase.

In the first part of the thesis, the author will give a comprehensive overview of existing literature about trade show management and literature about assessing trade show performance. Each of the paragraph will be summarised for an overview of aspects that should be analysed in case of Estonia. Further on, research design and methodology will be described. Sampling, data collection, data analysis and verification procedures are discussed for both quantitative and qualitative approaches of the thesis. After that, results of the research are presented and discussed in more detail, using both results from the self-administered questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. Then, the thesis will be summarized and additional details will be presented in the appendices.

# **1. Literature review**

## **1.1. Motives and rationale**

Several studies bring out that the main problems of export are low level of skills and competences of export marketing within the company (ECCI 2010, Li et al. 2011); also, uncertainty related to foreign markets and production related problems (ECCI 2010, Praxis 2012). According to research done by ECCI (2010) for Estonian companies at least three problems for developing export listed in the top ten are related to export marketing and trade fairs. Problems such as poor contact network abroad, sales competences and access to sales channels are among the most significant ones that hinder their performance abroad. (ECCI 2010) Trade shows are an export marketing tool that may help to solve these problems.

The importance of using trade shows as part of export marketing has been discussed as one of the most effective ways of increasing brand awareness and increase export sales (Dekimpe et al 1997, Gopalakrishna and Lilien 1995, Li et al 2011, Ling-ye 2007). Researchers have acknowledged the importance of trade shows in export marketing mix (e.g. Cavanaugh 1976, Lumiste et al 2013). Seringhaus and Rosson (1998) find that trade fairs are a significant marketing tool, which enables companies to compete and succeed internationally. On the other hand, Firat and Dholakia (2006) take a postmodern view on trade fairs, where consumers are perceived as part of the company's value chain and have a significant role in value creation network.

According to several authors (Herbig, Hara, Palumbo 1997, Blythe 2000, Cavanaugh 1976), average cost of closing a sale as a result of trade show attendance is less than personal sales calls. Some of the most common advantages of trade shows are that the promotion message is delivered to a specific target market, the company can gather information about competition, enhance its goodwill, corporate image and awareness, and of course, generate sales through existing and potential sales leads – all through one marketing tool (Herbig, Hara, Palumbo 1997).

Motives of trade shows are mostly in line with advantages of attending a trade show and have been discussed by several authors (for example, Herbing et al 1998, Shipley et al 1993, Carman 1968, Kerin and Cron 1987 and Cavanaugh 1976). Largely, motives have been divided into sales-related and non-sales-related motives; however, the latter has been analysed less in

terms of actual effect on trade show performance. The ultimate motive for business and marketing comes down to generating sales and being profitable. Thus, it is understandable, why sales-related motives are paid more attention to – sales numbers are more straightforward and easier to interpret. On the other hand, seemingly non-sales related factors can affect sales and profitability in the long-run even more than obvious sales related factors. Several authors have included both in their analysis to emphasize the importance of intangible, non-sales-related factors (Hansen 1994, Li et al 2011, Carman 1968).

Trade show motives have been relatively unchanged for the past 50 years. However, some motives have added and transformed over time. Summarizing motives mentioned by several authors results in the following extended list of trade show motives (Carman 1968, Kerin, Cron 1987, Cavanaugh 1976):

- make direct sales of trade show;
- maintain relationship with existing customers;
- establish contact with potential customers;
- demonstrate non-portable equipment /which cannot be taken on a roadshow);
- on-the-spot technical problem solving;
- introduce a new product or a product line;
- find new ideas for both product development and business strategies;
- test market for a prototype;
- conducting market research (industry and competitors);
- identifying future prospects;
- counter participation by competitors (we attend because they do);
- recruit personnel;
- motivate (local) sales representatives;
- training tool for sales personnel;
- improve corporate morale and image, etc.

Trade shows, proven to be an efficient export marketing tool, may not be the right one for every company. It is an expensive tool and may not help the company to achieve their objectives and motives. Firms should carefully evaluate whether they should attend or not (Herbig, Hara, Palumbo, 1997). Managers who seek tactical benefits rather than strategic, do not believe in the effectiveness of trade fairs – it can take years until the effort will be reflected in sales figures (Herbig, Hara, Palumbo, 1997). A detailed cost benefit analysis helps to

determine, whether a company should attend a trade show and to make sure that trade shows are the right export marketing tool. AUMA (2014) proposes an online tool for initial cost-benefit analysis.

For example, large international firms with technologically complex goods are more prone to attend trade fairs, whereas small companies do not participate as they have personnel constraints. It is difficult for a small company to have most of the employees out of the office for several days (Herbig, Hara, Palumbo, 1997). Secondly, the high cost of trade fair participation becomes a problem for smaller firms. Regularly, small service firms do not tend to attend either (Herbig, Hara, Palumbo, 1997). As additional disadvantages of trade shows, Bonoma (1983) mentions the fact that the effectiveness is not straightforwardly known and is difficult to measure. Shipley et al (1993) bring out various reasons why some companies do not exhibit:

- too costly
- does not generate enough sales
- existing promotional methods are satisfactory
- customers do not attend shows
- no appropriate exhibition to attend
- not conventional in the industry
- tough to exhibit due to competition
- have never thought about it.

Attending a trade show does not always mean that a company has to have a booth of their own. There are several other options to consider, for example attending with a joint-booth or attending as a visitor. Kare Hansen (1996) analysed participation motives in terms of participation mode, taking the seller perspective for both visitors and exhibitors. The author found that selling motives are more significant for exhibitors than visitors. However, non-selling motives were more important for visitors. Relationships with existing and potential customers were perceived important for both exhibitors and visitors (Hansen 1996).

All in all, for many companies trade shows are an effective mean of export marketing. There are both sales related and non-sales related motives, why companies choose to attend trade shows. A lot of emphasis is put on sales related motives, however, trade shows have proven to be a relatively good tool for building non-sales related aspects of marketing such as

increasing brand awareness. Aside from marketing aspects, trade shows can be effective for information gathering, image building and personnel motivation.

Even though trade shows are considered to have a smaller average cost per sale than personal sales calls, they are a significant expense that may need more justification than other marketing activities. Therefore, it is important to understand all benefits that it can bring. If a company recognizes its motives, justifying the investment becomes more rational. Also, this helps to understand what is necessary for building a successful trade show strategy.

## **1.2. Strategies and trade show management**

Depending on trade show motives, companies have to plan trade show attendance in advance to ensure successful trade fair participation and to reach objectives. Systematic resource planning and trade show management is essential for successful trade show participation (Shipley et al 1993, Ling-yee 2008). Trade show effectiveness is directly related to activities in different trade show phases – pre-, at- and post-show phases. Main topics of consideration to improve trade show effectiveness are the following (Herbig, Hara, Palumbo, 1997):

- fit of the trade fair to company's needs – “should we attend?”
- unique objectives (two to five prioritized objectives) – “what is our goal?”
- pre-, on- and post show promotion should be planned – “put effort in planning!”
- carefully selected booth personnel and proper training – “who is involved?”
- well planned post-show follow-up – “put effort in follow-up work!”
- assessing performance measures in all trade fair stages (pre-, at- and post) – “What have we learned and achieved?”

The need for thorough managing throughout three phases of trade fair planning, namely pre-show, on-show and post-show, is emphasized by several authors. For example, Seringhaus and Rosson (2004) agree that both project and marketing management skills are needed for successful trade show participation. Trade fair phases are described and analysed for example by Gopalakrishna and Lilien (1995) and Rodriguez-Oromendia et al (2012) (also Ling-yee 2008, Herbig, Hara, Palumbo, 1997). Aside from having a thorough plan during trade show phases, it is necessary to keep in mind both tactical and strategic trade show planning (Friedmann 2002).

In the literature, many authors emphasize the importance of linkage between company's trade show management and marketing strategy. Consequently, trade show strategy has to fit into the overall strategy of the company as well as marketing strategy. Trade shows will affect company performance not only in the short-run, but also in the long-run. For example, the choice of trade show can depend on the markets the company wants to enter. Bettis-Outland et al (2010) contributes to the literature by analysing the impact of information gathered on companies' long-term decision making. Gopalakrishna and Lilien (1995) also contribute to link tactical variables used during trade fair planning phases with performance measures (attraction, contact and conversion efficiency). Trade shows should fit into the company's overall marketing mix and strategy (Figure 1).

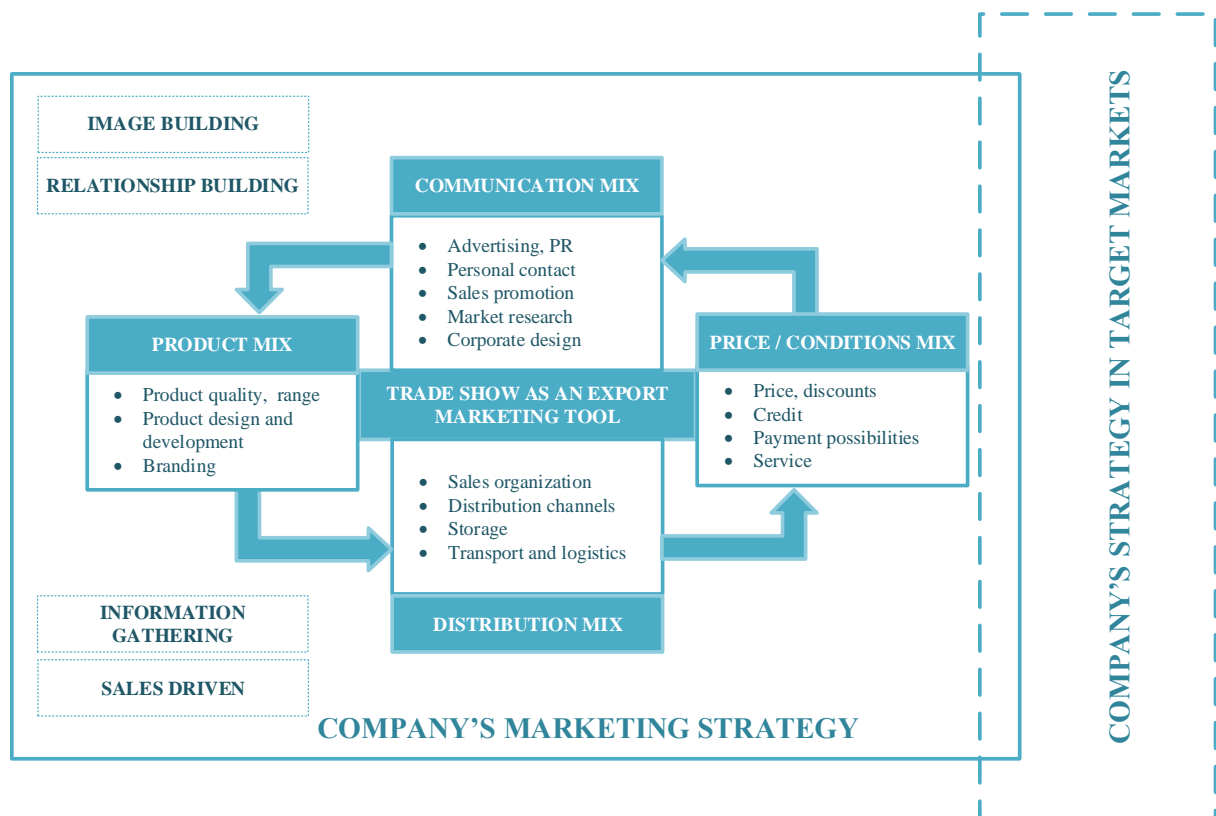


Figure 1. Trade show contributions to the company's marketing strategy

Source: created by the author based on AUMA (2013) and Li et al (2011)

Seringhaus and Rosson (2004) found that participation costs, follow-up, pre-fair communications and visitor tracking are the most influential variables for high performers compared to low performers. Better trade fair planning in any stage influences the performance.

According to Seringhaus and Rosson (2004), activity variables and performance variables were significantly related. This emphasizes the importance of trade fair management even more.

Companies, who have not thought their trade show strategy through, have insufficiently planned different trade show stages and do not put effort in maximizing their benefits. Thus, the investments are not justifiable to the management. Chonko, Tanner and McKee (1994) surveyed 500 high-tech trade show exhibitors and over one-third of the respondents indicated that the trade show did not meet their needs. The main reason for discontent was booth personnel's ability to connect with target audience. It is important to understand visitor's motives and in which part of the decision phase they are in. Hence, education your booth personnel about visitor profiles will help to maximize benefits from trade show.

Further on in this section, the author will discuss existing literature in these three trade show phases: pre-show, on-show and post-show. All of these phases are important. Proper planning, management and appropriate activities in these stages help to maximize trade show performance.

### **1.2.1. Pre-show phase**

Pre-show phase is the longest of trade show phases and it also covers for most of the planning in the on- and post-show phases. Trade shows are usually two to three days long, so there is no time for planning anymore, but acting according to the plan. Usually, companies should start planning up to twelve months before the trade show (for example Siskind 2005, AUMA 2013). Vanderleest (1994) suggests a detailed timeline for trade show planning from a practitioner's view. Even though some of his points are a bit outdated, the general timeline is a good checklist to start with. Pre-show phase includes identification of need, objective setting, target audience and message recognition, promotion, booth personnel training and so on. Cavanaugh (1976) distinguishes six areas the company should think of in the first phase of planning trade fair attendance:

- 1) the company's purpose in exhibiting
- 2) what message will be sent to target audience to be reached
- 3) the advantages to regional, national, or local exhibiting
- 4) the efficiency/effectiveness balance
- 5) competitors' approach to exhibiting; and
- 6) the budget and projecting the cost ratio per sales lead obtained

Shiple et al (1993) brought out exhibition selection criteria, where visitor profile, amount of visitors and cost of exhibition were ranked the most important. After the company has identified and justified the need to use trade shows as a marketing tool is essential to set up trade show objectives. This will determine which trade show to attend, what to exhibit and defines whether trade fair visitors are the company's potential target customers. Thus, trade show choice is also dependent on target audience. Deciding which trade show would fit the company's target audience and objectives will define most of the trade show strategy in all trade show phases.

Many authors dissert on the importance of clearly set objectives due to the fact that these objectives can determine the whole planning process as well as trade fair performance (Rodriguez-Oromendia et al 2012, Underation 2006, Bellizzi, Lipps 1984, Banoma 1983). According to Kerin and Cron (1987), written objectives are essential for successful trade show performance and it also helps in the post-show assessment process. Gopalakrishna and Lilien (1995) argue that objectives will shape how the trade fair is planned from step one. Siskind (2005) distinguishes between three groups of objectives: corporate, departmental and individual. This, however, does not necessarily have to apply to Estonian companies, which by nature are relatively small. Clearly set objectives determine the further preparation process and its directions. For example, booth personnel's training is also dependent on defined objectives.

Tanner (1996) has found that when preparations of personnel are consistent with objectives, the booth personnel will be more likely to turn targeted visitors into actual sales leads. On the other hand, Carman (1968) argues that exhibitions are not homogenous and therefore it is difficult to determine aims and objectives to achieve. Even though trade shows can be different, the main objective of all companies is the same – to increase sales and profit by using trade shows as an export marketing tool. Kang and Schrier (2011) describe that new exhibitors and experienced ones may have different objectives when exhibiting. Their findings are more important to exhibit organizers to understand what drives exhibitors' satisfaction and willingness to pay.

Jim Blythe (2000) distinguishes between aims, which are “for carrying out a specific activity” and objectives, which “imply a specific outcome”. He also emphasizes the way objectives for assessing trade show performance are set. If objectives are inappropriate then they may be difficult to measure and therefore are not in any way helpful (Blythe 2000). Blythe (2000) also found that there is a difference between setting objectives by the job title of the



responsible person who organizes a company’s trade show attendance. Sales and marketing related positions were more likely to set objectives.

Sales related performance objectives usually are derived from sales-related motives. They contain generating leads, making on spot sales, contracting new distributors and many others (for example Blythe 2000, Siskind 2005). Most of the objectives for UK and US companies are sales related as they are easier to measure and research indicates that managers employ booth personnel with sales experience (Blythe 2000). Sales and non-sales related objectives can be focusing on current and potential customers (Banoma 1983) (Figure 2).

	SELLING OBJECTIVES	NON-SELLING OBJECTIVES
CURRENT CUSTOMERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain relationships</li> <li>• Transmit messages to key accounts</li> <li>• Remedy service problems</li> <li>• Stimulate add-on sales</li> <li>• Direct sales</li> <li>• Fix agreements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mintain image</li> <li>• Test products</li> <li>• Gather comprehensive intelligence</li> <li>• Widen exposure</li> <li>• Gather customer feedback</li> </ul>
POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact prospects</li> <li>• Determine needs</li> <li>• Transmit messages</li> <li>• Commit to callback or sale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact prospects</li> <li>• Foster image building</li> <li>• Test products</li> <li>• Gather comprehensice intelligence</li> </ul>

Figure 2. Sales and non-sales related objectives for different target audiences

Source: created by the author based on Banoma (1983).

Blythe also gives evidence that larger firms are more likely to set formal objectives. In addition to that, there seems to be little or no relation between objective setting and whether a company is a frequent exhibitor or not (Blythe 2000).

Carman (1968) says, “The people manning the booth are a key link in personally communicating a sales message to the visitor.” Most of the authors emphasize the importance of booth personnel choice and their training (Kimmick 2013, Carman 1968, Chonko, Tanner and McKee 1994). Friedmann (2002) considers booth personnel to be the company’s “ambassadors who represent your company, its products and values”. He warns not to overcrowd the booth, but to assign responsibilities among booth personnel. Carman suggests that booth personnel would not sit down while working (Carman 1968). Chonko, Tanner and McKee (1994) add a dimension to trade show training that trade show strategy and its fit to company’s overall strategy should be communicated, so that booth personnel would know the rationale behind their training. Also, adaptive selling behaviour is necessary to maximize trade show performance (Ling-yee 2008).

Li et al (2011) found that personnel commitment and the extent to which top management puts effort in choosing and training booth personnel is positively associated with sales related, information-gathering, relationship-building, image-building and personnel motivational performance. The booth personnel has to be trained to use techniques that help to reach management’s objectives. Underation (2006) also emphasizes the necessity of top management’s involvement in trade show planning. Also, it is essential to make sure that there is enough booth personnel and that they all be professional at all times. According to Blythe (2000), research about US and UK indicates that even though managers do not expect to sell on spot, they do employ trade fair personnel that have sales experience.

Communicating the message is an important part in the whole pre-show planning phase, as this determines the whole reason and concept of exhibiting. Quality of the message that you want to give is very important and the way you graphically present it (Kimmick 2013). Cavanaugh (1976) differentiated between three main aspects of this central idea: the booth’s appearance and graphics, the sales personnel’s message, and additional promotional materials.

Carman (1968) describes that analysing past trade fairs statistics, floor maps and visitors may help to set objectives for future trade fairs. It helps to locate your booth as well as distinguish which trade should your company attend. Therefore, location of your booth and neighbours in the trade fair also need to be accounted for when building a trade fair strategy.

Probably experienced exhibitors have their own gut feeling about the location of the booth, if they visit a certain trade show annually.

All steps in planning should take into account that trade shows have hundreds, if not thousands, of visitors. Depending on the trade show, most of the exhibitors are probably there to exhibit similar products. Thus, being memorable and distinctive will help to maximize trade show performance. Friedmann (2002) puts it this way: “Every aspect of your exhibit marketing plan, including your promotions, your booth, and your people should be aimed at making an impact and creating curiosity”. If professional designers are included in booth design and creating a meaningful, targeted conception, then they will also contribute to that aspect. Vanderleest (1994) says that the right design helps to impress trade show visitors and contracting a professional display designer may be a worthy idea. Bellizzi and Lipps (1984) also emphasize booth design and layout, because this will help the company to reach objectives that they wish to achieve.

Besides the appearance, the booth’s location can play a big role in the success of the on-show promotional activities. As the visitors move around using different methods (Ahola, 2012) and have a relatively big area to cover, it is essential to be both attractive and in the right location. Aside from conceptual framework, Nicole Kimmick (2013) highlights several other practical pre-show activities that help to maximize trade show performance. For example, renting a booth well in advance will usually give you more freedom to choose the location of the booth as well as cheaper rent.

The company’s trade show booth acts as a distinctive marketing tool. The layout of the booth should be consistent with other conceptual decisions. According to Friedmann (2002), the company’s booth should carry the key message that you want to communicate to target customers. It should be “friendly, open, welcoming” (Friedmann 2002) – able to create a memorable experience. The message has to be very concise and strong. All pre-show promotional activities are built one ground concept. Target audience has to understand the message at a glance and booth personnel contributes by immediate interaction to deliver the full message (Chonko, Tanner and McKee 1994).

Friedmann (2002): promotional activities throughout trade show phases are necessary and costs can be held under control when the company has a well-defined message in the first place. Also, knowing your target audience is essential to keep costs under control. Send out three personal invitations via mail before the show, as it acts as a nice gesture (Friedmann 2002,

Vanderleest 1994). Jakob Saks (2013) encouraged to send out hand-written invitations and envelopes to ensure higher open and response rate.

Companies should put a lot of effort on pre-show promotional activities such as customer communication and adding company info into trade show information systems (Kimmick 2013). Letting potential and existing customers know about your attendance and why they should visit your booth is essential. Also, scheduling meetings both for the day and evening will help to maximize trade show effects. Other authors suggest doing an extensive pre-show campaign with follow-up calls a few weeks before the show to increase the attendance rate of target audience (Underation 2006).

When the company has made a decision to attend a trade show, a thorough budget gives an idea of total expenditures to be expected. According to Siskind (2005), an exhibit manager should recognize how much is needed to achieve objectives. If a company is a regular trade show attendee, it is easier to compile a budget taking previous budgets as an example. However, when a company has never used trade shows as a marketing tool, more effort needs to be put into the budget. Most of the costs can be calculated or asked from the trade show organizer, but it is important to identify the extent to which a company wants to, and is able to, invest in booth design and promotional materials. It is important not to let expenses accelerate and get out of control. Underation (2006) and Saks (2013) suggest adding a contingency buffer to trade show budget for any unforeseen events.

Some authors have listed several practical ideas that companies should think about in the pre-show phase. For example, Vanderleest (1994) suggest preparing an on-spot emergency kit so you would be able to fix something immediately. Other risk management measures and a contingency plans, for situations when something does not go as planned, should be comprehensively thought through. Skiskind (2005) goes through the detailed process of trade show management in his book including tip for transportation and booth design. AUMA (2013) and Hinnov, Sarv, and Sink (2012) give reasonable suggestions about different phases of trade show management.

Pre-show phase requires months of work, consistent project management and management's efforts for making sure that trade show strategy is in line with the company's general strategy. Several authors have stressed the importance of setting clear measurable objectives, training booth personnel and putting effort in comprehensive pre-show promotional activities. Most important resources that are used in pre-show phase financial, planning and

personnel related. Planning related resource means that all trade show phases are thoroughly planned. Among other things, this includes booth design and functionality, which so far has been less covered in the literature. Preparing the budget and making actual financial expenses also occur in the pre-show phase. Effective as well as thorough use of resources in the pre-show phase determines trade show outcome in the next two phases.

### **1.2.2. On-show phase**

Theoretical authors have focused less on the on-show management part of trade shows. In the on-show phase, the company has already designed the booth and has chosen the location. However, setting up the booth as planned and finding out how everything works in the venue in the pre-show phase is yet to be done. A few days before the fair has started, booth personnel should be present at the venue to make sure that promotional materials and booth parts are in the trade fair venue and are correctly handled. Arrangement of additional materials should not compromise the booth's design and message that will be told to the target audience. During the few days before the trade fair, booth personnel should get acquainted to the venue, its possibilities and the organizing team, who can help to set up the booth and with any other questions regarding the show.

Organizing booth personnel's activities for trade show days is essential. Jakob Saks (2013) advised to think through the whole daily plans of booth personnel, dividing responsibilities and tasks. Eating possibilities should be looked up and daily plans agreed upon before the beginning of the trade show. It is also important to plan time for booth personnel to have a break without leaving the booth empty. He also advised to prepare an emergency kit for any unforeseen events with the booth construction or the booth personnel (Saks 2013). It is important to make sure that booth personnel has motive to perform well and act according to the plan. Some behavioural or ethical points should be kept in mind as well. For example, Saks (2013) strongly suggested not to eat and do off-trade-show work at the booth.

Similarly to other marketing activities, some authors point out that one has only five seconds to engage people's attention at a trade show (Kimmick 2013). When you have had the person's attention, the booth personnel's actions become more significant. According to Jakob Saks (2013), booth personnel must be able to filter out target customers and make sure that the time spent communication is worthwhile for both parties. Also, making sure that booth

personnel can answer not only questions about your product but also the industry and competitors is an important part of on-show planning (Kimmick 2013).

Usually, in international trade shows there are a lot of visitors and exhibitors, so getting your target customers attention may be difficult. Taking into account their time constraints, the exhibitor really has to put effort into getting their attention. Therefore, it is important to get their interest by showing what is new in your products or value proposition (Friedmann 2002).

Product demonstration and presentation (attractiveness and memorability) are important among visitors (CEIR 1997, as cited in Seringhaus, Rosson 2004). Siskind (1993, as cited in Seringhaus, Rosson 2004) suggests that procedures are employed for assessing the type of visitor and their intentions. On-show promotional items have to be memorable and carry the message you want your target audience to know. Friedmann (2002) advises to put oneself in the target audiences place and think what would “help them to do their job better”. Knowledge of connecting with target audience is a skill that has to be taught to booth personnel during the pre-show phase.

Booth personnel also has to adapt to visitor profiles and be able to answer both technical and sales-related questions (Table 1). Even the way booth personnel present the company and its products has to be target audience specific. Due to the fact that not all booth staff can be able to answer all questions, it is essential to be able to distinguish to which person one can guide the visitor (Choncko, Tanner and McKee 1994).

Table 1. Matching target audience with booth personnel and promotional materials

Visitor categories by objectives	Staff	Materials
Potential customers, who already know what they need and are looking for a cooperation partner	Technical and sales	Price sheets, specification sheets
Potential customers, who do not have a solution to their problem, but are looking for it	Technical	
Existing customers, who require additional information	Technical and management	Magazines, reprints

Source: created by the author using Chonko, Tanner and McKee (1994)

Kimmick (2013) also brings out the importance of on-show lead management. He suggests dividing the leads into different categories, such as “hot”, “warm” and “cold”, depending on their importance. Underation (2006) emphasizes that identifying target audience by booth personnel is needed not to waste time on unnecessary leads. There are several mobile

applications available that help to organize your leads and information for post-show analysis. Booth personnel should be consistently ready to manage leads, send them additional marketing materials on the spot and save all data related to evaluation process.

Aside from booth personnel's on-show work with potential customers, they play an important role in helping to assess trade show performance. Cavanaugh (1976) emphasizes the importance of trade show personnel's work in data gathering. The booth personnel should record data about sales leads and conversations held with their target audience. Underation (2006) emphasizes information gathering during trade show as well by saying that "getting the contact information is not enough".

Public relations are an effective and relatively economical way to get advertising. Jakob Saks (2013), an experienced practitioner who seeks to maximize trade show benefits, also advised to prepare "press kits" for the press. Companies should purposively hand out a well prepared press-kit including press releases, company and product information, high-quality pictures, contacts of key personnel and description of your competitive advantage. This increases the probability that a journalist will include your company in the trade fair press releases as you have done half of the work for them already.

Success of the on-show phase is mainly dependent on booth personnel's hard work and preparation done in the pre-show phase. Booth personnel has to put a lot of effort in executing trade show strategy to achieve objectives as much as possible. Detecting the right target audience and convincing them is essential for most of the companies despite of additional trade show objectives. Regardless of specific objectives, booth personnel must be able to communicate the message that the company should have had clarified in the pre-show phase. Purposive on-show promotion and work gives a lot of input into the post-show phase, where generated leads will be turned into actual sales.

### **1.2.3. Post-show phase**

Trade show audit (evaluating performance) and timely follow-up with contacts made is an essential part of post-show activities (Cavanaugh 1976, Seringhaus, Rosson 2004). Existing literature about evaluation trade show performance will be reviewed in a separate chapter (please see the next section) due to its importance.

Working with potential customers that have been identified at the fair is an activity into which a lot of companies tend to put too little effort. Follow-up work with trade show

information is one of the most important steps to maximize trade show performance. Post-show phase requires time and effort, but it is a waste to let go customers with whom contact has already been made. Thus, sending additional promotional materials, thank you letters and calling to make sure that the potential customer is satisfied with the communication is necessary in the post-show phase. This will help to turn generated leads into actual profit. Timely post-show campaign and follow-up materials help to convince the potential customer “before the enthusiasm dies” (Bellizzi, Lipps 1984).

Kimmick (2013) advises to have follow-up according to importance categories (“hot”, “warm” and “cold”) to ensure that “hot” leads are contacted first. However, everyone you meet at a trade show should be considered as a potential customer and all of them should receive personal communication in one form or another (Kimmick 2013). For smaller companies it can be a problem, when there is a lack of resources and therefore follow up efforts are impossible (Serlinghaus, Rosson 2004).

Communicating the results of the evaluation to the staff is part successful trade fair participation (Underation 2006). To make sure that trade show performance is maximized, employees who have attended the show should share their experiences, knowledge about the customers they met and any other information that may influence the company’s other departments.

Post-show phase is essential for carrying on-show work into effect. Generated leads have to result in increased export sales and profit by systematically working with the information gathered during the show. Additionally, the company should analyse whether objectives have been achieved or not in order to learn from the experience. Trade show audit, however, is difficult to perform, as many companies do not think it through in the pre-show phase. On the other hand, the results of trade show audit as well as experience gained from the trade show should be communicated within the company so that marketing and sales personnel would be on the same page with the management. More emphasis could be put in specific analysis on how follow-up procedures could be best used and managed.

### **1.3. Performance**

Trade show performance is often difficult to measure as there are both tangible and intangible (or sales related and non-sales related) benefits from attending a trade show.



However, the ultimate goal of every company is to maximize profit. More detailed performance assessment is needed to understand where the company can improve its profit maximization efforts. Some authors argue that large companies are more likely to evaluate sales related outcomes, whereas smaller companies rely on informal discussions (Blythe 2000). Kerin and Cron (1987), on the other hand, examined how high and low performance company groups perform in trade fairs when considering various factors such as industry type and written trade show objectives. Thus, the literature does not provide concrete proof of a company profile, who measures trade show performance.

Authors dissert both on sales and non-sales related objectives and performance measures. Even though companies mostly set selling objectives and may even measure them, they find it difficult to set objectives for intangible benefits and evaluate those (Bettis-Outland et al 2010). Bettis-Outland (2012) analyse both tangible and intangible benefits that a company may gain when attending a trade show. They also bring out that intangible benefits are mostly not visible in the short-run, and hence, are often undervalued. As a result, intangible benefits are set aside whereas according to Bettis-Outland et al (2010), visitors or trade shows are the ones who are actually more information and intangible oriented.

Gopalakrishna and Williams (1992) distinguish between factors of which the company has control over and factors which the company has little control over. Management in trade show phases and choice of trade show are in direct and indirect control of the company, whereas economic conditions, trade show attendance, technological chances and environmental factors are mostly out of control of the exhibitor. However, both factors influence trade show performance.

Hansen (2004), in his research, proposes both sales and non-sales related performance measures. Hansen (1999), adding another view to the literature, argues that trade show performance should be evaluated taking into account outcome-based and behaviour-based measures. Taking into account also behaviour-based measures the company can evaluate the process rather than only objectives. Several other authors add intangible performance measures to assess trade show effectiveness (for example Li et al 2011, Gopalakrishna, Williams 1992).

Shoham (1999) differentiates between three non-sales related performance dimensions: gathering information, managing relationships, and psychological activities (e.g. building corporate image). Gopalakrishna and Williams (1992) emphasize the importance of information gathering, as both internal and external sources have to be used for successful performance

measurement. Other non-sales related objectives may include general market research, launching new products, finding out about competitors or enhancing the company image (Blythe 2000), however, these objectives have to be measurable for a company to successfully grasp trade show performance.

Gopalakrishna et al (1995) call non-sales related benefits attitudinal and cognitive. They say that trade shows return on investment is difficult to estimate due to the fact that trade show is accompanied by other marketing tools. Also, the effect of trade show can be visible some time after, but then other marketing activities may create synergies.

The next section will focus on the main trade show performance assessment models that have been analysed in the literature so far.

### **1.3.1. Performance evaluation models**

Several authors have put effort in determining usable performance evaluation models, but so far none of them have been able to cover both sales and non-sales related outcomes in isolation from other marketing activities. In combination with that, evaluation models should also take into account the long-time effect of trade fairs. Benefits have a spill-over effect (Gopalakrishna et al 1995) and it cannot be easily distinguished until what time the company gets benefits from a trade show, both in terms of sales and non-sales related aspects.

Gopalakrishna and Lilien (1995) computed indices for a three-stage model to assess trade show performance. Namely, company's attraction, contact and conversion efficiency were used to evaluate activities which affect trade show performance. As a result of the analysis, most of the activities pointed out can be controlled by the company itself. Hansen (2004), on the other hand, includes several performance measures in one study, whereas most of the previously mentioned have focused on one (no combination provided).

Adding intangible view and visitors' viewpoint, Bettis-Outland et al (2010) use return on trade show information (RTSI) index to assess trade show effectiveness. They propose RTSI index, to evaluate the extent to which all information gathered at a trade show is actually taken back home and used to improve business. Namely, Bettis-Outland et al (2010) distinguish between acquisition, dissemination and use of trade show information. In their later article, Bettis-Outland et al (2012) bring out RTSI index for post-show information and analyse how both tangible and intangible benefits can realize from right use of trade show information.

James Carman in his article points out a few straightforward and easy to grasp measurement possibilities for trade shows (1968). For example, cost per sale ratio trend can be analysed throughout different trade fairs in order to assess the return on different fairs. Carman himself (1968) calculates trade show ratio, exhibit efficiency, and show efficiency to compare three trade fairs throughout three years. Thus, he emphasizes the importance of keeping statistics of attended trade shows, so they could be used to compare trade shows.

Cavanaugh (1976) supports analysing attendance trends and visitor profiles to determine your own specific target audience. Figuring out the projected number of target audience at a show also justifies attending trade fairs. Deciding which trade shows to attend is essential and has to come along with the company's marketing plan and expansion strategies. Cavanaugh also suggest that surveying both booth personnel and target audience is a good way to measure effectiveness of trade shows (1976). For example, booth personnel can measure time spent in the booth. The most simplistic analysis from gathered data is cost per generated lead.

Kerin and Cron (1987) divide variables that affect trade show performance into three main categories: 1) industry influences, 2) company influences, and 3) trade show strategy influences. These three variable groups help to analyse trade show performance in both sales and non-sales related aspects. Additionally, some research indicates that specific (vertical) trade shows are more effective, but not by default. Target audience has to match the company's target customers and systematic research on target audience is therefore essential part of trade show strategy (Kerin, Cron 1987).

Gopalakrishna and Williams (1992) propose a model with a log-linear structure (similar to the Cobb-Douglas production function) to associate input and output. They include trade show expenditures, attraction efficiency, booth personnel efficiency, and factors relative to competition to assess lead efficiency. However, they have focused on lead generation and its efficiency solely, not taking into account other factors that the company may wish to pay attention to. Also, their model does not eliminate the fact that sales may not be solely a result of trade show attendance.

Gopalakrishna et al (1995) created an analogy with advertising in order to evaluate the economic effect of trade shows on a company. Their most important finding was that trade shows can produce a positive ROI, taking into account the after-show effect on sales. However, they analysed trade show ROI in isolation and suggested that other effects and elements will make trade shows more cost-effective (Gopalakrishna et al 1995).

Measuring the performance of booth personnel is another important part of trade show effectiveness measurement. Hansen (2004) suggests that booth personnel should be evaluated only in those aspects over which they have control, which seems only reasonable, but can often be forgotten. Usually, the ability to generate targeted leads and visitors feedback is measured.

Kang and Schrier (2011) analyse the social value that exhibitors perceive they receive from attending a trade show. More precisely, they propose that social value has a positive effect on exhibitors' satisfaction, willingness to pay and intention to return (Kang, Schrier 2011).

Li et al (2011) developed a new measure to analyse the relation of resource commitment and trade show performance. Namely, they divided resources into three different parts: budget, personnel and planning. These resource classifications will also be used in this thesis to evaluate trade show effectiveness of Estonian companies.

In Blythe's survey, most common evaluation method chosen to evaluate non-sales related activities was "informal post-mortem discussion". In fact, some authors (Kerin, Cron 1987) argue that non-selling activities may be more important for some exhibitors than others.

On the other hand, some authors find that there is a conflict of objectives between exhibitors and visitors of trade shows. Visitors are more information oriented and most of the companies are sales oriented. Also, according to Blythe (2000) the visitor may not be the one actually responsible for sales in their company, so their response to sales activities in a trade show may be adverse. Thus, conflict of objectives does not help to maximize trade show effectiveness, as there is a miscommunication of benefits. Neither of the parties will gain what they wish, if they do not know to account for different aspects.

From the consumers' perspective, trade fairs are a mean for gathering information. Ahola (2012) has analysed the role of trade fairs as facilitators of consumer creativity. By interviewing visitors at a trade fair, the author identified four themes that facilitate consumer creativity – progress, sensibility, multi-sensuality and companionship. Visitors reported that they attend the fair to 'find something new'. As the load of information gathered from the fair is excessive, the visitors felt overwhelmed and needed some time to settle the information. It was also important for the visitors not to feel bored and to see and experience at the trade fair.

### **1.3.2. Drivers of performance**

All planning phases, including pre-, on- and post fair phases, influence trade fair performance. The process and timing of trade fair preparations are crucial. Seringhaus and

Rosson (2004) included measures of performance outcome and measures of company activity in their analysis model. They found that company size, product offering (products *versus* services), technological level (low, average, high) were not associated with trade fair performance. However, high performing companies were more intense exporters and had attended more trade fairs in the past three years. Cost per lead, staff efficiency, lead conversion rate and time are the most influential variables which differ for high performers compared to low performers.

Jim Blythe (2000) in his survey found that in many cases respondents evaluated outcomes for which they had not set objectives or the other way around – set objectives but did not evaluate them. Thus, trade show attendance was not managed well enough and performance was not maximized. This is clearly an issue that has to be dealt in the planning phase as evaluation process has to be compared to some pre-set objectives.

One might think that logically, when a company commits sufficient resources, then trade show performance is by default maximised. However, Dekimpe et al (1997) suggest that it is not definitely so – a lot depends on the context and tactical internal variables may not be sufficient to maximize trade show performance. According to Blythe (2000), respondents who are “more likely to measure success are also committing fewer resources”. Interestingly, one would expect that companies who allocate more resources to trade fairs are more into measuring the success and process of trade fairs. Blythe (2000) brings out that probably companies who use several promotional activities need to measure their performance to evaluate which of these is more successful. This, however, does not indicate that trade show performance is not dependent on resource commitment as such.

Yet, even though Dekimpe et al (1997) brings out that tactical variables may not enhance trade show performance, they have studied how trade show effectiveness and found that spending on pre-show promotion, larger booth, more personnel per square meter help companies to attract more target audience and increases the ability to generate leads. These results were inconsistent between two analysed counties: the US and the UK. Visitor profile and their behaviour vary across countries and cultures. This, in turn, will affect trade show management dynamics and the way trade show is chosen. Kerin and Kron (1987) support their finding by suggesting that it needs interdisciplinary effort to manage trade shows within a company.

As a result, Ling-yee (2007) adds external relationship-based assets and internal knowledge-based assets to seek what influences trade show performance and reaching objectives. The most interesting finding is that even resource-poor companies can perform well in trade shows; they have to use their capabilities in all three stages of trade fair management and planning. However, their finding that there are other internal and external factors which influence trade show performance, is rather apparent.

One of the most important resource for using trade show as a marketing tool is financial resource. Trade shows are expensive, but they can be even more expensive when they are managed poorly and without thorough planning. Li et al (2011) discuss that not many research is done about how financial spending affects trade show performance. There are, however, a few authors who have some evidence that larger financial spending may result in more successful trade show participation (as cited in Li et al 2011).

Shiple et al (1993) note that the most frequent budget allocation methods for both local and overseas trade shows for UK companies were objective and task based, affordability based and last year's budget modified to inflation. Li et al (2011) found that allocating financial resources on booth design, promotional materials and other spending items (budget commitment), is positively related to sales-related performance. Gopalakrishna and Williams (1992) also found that trade show expenditure is positively related to lead efficiency, which, however, does not justify spending money inefficiently. On the other hand, reasonable budgeting should be considered as excessive spending without proper management in the pre-show phase will not help to maximize trade show performance in on-show and post-show phases.

Aside from financial aspects, some authors have extended their research with managerial resources. For example, Li et al (2011) analyse resource commitment behaviour to describe companies effort to maximise benefits from trade shows. They assess the consequences of resource commitment, namely, personnel, budget and planning commitment. Interestingly, Li et al (2011) find that planning commitment (devoting managerial and employee effort in developing trade show objectives, message and design) is positively related only to motivational performance. That is, when a company is putting a lot of effort in planning, the personnel sees how dedicated the company is to trade show participation. Thus, the employees may feel that they are involved into something very important for the company. The authors were not able to support relation between budget commitment and trade fair

performance indicators such as relationship-building, motivational performance and image-building performance (Li et al 2011). Ling-yee (2008), however, believes that managerial capabilities enhance only post-show follow-up process, whereas several other authors claim the importance on managers throughout all trade show phases.

Ling-yee (2008) described that exhibit resources, such as booth size, location and design, help in promotion process of the pre-show phase. Also, booth personnel resources, such as training, had positive effect on on-show and post-show activities. They analyse the effect of customer linking capabilities in the context of on-show and post-show (Ling-yee 2008), which refers to the booth personnel’s ability to connect to the target audience and identify their needs. According to Ling-yee (2008) partnering capabilities are helpful in pre-show promotion phase (Table 2).

Table 2. Capabilities needed in different trade show phases.

Pre-show	On-show	Post-show
Partnering capabilities	Customer-linking capabilities	Managerial capabilities

Source: created by the author using Ling-yee (2008)

According to Ling-yee (2008), “on-show selling and post-show follow-up processes were significantly related to achievement of sales and non-sales related goals; however, pre-show promotion had had a significant effect only on non-sales related aspects.”. This indicates that the use of resources has a direct effect on sales and non-sales related performance. Thus, using your resources effectively makes them a source of competitive advantage.

To sum up, most of the performance evaluation models seek to capture direct monetary benefits received from the trade show, either by analysing sales, non-sales related or both aspects. However, it is difficult to evaluate the true effect of trade shows in isolation and in a fixed time frame, because the effect on sales will be visible in the long-run and not instantly. Authors have focused on different aspects that affect trade show performance, such as resources, activity efficiency, information utilization, resource allocation, internal and external influences and so on. It is important to understand the meaning of cause and effect, thus, both sales related and non-sales related performance aspects should be analysed. To the author of this thesis, Hansen (2004) and Li et al (2011) describe the most important aspects of the relation of cause and effect of trade show performance. Thus, adding follow-up work’s aspect to

personnel, budget and planning, the author can analyse their relation to sales and motivation related aspects as well as information gathering, relationship and image building aspects.

#### **1.4. Summary of the literature review**

Existing literature has focused on several important aspects of trade show management (Figure 3), which gives a very good starting point for companies with no experience in trade shows. Some of the authors have taken a practical view on trade shows and give management implications and practical guidance for companies who think about using trade shows as an export marketing tool. To the authors' mind, this approach is valuable for both managers and other booth personnel. On the other hand, Estonian companies have indicated several export marketing related problems, which hinder their export performance. Thus, either they lack knowledge and experience or they skip some important management phases in trade show management.

Trade show performance and ease of management is dependent on several factors. However, many of the researches have focused on one industry and on one trade show. Trade show management may vary across industries and other factors. For example, whether a company is exhibiting its products, services or both has an important effect on trade show management process. Also, depending on the type of product (for example large industrial products versus fast moving consumer goods), trade show concept may vary from one side to the other. Nevertheless, the general framework of trade show management gives a good start for creating the best suitable trade show management process for companies. Experience is also an important factor in terms of preparing effectively for a trade show and maximizing trade show performance.



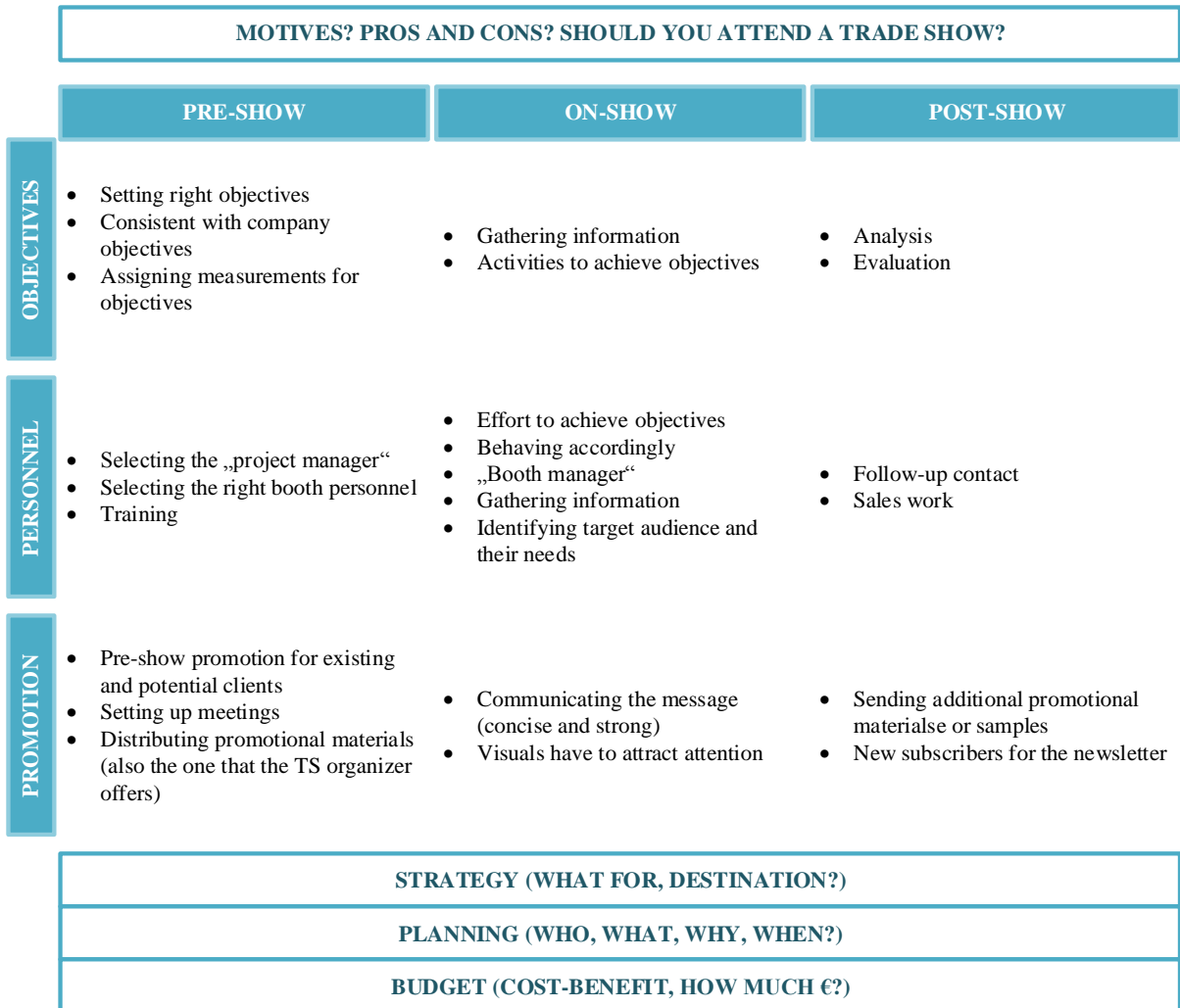


Figure 3. Summarized theory map

Source: created by the author

Typically, researchers focus on a certain time frame when analysing trade shows. Most common among researchers is to survey trade show exhibitors some time after a trade show. The true effect of trade shows can emerge several months or more after attending a show and therefore it can be difficult to evaluate trade show performance and analyse the effect of resources used. Analysing the full effect of trade shows, they should be analysed in isolation and for a longer time period. That, however, requires a long term commitment of analysing several case studies.

## **2. Research design and methodology**

### **2.1. Research design**

For triangulation purposes, a mixed methods research method approach will be used. More precisely, explanatory sequential mixed method will be used in research design. This means that qualitative research will help to find support to results from quantitative analysis and the selection of participants in the qualitative phase depends on the quantitative phase (Creswell 2014). According to Creswell (2014), this type of research design is typical, if the author wishes to explain survey results in more detail. Additionally, qualitative analysis will provide deeper insight into trade fair management formulation in export marketing. Combined research method will increase reliability and validity of the research.

The first part of the data analysis will be quantitative and will be gathered via a self-administered online research using SurveyGizmo's free online research tool. Even though the free version does not have all the possibilities of a paid one, the author believes the usability to be sufficient for this thesis. One of the biggest advantages of SurveyGizmo's online tool was that it enabled to design a questionnaire easily and test various question types. Also, the existing templates made the survey user-friendly and easy to design. The main disadvantage of the free version was that data exporting to SPSS was not available. Thus, this had to be done manually using Excel as an intermediary.

The second part of the analysis is qualitative. Sampling, data collection, data analysis and verification procedures will be discussed in section 2.7. Both respondents, the participants of the quantitative as well as qualitative part of the research, were given the opportunity to access the findings of the research after its completion.

### **2.2. Sampling procedures**

The author has limited the population of the study to Estonian companies (registered in the Estonian Central Commercial Register), who have attended foreign trade shows. Attending can also mean that a company has attended a trade show as an observer.

Sample for the quantitative part was selected on a non-probability basis (purposive sample) due to the fact that the number Estonian SMEs which have participated in a trade fair is rather limited. Thus, collecting data on a probability basis would be inefficient and time consuming.

Expected sample size was between 30 to 60 responses. In the end, the questionnaire was sent out to approximately 300 – 350 contacts from whom 116 opened the questionnaire and started filling. Some of the contacts were invalid and unusable. For example the company had gone bankrupt. The exact number of distributed questionnaires is unfortunately not known, as enterprise associates and Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry distributed the questionnaire themselves. Out of these 116, there were 70 partial answers, which were not fully filled in. The remaining 46 responses were complete, but 5 of those were eliminated due to the fact that the respondents filled in general information, but had not attended foreign trade shows in any way. After excluding unusable responses, the final analysis will include 36 responses giving a response rate slightly over 14%. However, taking into account the time constraint and that no additional phone calling was made, the author considers this response rate to be adequate. According to Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2014) and Praxis (2012), typical response rate for their own studies is also around 10%.

### **2.3. Respondent profile**

Most of the respondents (over 80%) were manufacturing companies based on domestic capital and were relatively small, indicating the amount of employees below 50 (around 60%) (Figure 4, Appendix 2). Typically, respondents indicated that they do not outsource trade show management and preparation (approximately 97%), however, they spend around four to twelve months for preparing (over 60%). These 51%, who spend only one to six months for trade show preparation should probably extend preparation time. Siskind (2005) and AUMA (2013) report that trade show planning should take up to twelve months in order to maximize trade show benefits.

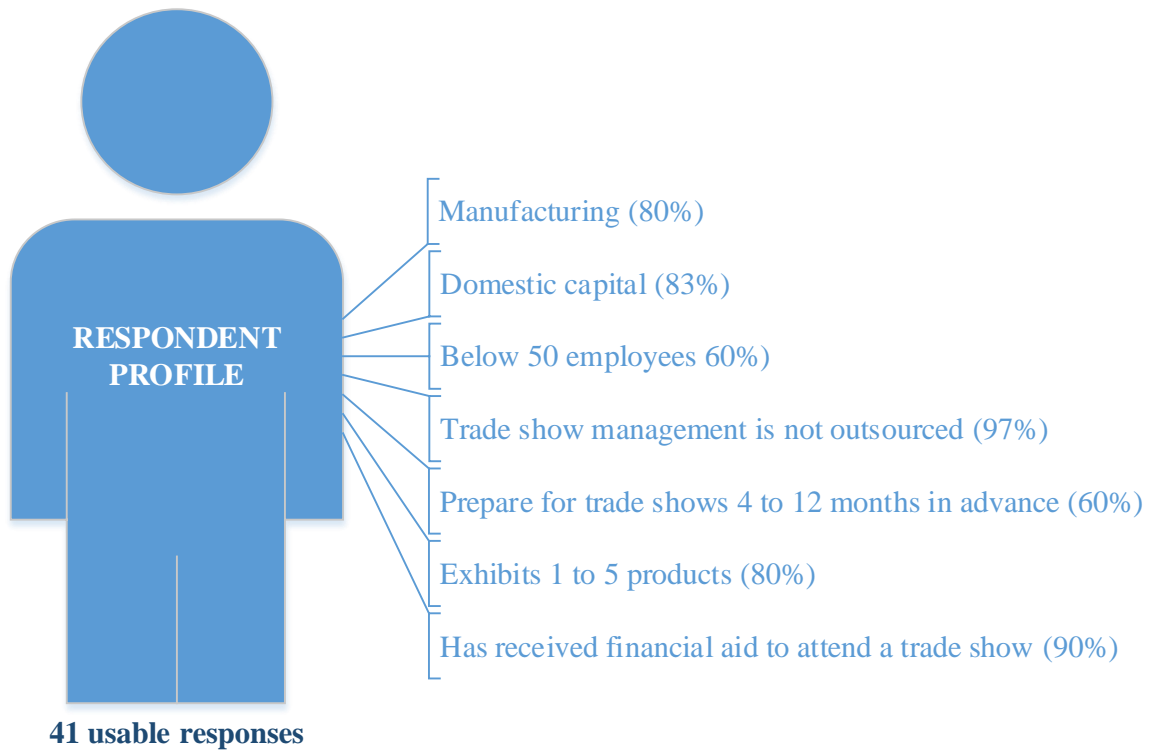


Figure 4. Respondent profile

Source: created by the author.

In accordance with suggestions from practitioners, over 80% of total respondents exhibited one to five products and/or services during one trade show. Around half of the respondents had attended trade shows one to three times. 10% of the respondents were very experienced trade show attendees, having attended 15 to 20 times during 2011 to 2013. Most probably due to data collection procedures and recent increase of financial aid to support export, over 90% of the respondents had received financial aid from any sources during the past three years (2011 to 2013).

The Estonian sample mainly consists of small manufacturing companies, which are based on domestic capital. This indicates that smaller companies wish to increase their export sales of goods and EAS's financial aid has covered at least some of their expenses for that. Smaller companies, however, do not tend to have a lot of personnel resources to prepare for trade shows much in advance. The CEO can perform the duties of marketing, sales and product manager at the same time. Also, financial constraints may be more evident for smaller companies. Thus, the author believes that the sample is representative and fits well with the focus of this thesis.

## 2.4. Data collection procedures

The questionnaire is based on Li et al (2011) questionnaire about resource commitment behaviour and its relation to trade show performance. Questions were translated into Estonian; however, adjustments and additions were made where the author found it necessary. The questionnaire begins with a cover letter introducing the topic and describes the potential respondent in the sample. In addition to general questions about the company's profile, the questionnaire mainly used Likert type 5-scale questions. Some of the general questions used categorical scales (yes / no) some were continuous scores (year of establishment). The continuous scales included ranking from one to five: 1 = not achieved at all / not applicable at all, 5 = achieved above expectations / entirely applicable. Detailed design and questions of the questionnaire can be seen in the Appendix 3; however, the summarised structure is displayed in Figure 5.

Quantitative research questionnaire was distributed in Estonian. The sample did not indicate a significant amount of respondents who would be Russian speaking, thus the questionnaire was not translated into Russian. Later on, the author retranslated the questionnaire into English for the purposes of this thesis. After retranslation, the questionnaire taken as an example was compared to the final version to make sure that there are no discrepancies and misleading statements.

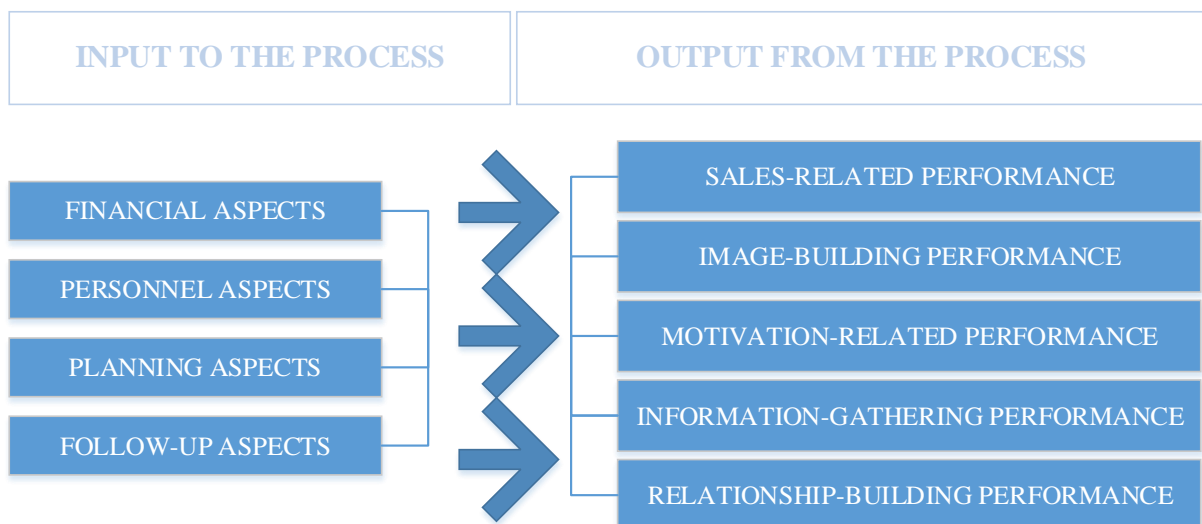


Figure 5. Structure of the main part of the questionnaire.

Source: created by the author.

Prior to sending out the questionnaire, two rounds of pilot-testing were carried out. In the first round of pilot-testing, the overall understanding of questions and ease of use was tested. There were seven pilot-testers in the first phase. After that, based on initial feedback, adjustments and corrections were made to the questionnaire. The second test group was asked to check the understanding of the questions, ease of use, reasonable choices and check the timing of filling in the questionnaire. The second pilot-test round indicated only a few amendments that needed to be made to the questionnaire. Subsequently, the questionnaire was launched on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2014 and closed on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2014. Thus, the questionnaire was open for responses for around 12 weeks.

The questionnaire was distributed via e-mail and social media channel Facebook as a self-administered questionnaire. In order to achieve a higher response rate, the author used MailChimp – an online marketing service. In that way, the author could see which respondents had opened the e-mail, which had clicked on the link and which ones had no response at all. After every three weeks, the questionnaire was redistributed to the contacts that had not opened the e-mail. Every time the questionnaire was redistributed, additional 3 to 5 responses were gathered.

Contact information was gathered from Enterprise Estonia webpage (EAS), Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECCI), on the Internet and through different enterprise associations. Through EAS, around 230 contacts were gathered, who had received financial aid from EAS to attend trade shows either with their own booth or in cooperation with other companies (joint booth). ECCI representatives sent out the questionnaire to over 60 members of ECCI.

## **2.5. Data analysis procedures**

The two data sets were analysed separately as the qualitative results were expected to provide in depth explanation to quantitative results. According to Creswell (2014), merging two results and analysing them as a whole is a common mistake. Thus, quantitative data was analysed at first and the interview questions were a result of the quantitative findings. Quantitative data was analysed by using both SPSS and Microsoft Excel software.

First of all, quantitative data was analysed by tabular description of data in Microsoft Excel and by simply taking a look at response frequencies (Appendix 4). Authors from different

fields have been discussing whether Likert type data is considered ordinal or interval. For example Argyrous (2005) considers Likert type data to be ordinal due to its equidistance; on the other hand, Brown (2011) argues that Likert scales can be treated as interval scales. Authors, such as Baggaley and Hull (1983), and Maurer and Pierce (1998) (as cited in Brown 2011) have proven that Likert scales can be treated as interval scales. Thus, weighted averages of Likert items were calculated to visualize into which category most of the responses fell into.

Next, Pearson's correlations (parametric statistics) between process input and output variables were taken under consideration in order to seek, which combinations are statistically significant (Appendix 5). Pearson's correlation was used as according to Murray (2013), "the type of analyses conducted on Likert scale data does not affect the conclusions drawn from the results". Thus, using Spearman's non-parametric correlation would not yield in different interpretation.

Further on, the author wanted to check whether there are any statistically significant dependencies between trade show management and trade show performance. As discussed above, Likert scales were treated as interval data, which allows taking an average of Likert items. According to Brown (2011), taking a sum or average of a Likert item will result in a Likert scale, which then can be analysed further. Analysing Likert scales instead of individual Likert items is more reliable (Brown 2011). Due to relatively small sample size, the author was not able to perform factor analysis to statistically reduce data and group Likert items. This, however, would have been a good data reduction method and would have helped to find factors and their path dependencies. Alternatively, separating trade fair process input and output groups can be justified by their theoretical background similarities. The author created the questionnaire by taking Li et al (2011) as an example and thus, questionnaire's Liker-scale part was composed taking into account the statements general topic. From Figure 5 it can be seen that trade fair management input and output are distinguished into four and five groups respectively.

Dependencies between process input and output variables were analysed using nonparametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test. Wilcoxon test does not require the data to be distributed normally (Laerd Statistics 2014) and as this was the case with Likert data in this questionnaire. Distribution of the data was tested with both Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test to test for normality, but Shapiro-Wilk test is considered to be more appropriate for small samples (Laerd statistics 2014). None of the Likert items could not be

statistically proven to be distributed normally. Thus, using more common statistical tests such as t-test would violate its assumptions. Also, linear regression did not meet the analysis requirements due to the fact that several assumptions were violated and therefore linear regression did not provide a good fit to data and its interpretation (normal distribution as well as linearity).

On the other hand, dependencies on single Likert items and information from general part of the questionnaire can be analysed with a t-test or ANOVA. If the p-value is above the significance level 0.05, then the null hypothesis about the two items not influencing each other is rejected. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the two variables influence each other.

## **2.6. Research design of the qualitative part**

In order to get explanatory data for the results of quantitative research, the author conducted four semi-structured expert interviews (Appendix 7). The interviews were held with four Estonian exporting companies, which use trade fairs as part of their export marketing strategy. The questions were open-ended and the interviews took place face-to-face. Interviews took place at their office or a more neutral ground, such as a café. All of the interviews lasted around 30 to 50 minutes. All of the interviews took place on 25<sup>th</sup> of April to 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2014.

Initial framework of the interview questions is presented in Appendix 3. This, however, was not a strict guide to asking questions. The interviewer followed the logical development of the conversation with interviewee, so that the important aspects from their viewpoint would also be covered. The interviewer guided the conversation back to the topic whenever necessary.

Sample for the qualitative part of the research was also chosen by purposive sampling method. The author purposively chose all of the interviewees considering their experience in trade show attendance as well as their different nature of business, availability and consent to participate. According to Creswell (2014), participants in the qualitative phase of the research should be taken from the sample of the quantitative phase. Thus, the author made a selection of interviewees out of 41 companies, who filled in the questionnaire and had attended trade shows.

For the purposes of this thesis, the author determined the amount of interviewees during the interview process. Sampling activity was stopped when the informational redundancy was



achieved. When any additional information received from the next interviewee reached the point of diminishing returns, no longer interviewees were included in the sample. The author used this aspect of research design as suggested in Bock and Sergeant (2002).

In the end, four interviews were conducted with companies to whom the nature and need for trade shows is different by nature:

- C1: Floor production company (uses innovative technology to retain natural curves)
- C2: Alcohol production company (sells to distributors mostly)
- C3: Tourism services company (mostly sells to private tourism groups)
- C4: Industrial manufacturing company (sells also not easily movable goods)

The floor production company (C1) that has a distinctive competitive advantage, has attended trade shows in Asia, Arabia, the US and Europe. Depending on the trade show, they may be present with their own booth or cooperate with other companies by furnishing their booth. They have a large network of local area managers who help with export sales and marketing abroad. In their Estonian office, they have only six employees.

The alcohol production company (C2) attends trade shows with their own booth rarely, but mostly with a joint-booth to support export partners in other countries and increase their credibility. They mostly attend trade shows in Russia, Finland, the Netherlands and Germany. They have a separate export sales department that in cooperation with sales and production puts effort in increasing export sales. There are six people in the export sales department.

The tourism services company (C3) had attended Scandinavian and Russian tourism trade fairs for inbound tourism purposes (getting foreign tourism groups to come to Estonia). Mainly, the company had attended trade shows in a joint-booth or as an observer. There are three employees in that company.

The industrial manufacturing company (C4) has attended trade shows in Scandinavia, the Baltics, Germany and Russia. Among other things, they produce bigger technological products that are difficult to transport. These, however, are sometimes produced especially for the shows. They have subsidiaries in the Baltics and Finland. They do not have a marketing department as such, sales managers in cooperation with outsourced services deal with marketing. There are around 280 employees in its Estonian company.

Data from the semi-structured interviews was collected during face-to-face interviews. All of the interviews were recorded on the interviewees' consent. Data collection procedure was somewhat emergent, meaning that interview questions were not entirely fixed throughout

the interview and were flexible depending on the interviewee and their experience. With the aim to increase willingness to provide detailed information about potentially subtle and confidential subjects, all of the interviewees were ensured confidentiality.

The recordings were afterwards transcribed in order to make data analysis more comprehensive. Different emotions and thinking pauses were not systematically brought out by the author as the author believes that it does not influence the meaning of their responses.

Semi-structured interviews as kind of data collection type was chosen because this allows the researcher have control over the topics discussed and participants can express their experiences in more detail (Creswell 2014). Even though there was a threat that interviewees will provide too general information, all the interviews were concentrated and did not get too general. Hopefully the author's presence did not create a bias in the responses as proposed by Creswell (2014).

Due to the fact the only four interviews were conducted, the author did not use any qualitative software programs for the coding and analysing process of qualitative data. All of the interviews were recorded and afterwards transcribed (Appendix 8).

## **2.7. Verification procedures**

As an internal consistency measure, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for all of the trade show input and output groups in order to find statistical support for the created groups (Table 3). According to Garson (2006), Cronbach's alpha should be above 0.7 in order to achieve adequate level of internal consistency and above 0.8 to achieve a good level. However, some authors, such as Hair et al (1998), consider 0.6 and 0.7 to be the lower level of acceptability. Thus, the author considers Cronbach's alphas from 0.65 to 0.80 to be relatively good in this case.

When calculating Cronbach's alphas for trade show process input and output groups that were composed based on theory (Table 3), one Likert item was removed. Grouped variable "planning" had a higher Cronbach's alpha without the first and seventh item regarding companies planning seminars and workshops at the trade show. From the group "personnel", seventh and eighth items were excluded as Cronbach's alpha raised to 0.802 from 0.742. Hence, further analysis with grouped variables was done without these items and the final groups consisted of variables which gave highest Cronbach's alphas.

The author checked whether creating groups from Likert items by taking medians instead of averages will yield in a different result. The numbers of significance differed somewhat, but the conclusion and the level of significance remained the same. Thus, there should be no threat of bias from taking average of Likert data when combining and aggregating the data.

Table 3. Calculated Cronbach’s alphas for proposed groups.

Trade show input groups	Cronbach’s alpha with all variables	Cronbach’s alpha excluding variables*	Cronbach’s alpha excluding variables**
Planning	0.802	<b>0.808</b>	0.793
Personnel	0.743	0.758	<b>0.802</b>
Budget	<b>0.646</b>	0.576	0.411
Follow-up	<b>0.779</b>	0.779	0.779
Trade show performance groups			
Sales-related	<b>0.669</b>	0.669	0.669
Information-gathering	<b>0.717</b>		
Relationship-building	<b>0.802</b>	0.802	0.802
Image-building	<b>0.715</b>	0.715	0.715
Motivation-related	<b>0.733</b>	0.733	0.471

\*- PL1, PL7, PR7, B1, I2, I3 were excluded because of no significant correlations

\*\* - PL9, PR8, B2, I1, M2 were excluded because of only one significant correlation

Source: created by the author.

Internal validity of the quantitative part of the thesis was ensured by defining dependent and independent variables with the help of previous theoretical literature. Also, qualitative research method was added to the thesis, to bring clarity to any uncertainties. There should be no issues with external validity. The author cannot generalize the results to individuals in other settings or to past and future situations. However, the study was not replicated to increase external validity. Statistical significance was taken into account throughout the thesis, when interpreting the results of the qualitative part of the thesis.

Qualitative reliability was ensured by using a consistent approach during the semi-structured interviews. In that way, when different researchers would use the same approach on different interviewees, they would receive the same or at least similar results. Qualitative validity was ensured by triangulation, member checking, bringing out discrepant information and rich descriptions. These validity strategies are suggested for qualitative research design by

Creswell (2013). Mixed methods research by itself is triangulation, as different data sources are used to seek evidence and justification for different topics. As the interviewees were also respondents of the questionnaire, the author asked some of their responses to the quantitative part to check whether they have the same thoughts about some certain topic. All discrepancies in the data are presented in the discussion section.

### **3. Results and discussion**

#### **3.1. Trade show motives**

Interestingly, companies indicated that the main reasons they attend trade shows are mainly relationship-, image-building and information-gathering related (Table 4). All of the respondents indicated that their motive is to make contact with new potential customers. This, if used effectively, can increase company's export sales in the future and help in the internationalization process. 75.6% of all respondents indicated that maintaining and developing personal contact with existing companies is an important factor of trade show attendance. Also, collecting general information and information about competitors, was seen as one of the main motives of attending a trade show (for 75.6% of the Estonian sample).

All of the interviewees confirmed that relationship-building and information gathering are one of the most important reasons why they attend trade shows. Interviewees emphasized the importance of meeting up with current and potential new partners, whether at the show or during the time spent abroad. They also indicated that they walk around the trade show area and gather information purposively in order to get the maximum out of the trade show.

Most of the literature emphasizes measuring sales-related performance and putting effort in making sales. However, the Estonian sample attends trade shows mostly for non-sales related reasons and therefore these objectives should be measured and taken into account. This emphasizes the importance of planning and measuring the performance of non-sales related aspects of trade show. On one hand, this may be due to the fact that not in all foreign trade shows it is common to make direct sales during the event. Secondly, Estonian exhibitors may be long-term oriented and are confident that hard work in all trade show phases will turn into

sales numbers some time after the trade show. As it will be discussed later on, the interviewees did not provide proof that they measure non-sales related objectives.

Table 4. Respondent's trade show motives.

Reasons why companies attend trade shows	# of responses	% of total	Type of objective
Making contact with new potential customers.	41	100.0%	relationship
Maintaining and develop personal contacts with existing customers.	31	75.6%	relationship
Collecting general information and information about competitors' (their pricing, products and strategies).	31	75.6%	information
Increasing brand awareness.	27	65.9%	image
Convincing target audience that the company is strong and sustainable.	24	58.5%	image
Increasing competitive advantage by attending the show, when competitors do not attend.	21	51.2%	image
Entering into new partnership contracts with potential customers.	21	51.2%	relationship
Introducing a new product, product mix or service	19	46.3%	sales
Making actual direct sales at the trade show to new potential customers.	13	31.7%	sales
Testing new product and/or service concepts.	12	29.3%	sales
Teambuilding.	6	14.6%	motivation
Increasing personnel's motivation.	2	4.9%	motivation

Source: created by the author.

Another interesting finding is that personnel motivation is not considered as an important trade show motive for the respondents. Teambuilding and increasing personnel motivation is chosen to be important only for six and two companies respectively. This may indicate that Estonian companies are more business-oriented and not so much taking the personnel management view on trade shows. Alternatively, the respondents can believe that this comes along with attending a trade show and is not a distinctive motive or a priority in resource commitment as such. This was confirmed by the interviewees. Tourism services provider (C3), industrial manufacturer (C4) and alcohol producer (C2) indicated that trade shows may be motivation for booth personnel. On the other hand, the floor production company (C1) indicated that trade shows mean a lot of work and long hours, so it cannot be considered as vacation. However, travelling may be more personally motivating (for example to Shanghai)

and communicating with your target audience increases work-related enthusiasm. This, however, is not planned for or measured in any way by any of the interviewees.

## **3.2. Trade show resource commitment and performance**

### **3.2.1. Planning**

In general, it seems that Estonian companies tend to put a lot of effort into planning trade fair attendance (Figure 6). This is supported by the fact that most of the statements were skewed to the left, meaning that the responses were mostly “mostly applicable” or “entirely applicable”, with some exceptions, of course. Over two thirds of the respondents stated that attending a trade show is a continuous determined activity and trade show is planned according to objectives and adapted to trade show audience.

One fifth of respondents do not have defined measurable goals. This makes trade show performance assessment rather difficult and it is more difficult to find aspects of improvement. As discussed by Kerin and Kron (1987), Gopalakrishna and Lilien (1995) and Siskind (2005), written measurable trade show objectives are essential from step one of trade show planning. 46% of respondents indicated that defining measurable goals is “applicable on average” to “not applicable at all”. This is worrying in terms of trade show performance measurement as well as the whole planning and preparation process.

Alternatively, interviewees pointed out that even though they may have defined specific goals, they may not be strictly measured. All of the interviewees brought out that they count useful leads gathered from the trade show. Industrial manufacturer (C4), however, also said that when the goal is to be present, they do not feel the need to define measurable goals. Therefore, none of the interviewees had set specific measurable goals to sales related performance and only a few non-sales related aspects (relationship building in this case).

Interestingly, it seems that Estonian companies rarely plan seminars or workshops at a trade show, even though these have been noted as a good mean to increase trade show performance. On the other hand, seminars and workshops differ from promotional activities in the booth and may not go in line with the companies’ profile. 46.3% of total respondents stated that introducing a new product, product mix or service is one of their motives of attending a trade show. Hence, seminars and workshops could be an efficient tool for public relations and

marketing communication. Siskind (2005) brought out that according to CEIR report, 26% of respondents were more likely to make a purchase within the next year when they had an attended a seminar. Seminars, if well prepared, are a good mean to educate your customers. This, however, may work better for industrial, technological, business to business and innovative products and be less effective for consumer goods. Interview with the industrial manufacturer (C4) confirmed that organizing smaller promotional events during the show helps to focus your target group and build relationships.

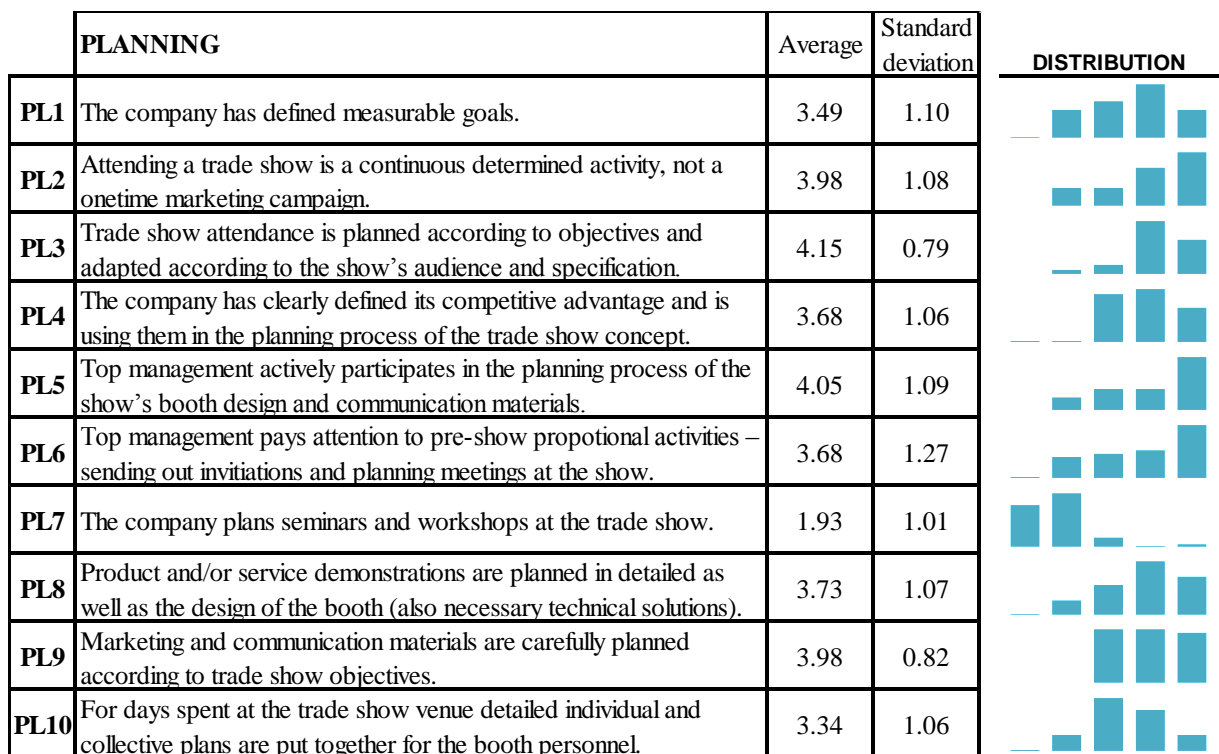


Figure 6. Questionnaire results for planning resource commitment.

Source: created by the author.

In terms of management's effort in the planning process, the Estonian sample is dedicated, mostly choosing a response well above the "applicable on average". Thus, companies have indicated that including top management in the planning process and in the pre-show promotional activities is mostly or entirely applicable to their company. Li et al (2011) and Underation (2006) emphasize the importance of management's effort in choosing and training trade show personnel, also, involvement throughout the whole process from pre-show to post-show phase. The most of the respondents had a company size below 50 employees in the Estonian sample and this may be the reason why top management is so actively involved in

trade show management. All of the interviewees indicated throughout the interviews that the management is actively participating in the trade show planning process. Also, starting from the development director to product manager, they are considered to be the most effective booth personnel as their competence and knowledge is good in communication specific information to the target audience. The floor producer (C1) said that the management is always hands-on, excited to put their time to see the results and they know the company's strategy the best. Thus, trade show strategies are very closely linked to the company's overall strategies and management.

In terms of detailed individual and collective daily plans for booth personnel, it seems that the Estonian sample companies do not put that much effort into that. Most frequently, the respondents indicated that planning booth personnel's daily agendas was applicable on average to their company. Saks (2013) emphasized the importance of planning daily agendas for the on-show phase, because it helps to make sure that booth personnel has clearly divided responsibilities. This helps booth personnel to maximize their effort and ensure successful trade show participation. None of the interviewees indicated the necessity of such daily plans. According to them, this is natural and all of their booth personnel manages to plan their actions during the on-show period well.

All in all, there are a few things that the Estonian sample does not put effort into, which according to literature could help maximize trade show performance. The Estonian sample should put more emphasis in defining measurable sales and non-sales related goals. Setting measurable goals gives a good structure to the whole trade show management process. On-show days are not planned as the Estonian sample as well as interviewees indicated that this comes naturally. Perhaps improvement in these two aspects, especially the first one, could help to increase trade show outcomes.

On the other hand, due to relatively small size of the companies, top management is involved in trade show management process relatively much. In this aspect, the Estonian sample is doing well and in accordance with Underation (2006) and Li et al (2011).

### **3.2.2. Personnel**

In most aspects of trade show personnel the respondents ranked that the statements were "applicable on average". However, two important aspects, namely training booth personnel and agreeing on trade show personnel' measurable objectives, the Estonian sample companies do



not put a lot of effort into. 51% of the respondents implied that setting measurable booth personnel’s objectives is “mostly not applicable” and “not applicable at all”. Also, training trade show personnel is evaluated as “mostly not applicable” or “not applicable at all” to respondents. This may indicate that experienced trade show exhibitors probably do not need any further training. On the other hand, single factor ANOVA test implied that the alternative hypothesis (that there is a relation between two variables) should be rejected (significance level of 0.919 is well above 0.05). Therefore, based on this sample this statement is not supported. Several authors emphasized the importance of trade show training and its relation to trade show success (see for example, Kimmick 2013, Carman 1968, Chonko, Tanner and McKee 1994).

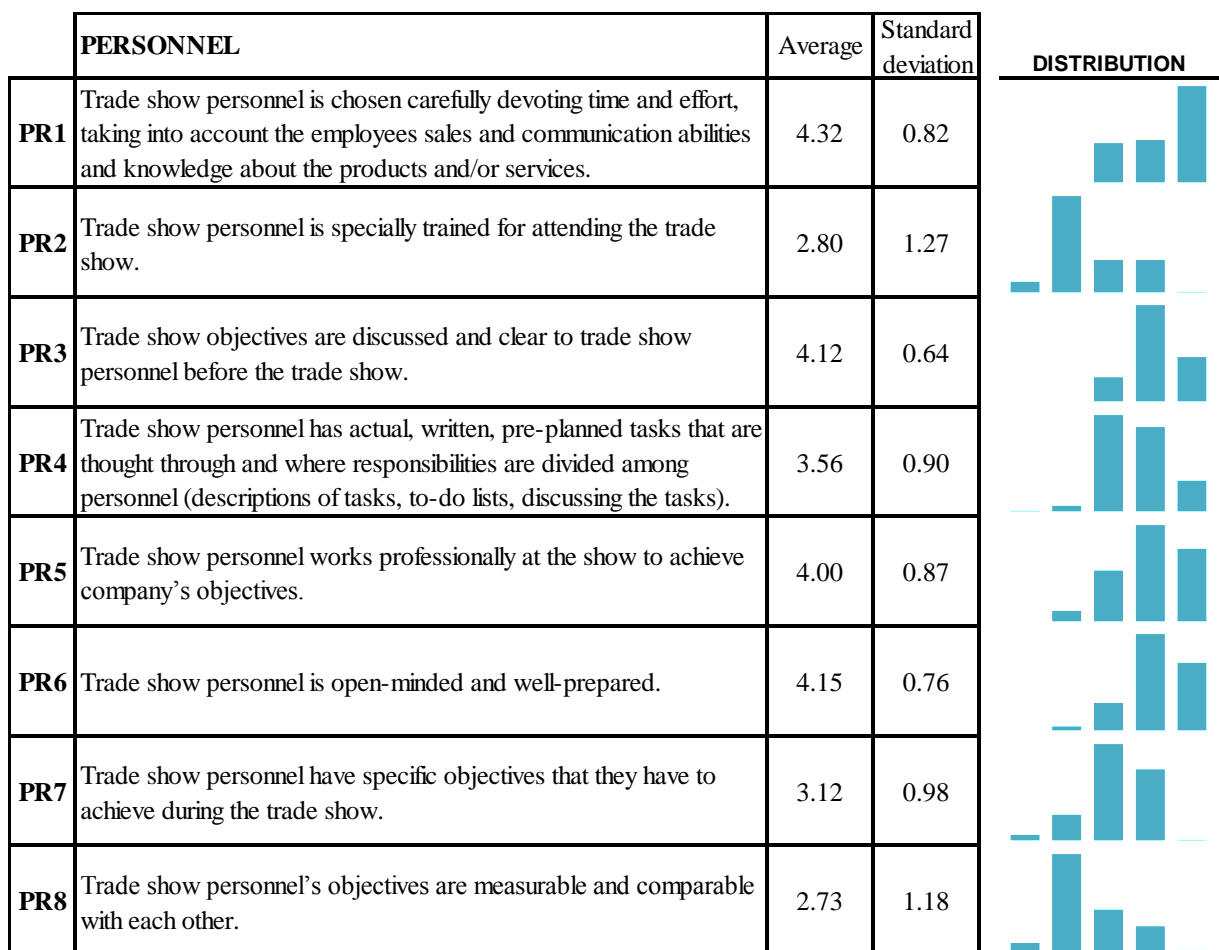


Figure 7. Questionnaire results for personnel resource commitment.

Source: created by the author.

On the other hand, trade show objectives appear to be discussed with booth personnel (Figure 7), receiving an average score of 4.12, thus, most frequent answers were “mostly

applicable” and “entirely applicable”. According to the questionnaire, Estonian companies’ booth personnel is usually open minded and well-prepared. The respondents stated that this aspect of trade show personnel is “mostly applicable” to their company. Open minded and well-prepared booth personnel act as ambassadors for the company (Friedmann 2002), which helps to communicate the message to the target audience.

According to the results of the questionnaire, it is not very common for the Estonian sample to train their booth personnel. Training booth personnel has been emphasized throughout trade show management literature. Interviewees explained that most of the booth personnel is their field’s and company’s experts and managers, who are included in the pre-show process, so there is no need for any additional trainings. On the other hand, the alcohol producer (C2) indicated that they have learned a lot from their partners, as they usually share a booth with their distributors. Also, more experienced personnel helps out less experienced personnel if needed.

Surprisingly, none of the interviewees indicated great need for trade show-related training. On the other hand, some of the interviewees explained that entrepreneurship organizations could help companies with aspects that they need improvement in for internationalisation and increasing export sales. For example, when attending trade shows outside Europe for the first time, receiving tips from experienced exhibitors in different cultures could share their experiences. Similarly, it would be helpful if organizations could cooperate in introducing Estonia and its competitive advantages in strategically important trade fairs for Estonian exporters. Estonia is a small country and not even all of the European countries know where exactly it is situated. In some trade shows Estonia has had its own representative booth, which according to the industrial manufacturer (C4) and alcohol producer (C2) has been very helpful. That would increase brand awareness of Estonia as an exporting country and companies would have more time on trade shows to take care of more specific topics than just introducing their country.

The most interesting finding from personnel commitment aspect is that the Estonian sample does not commit their resources for personnel training. The main reasoning is that booth personnel is experienced and mostly consists of top management. In what way training booth personnel would increase Estonian companies’ trade show performance and in which aspects it would be necessary is unfortunately out of the scope of this thesis. However, industrial manufacturer (C4) indicated that when preparing for trade shows in countries which has a

completely different business culture, they could use some advice from experienced trade show attendees.

### 3.2.3. Budget

Most of the respondents agree to spend financial resources on designing trade show booth and its displays (Figure 8). Over 70% of the respondents chose “mostly applicable” or “entirely applicable” in that aspect. Also, over half of the respondents seem to have enough financial resources to plan and attend a trade show as well as they prepare a detailed budget, selecting “mostly applicable” most frequently in both cases.

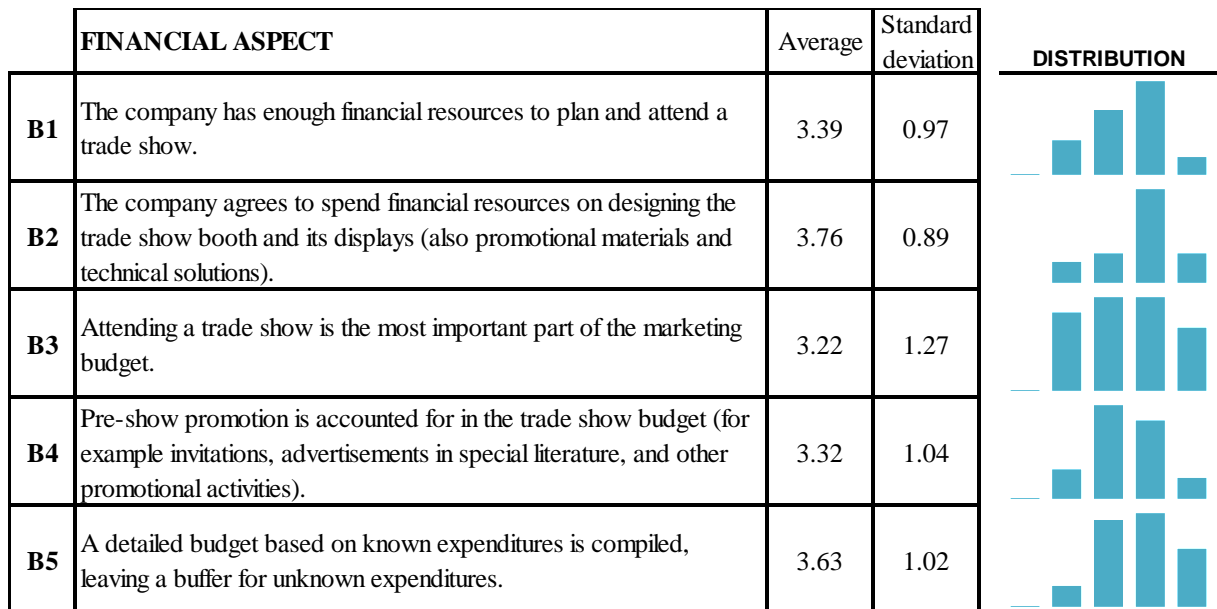


Figure 8. Questionnaire results for budget resource commitment.

Source: created by the author.

Even though a significant part of the respondents receive financial aid for trade show attendance (90%), having enough financial resources to plan and attend a trade show as well as agreeing to spend financial resources on designing the booth and its displays is not dependent on receiving financial aid. Respective t-tests rejected the alternative hypothesis (p-value of 0.06 and 0.618 respectively are well above the significance level of 0.05). Correlations between these variables were also weak and statistically non-significant. Here, however, the non-respondent bias may indicate that companies who do not have enough financial resources to spend on trade

shows do not attend trade shows, even as an observer. On the other hand, the author believes that the availability of financial aids should eliminate that bias.

Three fourth of the interviewees indicated that financing commitment is not a problem for attending trade shows in the sense that they are willing to use financial resources to maximize trade show performance. One of the companies, however, does not have enough financial resources to attend one of the most important trade shows in their industry and would need external financial aid, due to the fact that the trade show is relatively more expensive than any other trade shows they are usually attending. However, all of the interviewees told that they are willing to use financial resources on trade shows as they are an important export marketing tool for them.

Overall, there does not seem to be many issues with budget commitment with regards to the Estonian sample. Interviewees confirmed that attending trade shows is expensive, but comprehensive budgeting helps to keep costs under control. All of the interviewees could not see what would be a good alternative to trade shows and thus confirmed that the companies are confident that the investments are justifiable.

#### **3.2.4. Follow-up**

Estonian companies seem to evaluate their follow-up work the highest among the four trade show preparation processes (Figure 9). According to the respondents, trade show performance is analysed and the results are discussed and shared within the company. After the trade show, new clients and partners are worked with systematically and purposively. Also, companies evaluate putting ideas from trade shows into practice mostly or entirely applicable to their company (83%). This is consistent with Kimmick (2013) and Seringhaus and Rosson (2004), who point out that follow-up work has a positive effect on trade show performance. Therefore, persistent and well planned follow-up work should theoretically lead to expected trade show outcomes for the respondents.

According to two expert interviews (tourism and industrial manufacturing, C3 and C4 respectively), follow-up work is very important to them and they claimed to put a lot of effort into turning leads into actual sales. Industrial manufacturing (C4) company said that they include some follow-up procedures already during the on-show phase. Whenever they have the possibility to use an electronic attendee management programme during the show, sales people

can send additional information and “thank you” letters to specific customers some hours (or the same evening) after the meeting.

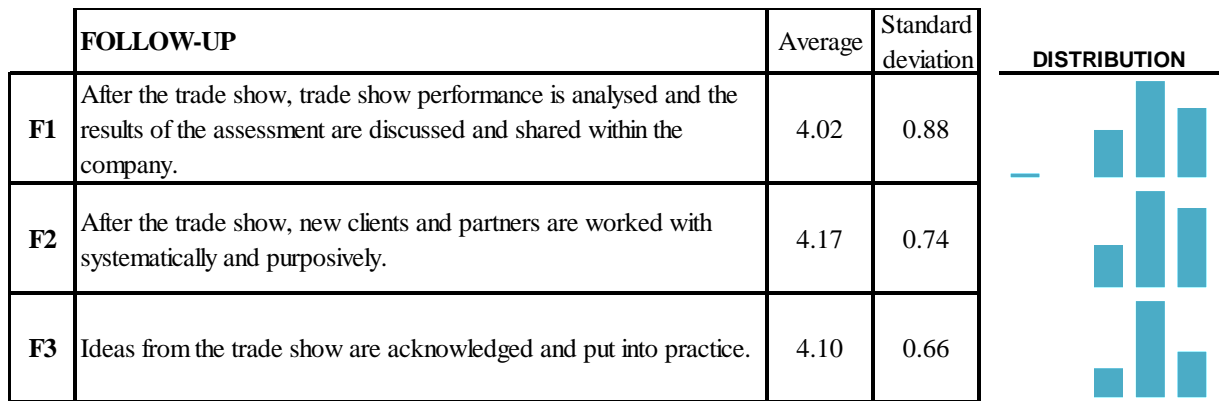


Figure 9. Questionnaire results for follow-up commitment.

Source: created by the author.

Some companies, on the other hand, for example the alcohol producer and floor manufacturer (C2 and C1 respectively) indicated that they do not need to put a lot of effort into the follow-up phase. These companies have area managers or distribution partners who will deal with the generated leads. The on-show effort is collective, as the company itself wants that the area managers or partners would do well and increase their export sales. This gives proof to the fact that trade show management and the process is dependent on the industry, company strategy and its stage in the life-cycle.

As indicated by the questionnaire’s results of the Estonian sample, the interviewees confirmed that follow-up work has to be done systematically and purposively. For example, the floor production company’s representative (C1) indicated that they prioritize the leads gathered. All the contacts and information from the shows is gathered in one place, so all the area managers can access the information. Leads are linked with the probability of actual sale, which is assessed by the person who received contact with the potential customer. Other interviewees also indicated that they share information within the company. All of them had regular meetings after trade shows, so they could share their experience and information gathered.

According to the results of the Estonian sample, least effort is put in analysing the results of the trade shows during the follow-up work. This, probably has a relation to not setting measurable goals, thus, there is not much to analyse. All of the conclusions are done based on gut-feeling and team meetings after the trade show.

### 3.2.5. Sales related performance

Making actual direct sales at the trade show was not achieved by or not a priority for most of the companies (Figure 10). 51% of total respondents answered that “not achieved at all” or “achieved under expectations”. During the interview, the alcohol producer (C2) indicated that in some countries it is common to make on-show sales (for example the Netherlands), but it may be prohibited in others, such as Finland. On the other hand, 76% of total respondents indicated that trade show resulted in an export sales increase after attending “on average” to “above expectations”. Introducing a new product is more common to the Estonian sample – 85% of total respondents believe that they were successful in introducing new products, by responding “achieved on average” to “achieved above expectations”.

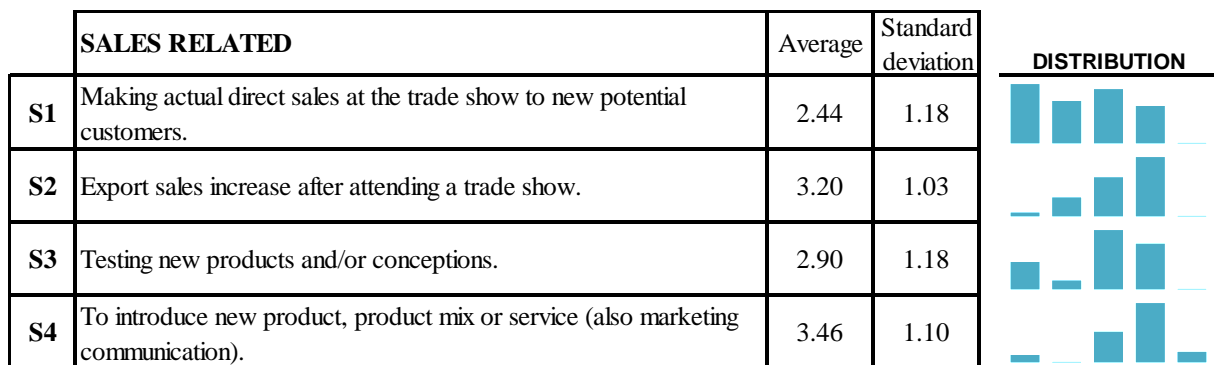


Figure 10. Questionnaire results for sales related trade show performance.

Source: created by the author.

All of the interviewees agreed that sales are the ultimate result from trade show attendance, but patience is needed. The tourism services provider (C3) said that in that industry, the delay can be even a few years as you have to build the ground for the foreigners so that they would accept Estonia as an attractive destination. Also, they have to cooperate with a lot of other tourism agencies, because tourism groups outside of Europe do not want to visit only one country, they want to see a part of Europe. This also increases the time until the company sees actual results.

Sales related performance aspects are achieved by the Estonian sample, but direct sales are not the first priority. The Estonian sample and the interviewees confirmed that they emphasize on long-term sales results.

### 3.2.6. Non-sales related performance

Non-sales related performance aspects are divided into four different aspects: information gathering, motivation-related, image-and relationship-building. According to trade show motives, relationship-building, information-gathering and image-building were the most important non-sales related motives for the Estonian sample. Interviewees also indicated that these are the most important performance aspects that they seek from trade shows.

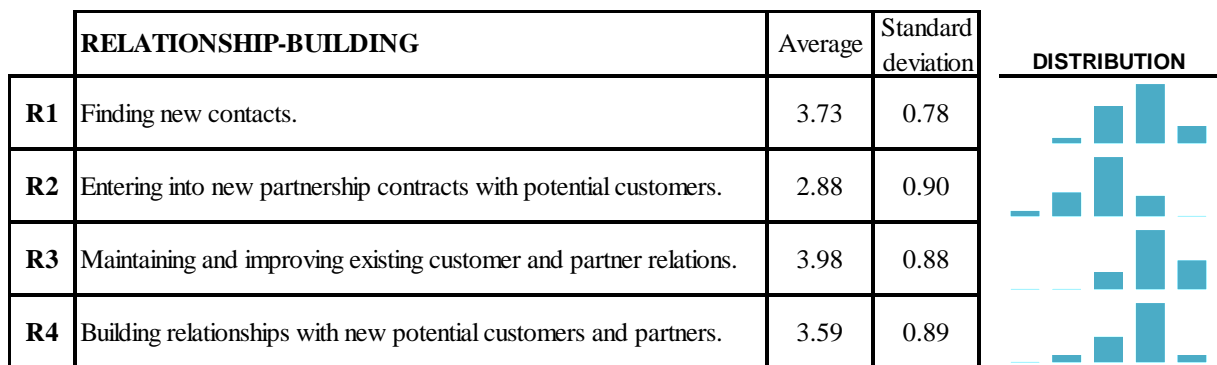


Figure 11. Questionnaire results for relationship building trade show performance.

Source: created by the author.

According to the questionnaire (Figure 11), 95% of total respondents indicated that finding new contacts was “achieved on average” to “achieved above expectations”, where “achieved as expected” contributed 49% of total responses. Entering into new partnership contracts was achieved less, but 49% of total respondents indicated that they achieved it on average. This shows the importance of follow-up work, so that new contacts have to be worked with and getting someone’s contact information is not enough (Underation 2006). Maintaining existing customer relationships and building new relationships were both mostly “achieved as expected”, with respective weights of 51% and 54% on level of achievement.

All of the interviewees attend trade shows for relationship-building performance. They all wish to get new contacts and communicate with existing ones. This is actually one goal that all of them measure, whether knowingly or unknowingly. Relationship-building aspect was emphasized by all of the interviewees, as all of them indicated that they plane meetings with existing and new customers. Alcohol producer and tourism services provider (C2 and C3 respectively) also indicated that these relationships cannot be managed via e-mail. Face-to-face communication in essential in every business and this can easily be done during trade shows.

Industrial manufacturer (C4) agreed, by adding an informal side to it. Having an informal discussion with their partners is important and necessary for them.

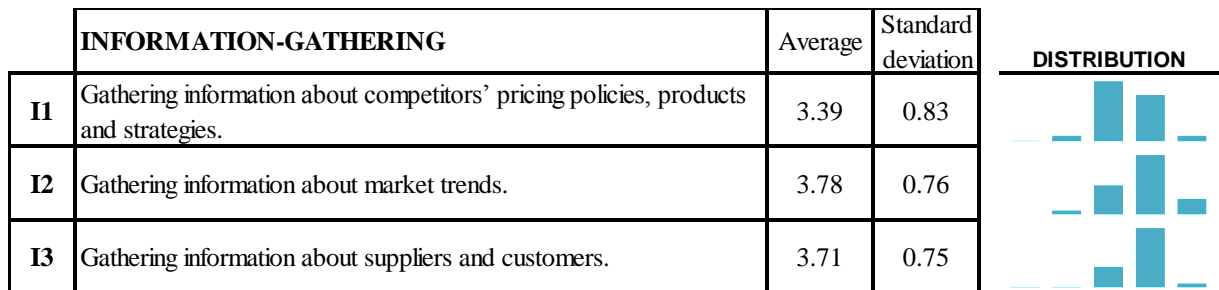


Figure 12. Questionnaire results for information-gathering trade show performance.

Source: created by the author.

Gathering information about suppliers and customers has been “achieved as expected” by 63% of the total respondents (Figure 12). Gathering information about market trends and about competitors pricing policies, products and strategies is also achieved mostly more than “on average”. 95% and 91% of total respondents respectively replied that they have achieved these aspects of information gathering “on average” or higher.

All of the interviewees stated that they do gather information from trade shows. However, they do not plan for it in any way or measure it afterwards. Thus, the Estonian sample lacks formal analysis of the information gathered, as suggested by Bellizzi and Lipps (1984). Here, it would be interesting to analyse the RTSI which was proposed by Bettis and Otland (2010) to see how information has affected trade show performance, but unfortunately it is out of the scope of this research.

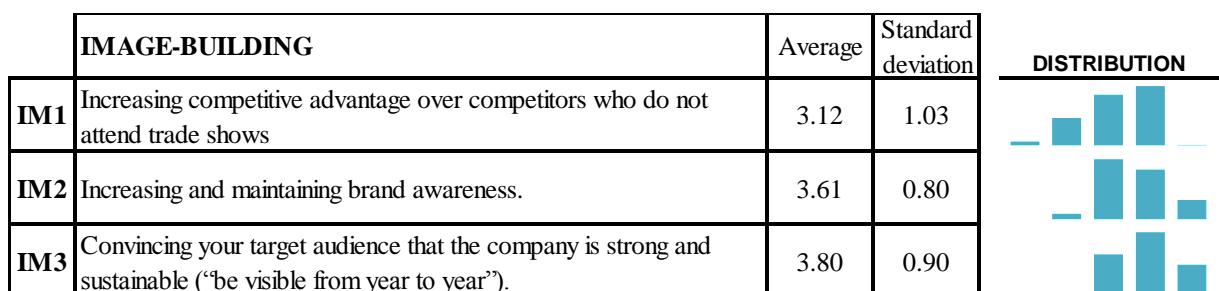


Figure 13. Questionnaire results for image-building trade show performance.

Source: created by the author.



Further on, image-building performance aspects reflect that increasing competitive advantage over competitors who do not attend trade shows, received mostly the score “achieved as expected” and “achieved on average” in total of 69% of total responses (Figure 13). Increasing and maintaining brand awareness as well as convincing your target audience that the company is strong and sustainable have both responses skewed to the left. The Estonian sample evaluates that they have achieved these goals “on average” or above that.

For the industrial manufacturer (C4), being present and being visible from year to year is an important aspect that they wish to achieve from trade shows. For the alcohol producer (C2), image-building is an important performance aspect as they are unknown on some of the markets they attend trade shows. They, however, have to start by building Estonia’s image in the first place, because it is connected to the product’s and brand’s story. The floor producer (C1), on the other hand, implied that building their image is luckily easier due to the innovativeness of the product and the large interest in it from the outside.

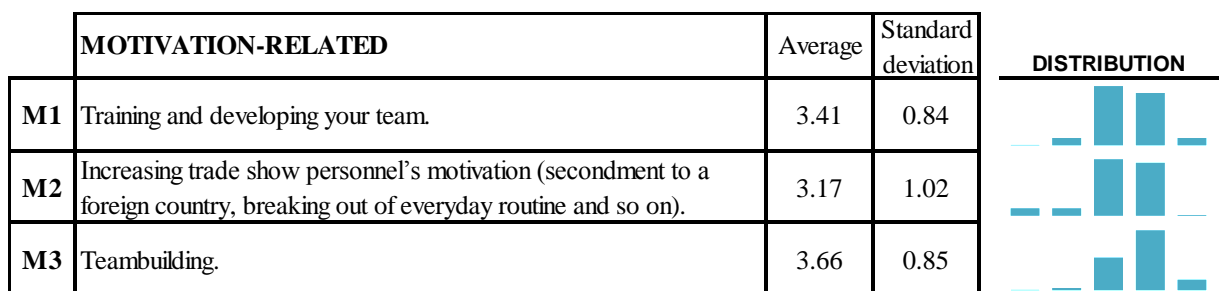


Figure 14. Questionnaire results for motivation-related trade show performance.

Source: created by the author.

Even though the results of the quantitative part of the thesis indicate that for the Estonian sample, motivation-related aspect of performance is usually “achieved on average” or achieved as expected”, the interviewees did not consider that aspect of performance to be a very significant indicator of trade show success (Figure 14). While the Estonian sample showed that motivation-related aspect is the least significant motive, why companies attend trade shows, they seem to enjoy the benefits of this aspect anyway. On-show days are long and tiring, but this is good for teambuilding and exciting days at the show enhance working motivation. Booth personnel can travel and get away from everyday routine as well as learn from other attendance or partners.

The aspect of team development, which was rated above “achieved above average” and higher (91% of total respondents), was also brought up by the interviewees. Attending trade shows is a good professional learning tool for all of the employees. They can educate themselves about market trends, increase their sales skills, and learn about international business and other cultures.

The Estonian sample evaluates that they have “achieved on average” or “achieved as expected” most of the aspects of non-sales related performance. Based on both questionnaire results and the interviews, it can be said that relationship-building and information gathering are indicators that the Estonian sample considers to be successful. Trade shows are a good learning experience and very good for business socializing. From that, it seems that the Estonian sample is satisfied with their results, by committing as much resources as they commit. However, the author cannot confirm that they have maximized their trade show performance as such, because that would require their individual objectives and more detailed measurement process.

### **3.2.7. Relationship between resources and performance**

Further on, the author looked at the Pearson's correlations between trade show input Likert items and output (performance) Likert items. Statistically significant correlation coefficients ranged from -0.343 to 0.538. Thus, it can be said that correlations between Likert items are ranging from weak negative to moderate positive correlations.

Highest correlation (0.538), with a significance at the 0.01 level is between trade show personnel training (PR2) and testing new products and/or concepts (S3). This correlation is still rather moderate to draw any conclusions from that. Personnel training has a statistically significant moderate correlation (0.522) also to building relationships with new potential customers (R4).

Planning trade show attendance according to objectives (PL3) has statistically significant moderate positive correlation to building relationships with new potential customers and partners (R4, correlation coefficient 0.511), entering into new partnership contacts with potential customers (R2, correlation coefficient 0.515) and convincing target audience that the company is strong and sustainable (IM3, correlation coefficient 0.531). These correlations are in accordance with theory, that setting objectives has positive effect on trade show performance (for example, Kerin and Kron 1987).

Interestingly, gathering information about market trends and about suppliers and customers was not related to any of the trade show input variables. Gathering information about competitors' pricing policies, products and strategies has only one significant correlation with management's active participation in the planning process. The finding that basically none of the resources (planning, personnel and budget) is correlated with information-gathering performance aspects is actually in accordance with the quantitative findings. Namely, all interviewees indicated that information gathering is important to them, but they did not prepare for that in any way. It was considered to be a natural part of trade shows and nothing that they can contribute to in advance, except for checking which competitors will attend the show (floor production company C1).

Only statistically significant negative correlation was between the statements that top management pays attention to pre-show promotional activities (PL6) and motivational-related performance of training and developing the team (M1). Even though the correlation is significant, the direction is not very logical in theory. The interviews neither supported nor reject that finding.

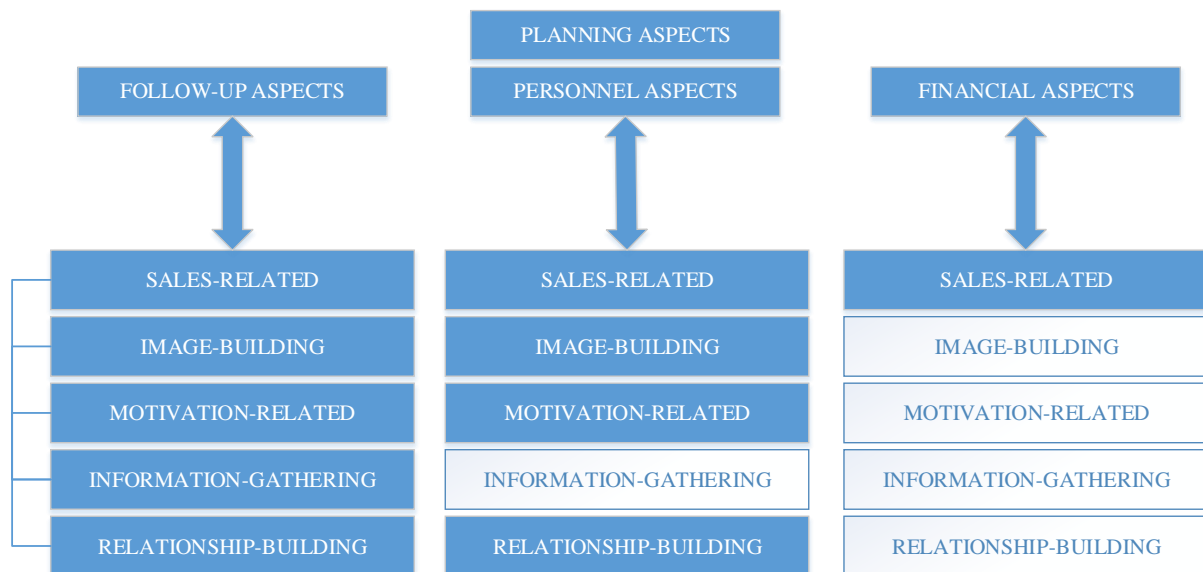


Figure 15. Results of the Wilcoxon test, where white cells indicate that there was no statistically significant relationship.

Source: created by the author.

Wilcoxon signed ranks test (Figure 15 and Appendix 6) indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between trade show follow-up and all of the performance

categories, whereas financial aspects were only related to sales-related trade show performance. Follow-up is considered to be one of the most important aspects of post-show phase, which realizes the whole effort in the previous phases. Pre-show and on-show phases usually do not generate direct sales; however, post-show follow-up will help to turn leads into actual sales. Seringhaus and Rosson (2004) as well as Kimmick (2013) stress the importance of follow-up activities. Thus, the results from Wilcoxon signed ranks test is in line with existing theory.

Financial aspects (budget commitment) results are entirely consistent with the results of Li et al (2011). There is a connection between budget commitment and sales-related performance. On the other hand, the author argues that rational spending on booth location, design and promotional materials should also have an effect on long-term non-sales related aspects. This however, cannot be proven in the scope of this thesis.

Planning and personnel aspects had a relationship with all of the trade show performance categories except information-gathering. This, however, is contradictory to existing theory as booth personnel plays an important role in data gathering (Underation 2006, Cavanaugh 1976). Also, Li et al (2011), found support that personnel commitment has an effect on information-gathering performance. According to the interviewees, booth personnel puts effort in information-gathering. Otherwise, results of personnel commitment are consistent with Li et al (2011).

Wilcoxon signed ranks test indicated statistically significant relationship between several trade show resources and trade show performance aspects. Statistically significant relationship between trade show follow-up and all of the performance categories adds empirical proof to the current literature, that follow-up phase is essential for trade show performance. However, more analysis should be done on planning and personnel commitment to information-gathering performance as there is no proof of statistically significant relationship between those input variables and all output categories.

## CONCLUSION

Estonian companies have indicated that the main export problems are poor contact network abroad, sales competences and access to sales channels. These problems could be solved by using foreign trade shows as an export marketing tool. Trade shows, however, are relatively expensive compared to other marketing activities. On the other hand, compared to direct calling, the average cost per lead is expected to be lower. All in all, trade shows have been proven to be an effective export marketing tool.

The aim of this thesis is to give an overview of Estonian companies' foreign trade show resource commitment, performance and the relationship of these two process input and output aspects. Namely, planning, budget, personnel and follow-up, and their relation to sales-related, as well as non-sales related performance aspects.

First part of the thesis gives an exploratory overview of previous literature on different trade show phases, performance drivers and assessment methods. In Estonia, trade shows as export marketing tool have not been analysed in detail, but practitioners have focused on giving practical guidance for sales and export development. Little research is done about foreign trade show management in Estonia as such. Thus, there is room for further detailed analysis on specific issues such as making booth design work for your benefit. Second part of the thesis seeks to cover one part of it and answer how Estonian companies affect their trade show performance and what key resource problems hinder trade show maximization. This thesis contributes to the literature, by giving an overview of foreign trade show management of Estonian companies.

In order to answer the research question, the author used explanatory sequential mixed methods research method. First of all, a self-administered online survey was carried out, which resulted in 41 usable responses. This data was analysed both statistically as well as simply analysing the tabular data and correlations. Secondly, four semi-structured interviews were conducted with experienced trade show attendees, who also took part in the first, questionnaire phase. Any results which were ambiguous or not logical in the quantitative analysis part, were included as questions in the interview in order to seek explanations.

Main motives for trade show attendance of the Estonian sample were relationship-building, information-gathering and image-building related. Even though most of the literature bring sales-related motives in the first place, sales- and motivation-related aspects were the least important in terms of trade show motives. As confirmed by the interviewees, the Estonian sample mostly aims to get new contact information as well as maintain relationships with current customers and partners. These are also the aspects that they have perceived to have achieved the most. On the other hand, none of the interviewees indicated that they plan for information-gathering as such – this comes naturally and is a good learning experience from trade shows. The motives brought out by the Estonian sample are in line with existing theory, which emphasizes the importance of measuring the performance of non-sales related aspects. With a time lag, non-sales related motives will pay off and be reflected in export sales.

The respondents of the Estonian sample evaluated their resource commitment rather high. Areas that can hinder their trade show performance maximization are training booth personnel, organizing booth personnel's daily agendas, setting measurable both sales and non-sales related objectives and analysing the results of the trade show based on measurements. These are areas of improvement that should get attention for performance maximization.

What is interesting, is that for the Estonian sample, top management is actively involved in trade show management. Previous literature emphasizes the importance of management involvement, for example Li et al and Underation, but this seems to be common for Estonian companies. This can result from the fact that Estonian companies are rather small compared to the rest of the world, but it helps to keep the company's overall strategy in line with trade show strategy. This finding was supported both by the results of the questionnaire and the interview.

Also, quantitative and qualitative analysis indicated that the Estonian sample puts a lot of effort into follow-up work. Follow-up and its relation to performance aspects has not been analysed in such framework before. Interestingly, the interview results brought up the dependency of trade show management and the industry, business type and company's life cycle. Different companies had different views on follow-up work. For example, companies that have area managers or foreign distribution partners put less or no effort at all to follow-up work. This finding is supporting authors like Shipley et al and Kerin and Cron, who have brought out that including trade shows in their marketing mix are dependent on industry and performance variables differ among industries respectively.

The Wilcoxon non-parametric signed ranks test indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between trade show follow-up and all of the performance categories. This gives an additional dimension to existing literature, by supporting theoretical arguments from Kimmick, Seringhaus and Rosson that follow-up work is essential for trade show performance maximisation. Financial aspects, alternatively, were only related to sales-related trade show performance (entirely consistent with previous research), which is also in line with previous research by Li et al. Planning and personnel aspects had a relationship with all of the trade show performance categories except information-gathering. This, however, is contradictory to existing theory as booth personnel plays an important role in data gathering, according to Kimmick, Carman, Chonko, Tanner and McKee.

As public entrepreneurship companies have a significant part in domestic companies' export development, their sustainable cooperation is important. According to the interviewees, they would appreciate country representation support on trade shows. This would allow companies to dedicate their time on their business objectives and less on introducing Estonia and its business culture. Also, when attending trade shows in countries with very distinctive business culture, some experience sharing and advices would come handy for those companies that have no experience in those regions (for example, Asia and Arabia). Estonian companies who have attended these regions, could briefly share their experiences to domestic companies, who are planning to expand their business.

The fact that the sample of quantitative part was rather small (41 companies) unfortunately limited the possibilities of statistical analysis. Further on, one of the limitations of this thesis is that most of the respondents had received financial aid for trade show attendance. This means that the sample may not be fully representative to the whole population of Estonian companies using trade shows as export marketing tool.

Suggestions for future research would include analysing resource commitment and its relation to trade show performance difference between companies in different life-cycles. It would be interesting to know, how the age of the company as well as stage in the life-cycle influence their resource commitment and whether it influences their trade show motives and performance differently than current literature suggests. Also, more qualitative research among Estonian companies could help to understand why companies commit less resources in some aspects and whether it has an effect on their overall business performance.

## KOKKUVÕTE

Eesti ettevõtete puhul on ekspordiprobleemidena välja toodud vähene kontaktvõrgustik välismaal, müügikompetentsid ja ligipääs müügikanalitele. Antud magistr töö raames uuriti, kas ja kuidas Eesti ettevõtted neid probleeme saavad lahendada kasutades välismesse ühe eksporditurunduse tööriistana. Kuigi välismessid on võrreldes teiste turundustegevustega kulukad, siis võrreldes otsemüügiga on keskmine kulu saadud kontakti kohta väiksem. Seetõttu peetakse välismesse ka üheks efektiivseimaks eksporditurunduse tööriistaks.

Käesoleva magistr töö eesmärk on anda ülevaade Eesti ettevõtete ressursikasutusest ja tulemuslikkusest ning erinevate ressursiaspektide ja tulemuslikkuse omavahelisest seosest. Täpsemalt, kuidas planeerimine, finantsaspektid, personal ning messijärgne töö mõjutavad nii müügitulemusi kui ka müügiga mitte otseselt seotud tulemusi.

Esimene osa magistr tööst annab ülevaate olemasolevast kirjandusest erinevate messi planeerimise etappide, tulemuslikkuse mõjutajate ja tulemuslikkuse hindamise mõõdikute kohta. Eestis ei ole välismessidel osalemist ja tulemuslikkust detailselt analüüsitud ja uuritud. Praktikud on keskendunud praktiliste juhiste andmisele müügi ja ekspordi arendamiseks. Ka välismesside planeerimise ja juhtimise kohta ei ole Eestis uurimusi teadaolevalt tehtud ning seega on vajalik detailsem analüüs välismessi tulemuslikumaks muutmise kohta. Teine osa magistr tööst proovib osa sellest analüüsivajadusest katta vastates küsimusele, kuidas Eesti ettevõtted mõjutavad oma välismessidel osalemise tulemuslikkust ja millised on peamised ressursiprobleemid, mis takistavad tulemuste maksimeerimist. Andes ülevaate Eesti ettevõtete välismessil osalemisest ja selle protsessi juhtimisest, panustab see magistr töö messialasesse kirjandusse.

Uurimusküsimusele vastamiseks kasutas töö autor kombineeritud uurimismeetodit (seletav järjestikune kombineerimine). Esimeses uurimuse etapis koostas autor veebipõhise küsimustiku, mille tulemusena vastas küsimustikule 116 Eesti ettevõtet erinevatest valdkondadest, kasutatavate vastuste hulk oli 41. Saadud andmeid analüüsiti nii risttabelitena kui ka statistiliselt (korrelatsioonid ja üldistav statistika). Teises uurimuse etapis viis töö autor läbi neli pool-structureeritud intervjuud välismessi kogemust omavate ettevõtete ekspertidega,



kes samuti osalesid esimeses uurimuse etapis. Kõik ebakõlad, vastuolulised ja huvitavad tulemused analüüsi osas verifitseeriti teises uurimuse etapis, et leida neile põhjalikum seletus.

Peamised välismessil osalemise motiivid Eesti valimi jaoks olid seotud suhete loomise, informatsiooni kogumise ning brändikuvandi loomise aspektidega. Kirjanduses tuuakse peamise motiivina tavaliselt müügiga seotud aspektid, kuid Eesti valimi ettevõtete jaoks oli see koos motivatsiooni tõstmise aspektiga kõige vähemtähtis. Intervjueeritavad kinnitasid, et Eesti valimi eesmärk on tavaliselt uute kontaktide leidmine ning olemasolevate kliendi ja partnersuhete hoidmine. Nendes tulemuslikkuse aspektides hindavad ettevõtted enda tulemusi ka kõige paremaks. Mitte ükski intervjueeritavatest ei väitnud, et nad planeerivad infot sihipäraselt koguda – see tuleb loomulikult ja on välismessidel heaks õppimiskohaks. Eesti valimi ettevõtete poolt välja toodud motiivid on kooskõlas olemasoleva kirjandusega, kus rõhutatakse nii müügiga kui ka müügiga mitteseotud aspektide tulemuslikkuse mõõtmist. Mitte müügiga seotud tulemuslikkus annab rahalisi tulemusi ajalise viitega ning need kajastuvad ekspordi müügitulemustes teatud aja pärast.

Üldiselt hindasid Eesti valimi ettevõtted enda ressursikasutust ja pühendumust kõrgelt. Aspektid, mis takistavad maksimaalset tulemuslikkust, on vähene või keskpärane panustamine messipersonali koolitamisega, messipersonali päevakavade organiseerimisse, mõõdetavate müügi- ja mitte müügiga seotud eesmärkide seadmine ning vastavalt mõõdetud infole messil osalemise ja tulemuslikkuse analüüsimisse. Need aspektid vajaksid parandamist, et suurendada välismessil osalemise tulemuslikkust.

Juhtkond ja juhid on Eesti valimi ettevõtete puhul suhteliselt tihedalt seotud välismessi planeerimise ja juhtimisega. Olemasolev kirjandus rõhutab juhtide kaasamise olulisust, näiteks autorid Li et al ja Underation. Samas tundub, et see on Eesti valimi ettevõtetele tavaline ja seda kinnitasid peale kvantitatiivsete tulemuste ka intervjuud. Põhjuseks võib olla Eesti ettevõtete väiksus võrreldes teiste maailma ettevõtetega, kuid see on väga vajalik, et ettevõtte, ekspordi ja välismesside strateegiad ühtiksid.

Nii kvantitatiivne kui ka kvalitatiivne analüüs näitas, et suurem osa Eesti valimi ettevõtteid panustavad palju välismesside järgsele tööle. Messijärgset tööd ja selle seost tulemuslikkuse näitajatega ei ole enne ulatuslikult analüüsitud sellises vaates, nagu seda on tehtud selles magistritöös. Intervjuude tulemused tõid välja huvitava aspekti – välismesside juhtimine sõltub sellest, millises valdkonnas ettevõtte tegutseb ja millises elutsükli staadiumis ettevõtte on. Erinevatel Eesti valimi ettevõtetel oli erinev arusaam messijärgsest tööst ja selle

vajalikkusest. Näiteks ettevõtted, kellel on ekspordiregioonis eraldi kohalik juht, edasimüüja või müügiagent, panustavad vähe või ei panusta messijärgsesse töösse üldse oma ressursse. Seda ideed kinnitavad ka autorid nagu Shipley et al ja Kerin ja Cron, kes oma uurimuses tõid välja selle, et välismesside kasutamine turundusstrateegias ning tulemuslikkuse näitajad sõltuvad valdkonnast.

Wilcoxon'i mitteparameetriline astakmärgi test tõestas, et messijärgse töö kõikide tulemuslikkuse kategooriate vahel on statistiliselt oluline seos. Selline käsitlus annab olemasolevale kirjandusele lisa mõõtme, tõestades Kimmicki, Seringhausi ja Rossoni teoreetilisi väiteid, et tõhus messijärgne töö maksimeerib välismesside tulemuslikkust. Finantsaspektidel oli statistiliselt oluline seos vaid müügiga seotud tulemuslikkuse näitajatega, mis on täielikult kooskõlas olemasoleva viidatud kirjandusega, näiteks Li et al'i toodud väidetega. Lisaks selgus tööst, et planeerimise ja personaliga seotud aspektid olid statistiliselt oluliselt seotud peaaegu kõikide tulemuslikkuse aspektidega, välja arvatud informatsiooni kogumisega. See on vastuolus olemasolevate teooriatega, sest nii Kimmick, Carman, Chonko, Tanner ja McKee väitsid, et messipersonal mängib informatsiooni kogumisel olulist rolli.

Avalikel ettevõtlusorganisatsioonidel on suur mõju kohalike ettevõtete ekspordi arendamisel ning seetõttu on nende panus ja jätkusuutlik koostöö ettevõtetega väga oluline. Intervjuude tulemustele tuginedes teeb autor ettepaneku: Eesti valimi ettevõtetel oleks kasu, kui riiklikud organisatsioonid toetaksid neid Eesti riigi ja selle ärivõimaluste tutvustamisega Eesti ärivaldkondadele strateegiliselt olulistel messidel. See lubaks ettevõtetel rohkem keskenduda enda ärieesmärkidele ning vähem riigi ja selle ärikultuuri tutvustamisele. Lisaks sellele, kui Eesti ettevõtted osalevad välismessidel riikides, mille ärikultuuriga nad tutvuvad ei ole (näiteks Aasia või Araabia), saaks riik, ettevõtted ja ettevõtlusorganisatsioonid neid aidata kogemuste jagamise või koolitustega, mis aitavad võõras ärikeskkonnas tähelepanu õigetele asjadele pöörata. Eesti ettevõtted, kellel on kogemus nendes regioonides välismessidel osalemise ja äritegevusega, võiksid oma kogemist jagada nendega, kes alles neid eksporditurge tundma õpivad.

Kvantitatiivse osa väike valim (41 ettevõtet) limiteeris kahjuks statistilise analüüsi võimalusi. Lisaks võib uurimuse ühe piiranguna välja tuua selle, et enamik vastajaid said välismessil osalemiseks toetust, mis võib tähendada, et valimi tulemused ei ole laiendatavad üldkogumile. Seega ei pruugi saada öelda, et valimis olnud ettevõtete välismesside kasutamine eksporditurunduse tööriistana on sama, mis Eesti ettevõtete puhul üldiselt.

Edaspidiseks uurimiseks võiks antud teemat laiendada ning analüüsida ressursikasutust erinevates elutsüklites olevate ettevõtete puhul. Huvitav oleks teada, kas ettevõtte vanus ja küpsusaste mõjutab välismesside ressursikasutust ning kas see omab ka mõju välismessil osalemise motiividele ja tulemuslikkusele. Lisaanalüüs ressursiaspektide kohta, millesse Eesti ettevõtted panustavad vähem, aitaks paremini mõista sellise käitumise põhjuseid ning aitaks aru saada, kas sellel on äritegevusele mingi mõju.

## REFERENCES

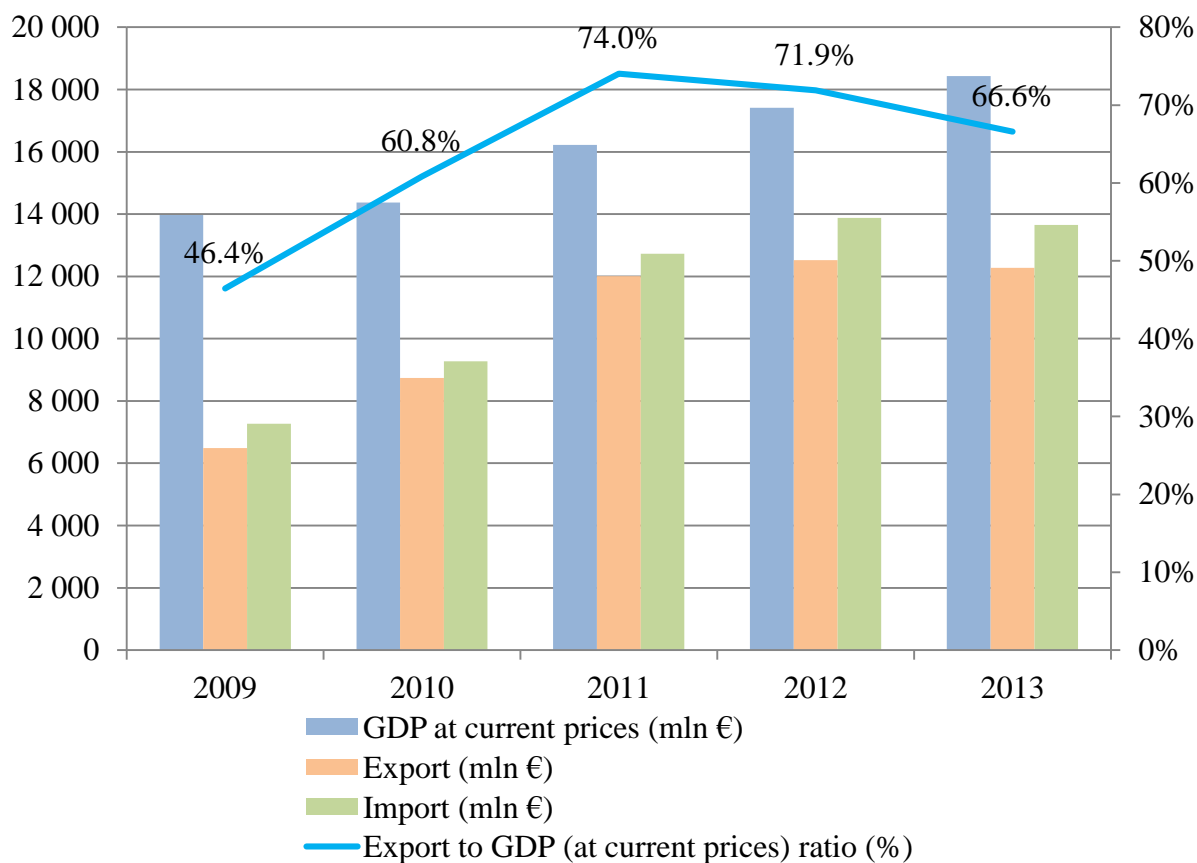
- Ahola, E.-K. (2012). Towards an understanding of the role of trade fairs as facilitators of consumer creativity. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 18(5), 321–333.
- Argyrous, G. (2005). *Statistics for Research: With a Guide to SPSS* (2nd ed.). Townbridge: SAGE Publications.
- AUMA. (2013). Successful Participation in Trade Fairs. <http://www.auma.de/en/DownloadsPublications/PublicationDownloads/SuccessfulParticipationInTradeFairs.pdf> (25.03.2014)
- AUMA. (2014). Trade Fair Benefit Check. <http://www.auma.de/en/TippsForExhibitors/TradeFairBenefitCheck/Seiten/Default.aspx> (25.03.2014)
- Banoma, T. V. (1983). Get More Out of Your Trade Shows. *Harvard Business Review*, 75–83.
- Bellizzi, J. A. & Lipps, D. J. (1984). Managerial Guidelines to Trade Show Effectiveness. *Journal of Industrial Marketing Management*, 13, 49–52.
- Bettis-Outland, H., Cromartie, J. S., Johnston, W. J., & Borders, A. L. (2010). The return on trade show information (RTSI): a conceptual analysis. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 25(4), 268–271. doi:10.1108/08858621011038225
- Bettis-Outland, H., Johnston, W. J., & Wilson, R. D. (2012). Using trade show information to enhance company success: an empirical investigation. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 27(5), 384–391. doi:10.1108/08858621211236052
- Blythe, J. (2000). Objectives and Measures at UK Trade. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 16(1-3), 203–222.
- Bock, T., & Sergeant, J. (2002). Small sample market research. *International Journal of Market Research*, 44(2), 235–244.
- Brown, J. D. (2001). Likert items and scales of measurement? JALT Testing & Evaluation SIG Newsletter, pp. 10–14.
- Carman, J. M. (1968). Evaluation of Trade Show Exhibitions. *California Management Review*, 11(2), 35–44. doi:10.2307/41164157
- Cavanaugh, S. (1976). Setting Objectives and Evaluating the Effectiveness of Trade Show Exhibits. *Journal of Marketing*, 40(4), 100–104.
- Chonko, L. B., Tanner, J. F., & McKee, J. (1994). Behind the Booth. *Marketing Management*, 3(1), 40–43.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Dekimpe, M. G., François, P., Gopalakrishna, S., Lilien, G. L., & Bulte, C. Van Den. (1997). Generalizing About Trade Show. *Journal of Marketing*, 61(October), 55–64.
- Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. (2010). Survey of exporting problems of Estonian Enterprises. General part. Tallinn. Retrieved from [http://www.koda.ee/public/Failid/Ekspordiuuring/Eesti\\_ettevotete\\_ekspordiprobleemi\\_de\\_uuringu\\_uldosa.pdf](http://www.koda.ee/public/Failid/Ekspordiuuring/Eesti_ettevotete_ekspordiprobleemi_de_uuringu_uldosa.pdf) (25.03.2014)

- Firat, A. F. & Dholakia, N. (2006). Theoretical and philosophical implications of postmodern debates: Some challenges to modern marketing. *Marketing Theory*, 6, (2), 123-62. doi: 10.1177/1470593106063981
- Friedmann, S. A. (2002). Ten Steps to a Successful Trade Show. *Marketing Health Services*, 31-32.
- Gopalakrishna, S. & Williams, J. D. (1992). Performance assessment of industrial trade shows. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 9 (February), 207-224.
- Gopalakrishna, S., & Lilien, G. L. (1995). A Three-Stage Model of Industrial Trade Show Performance. *Marketing Science*, 14(1), 22 - 42.
- Gopalakrishna, S., Lilien, G. L., Williams, J. D., & Sequeira, I. K. (1995). Do Trade Shows Pay Off? *Journal of Marketing*, 59(July), 75-83.
- Han, J. K., Kim, N., & Srivastava, R. K. (1998). Market Orientation and Organizational Performance : Is Innovation a Missing Link? *Journal of Marketing*, 62(October), 30-45.
- Hansen, K. (1996). The dual motives of participants at international trade shows: An empirical investigation of exhibitors and visitors with selling motives. *International Marketing Review*, 13(2), 39-53.
- Hansen, K. (2004). Measuring performance at trade shows. *Journal of Business Research*, 57(1), 1-13. doi:10.1016/S0148-2963(02)00269-2
- Herbig, P., Hara, B. O., & Palumbo, F. (1997). Differences between trade show exhibitors and non-exhibitors. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 12(6), 368-382.
- Herbig, P., O'Hara, B., & Palumbo, F. a. (1998). Trade show: who, what, why. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 16(7), 425-435. doi:10.1108/02634509810244444
- Hinnov, T., Sarv, T., Sink, R. (2012). Messi ABC. E-käsiraamat. <http://www.taveco.ee/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/MessiABC-2012.pdf> (25.03.2014)
- Kang, J., & Schrier, T. R. (2011). An Examination of the Factors Effecting Tradeshow Exhibitors' Decisions. Retrieved from [http://scholarworks.umass.edu/gradconf\\_hospitality/2011/Presentation/49/](http://scholarworks.umass.edu/gradconf_hospitality/2011/Presentation/49/)
- Kerin, R. A., & Cron, W. L. (1987). Assessing Trade Show Functions and Performance : An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Marketing*, 51(July), 87-94.
- Kimmick, N. (2013). Practical tips for Maximizing the Return on Your Trade Show Budget. HVACR/Hydronics Distribution Business, (August).
- Laerd Statistics. (2014). Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test using SPSS. Retrieved from <https://statistics.laerd.com/spss-tutorials/wilcoxon-signed-rank-test-using-spss-statistics.php> (10.04.2014)
- Lane, P. R., & Milesi-Ferretti, G. M. (2010). The Cross-Country Incidence of the Global Crisis. *IMF Economic Review*, 59(1), 77-110. doi:10.1057/imfer.2010.12
- Li, P.-C., Evans, K. R., Chen, Y.-C., & Wood, C. M. (2011). Resource commitment behaviour of industrial exhibitors: an exploratory study. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 26(6), 430-442. doi:10.1108/08858621111156421
- Ling-yee, L. (2007). Marketing resources and performance of exhibitor firms in trade shows: A contingent resource perspective. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 36(3), 360-370. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2005.11.001
- Ling-yee, L. (2008). The effects of firm resources on trade show performance: how do trade show marketing processes matter? *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 23(1), 35-47. doi:10.1108/08858620810841470
- Lumiste, R., Prause, G., Feuerhake, C., Venesaar, U., Vihalem, A., Kallaste, M. (2013). International Trade Fairs for Facilitating Internationalisation of Enterprises.

- International Business: Baltic business development. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH.
- Murray, J. (2013). Likert Data : What to Use, Parametric or Non-Parametric ? *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 4(11), 258–264.
- Praxis. (2012). Väikese ja keskmise suurusega ettevõtete arengusuundumused. Tallinn. Retrieved from [http://www.eas.ee/images/doc/sihtasutusest/uuringud/ettevotlus/vke\\_arengusuundumused\\_uuring\\_2012.pdf](http://www.eas.ee/images/doc/sihtasutusest/uuringud/ettevotlus/vke_arengusuundumused_uuring_2012.pdf) (20.02.2014)
- Rodriguez-Oromendia, A., Reina-Paz, M. D., & Sevilla-Sevilla, C. (2012). Business Objectives For Trade Shows Aimed At Final Consumers. *International Business & Economics Research Journal*, 11(13), 1455–1462.
- Saks, J. (2013). Osalemine välismessidel. Training by Estonian Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with EAS. (14.11.2013)
- Seringhaus, F. H. R., & Rosson, P. (2004). An Analysis Model for Performance Measurement of International Trade Fair Exhibitors. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 4, 152–165.
- Shipley, D., Egan, C., & Wong, K. S. (1993). Dimensions of trade show exhibiting management. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 9(1), 55–63. doi:10.1080/0267257X.1993.9964217
- Siskind, B. (2005). Powerful exhibit marketing: The complete guide to successful trade shows, conferences and consumer shows. Mississauga, Ont.: J. Wiley & Sons Canada.
- Skallerud, K. (2010). Structure, strategy and performance of exhibitors at individual booths versus joint booths. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 25(4), 259–267. doi:10.1108/08858621011038216
- Smith, T. M., Hama, K., & Smith, P. M. (2003). The effect of successful trade show attendance on future show interest: exploring Japanese attendee perspectives of domestic and offshore international events. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 18(4), 403–418. doi:10.1108/08858620310480296
- Statistics Estonia. (2014a). VK01: VÄLISKAUBANDUS --- SITC kaubajaotis, Kaubavoog ning Aasta. (19.04.2014)
- Statistics Estonia. (2014b). NAA012: GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT AND GROSS NATIONAL INCOME by Quarter, Year, Adjustment and Indicator. (19.04.2014)
- Titus, B. (2012). A franchise show allows your business to concentrate its sales efforts toward a local area. *Franchising World*, (July), 63–64.
- Vabariigi Valitsus. (2013). Konkurentsivõime Kava “Eesti 2020.” Retrieved from [http://valitsus.ee/UserFiles/valitsus/et/riigikantselei/strateegia/\\_b\\_konkurentsivoime-kava\\_b/\\_b\\_eesti-2020-strateegia/Eesti\\_2020\\_\(2013\\_uuendamine\)/Eesti2020.pdf](http://valitsus.ee/UserFiles/valitsus/et/riigikantselei/strateegia/_b_konkurentsivoime-kava_b/_b_eesti-2020-strateegia/Eesti_2020_(2013_uuendamine)/Eesti2020.pdf) (10.01.2014)

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. GDP at current prices and international trade from 2009 to 2013.



Source: Created by the author, using Statistics Estonia (2014a, 2014b) data.

## Appendix 2. Detailed information about the respondent profile.

<b>Shareholder structure</b>			<b>Respondents' industry</b>		
	<b># of responses</b>	<b>% of total</b>		<b># of responses</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Domestic capital	34	82.9%	Manufacturing	22	53.7%
Foreign and domestic capital	6	14.6%	Wholesale and retail	3	7.3%
Foreign capital	1	2.4%	Construction and planning	2	4.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	Creative industry	2	4.9%
			IT and telecommunications	2	4.9%
			Transportation and logistics	1	2.4%
			Tourism	1	2.4%
			Other	8	19.5%
			<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Approximate amount of employees as of 1.01.2014</b>			<b>Who manages and plans trade show attendance?</b>		
	<b># of responses</b>	<b>% of total</b>		<b># of responses</b>	<b>% of total</b>
1 – 10	13	31.7%	several own employees	27	65.9%
11 – 50	13	31.7%	one own employee	13	31.7%
51 – 100	6	14.6%	third party (outsourced)	1	2.4%
101 – 200	7	17.1%	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
201 – 500	1	2.4%			
501 - ...	1	2.4%			
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0%</b>			

<b>Number of products / services exhibited during one show</b>			<b>Exhibition items</b>		
	<b># of responses</b>	<b>% of total</b>		<b># of responses</b>	<b>% of total</b>
1 – 2	21	51.2%	Only products	19	46.3%
3 – 5	13	31.7%	Both products and services	14	34.1%
6 - ....	7	17.1%	Only services	8	19.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Preparation time before trade show</b>			<b>Number of times attended during 2011 - 2013</b>		
	<b># of responses</b>	<b>% of total</b>		<b># of responses</b>	<b>% of total</b>
4 – 6 months	14	34.1%	1	9	22.0%
7 – 12 months	12	29.3%	3	8	19.5%
More than 12 months	8	19.5%	2	5	12.2%
1 – 3 months	7	17.1%	6	4	9.8%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	5	4	9.8%
			4	3	7.3%
			15	2	4.9%
			20	2	4.9%
			7	1	2.4%
			9	1	2.4%
			10	1	2.4%
			12	1	2.4%
			<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Financing received for attendance</b>			<b>Type of trade show attendance</b>		
	<b># of responses</b>	<b>% of total</b>		<b># of responses</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Yes	37	90.2%	With their own booth	23	56.1%
No	4	9.8%	With both	8	19.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	With a joint booth	6	14.6%
			As a visitor / observer	3	7.3%
			Other	1	2.4%
			<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



## Appendix 3. Details of the questionnaire and its design.

### Estonian companies' attendance in foreign trade shows

---

#### INTRODUCTION

Hello!

If your company has attended in foreign trade shows in the past three years (2011 – 2013, with your own booth or joint-booth), then you are welcome to fill in the following questionnaire.

The questionnaire is composed in order to analyse how planning in Estonian companies affects foreign trade show performance. By an Estonian company, the author considers all companies that are registered in Central Commercial Register (based on domestic and/or foreign capital). Filling in the questionnaire takes around 10 to 15 minutes

All responses will be handled confidentially and the results will only be used for the purposes of this master thesis.

If you have any questions, I would be glad to answer them.

Best regards,

Madli Allikmäe,

Master's student in Tallinn University of Technology's Export and enterprise management course.

[madli.allikmae@gmail.com](mailto:madli.allikmae@gmail.com)

+372 56 906 255

---

#### Please fill in the following information about your company

1) What is your current position in the company? If you are responsible for several positions, then please select all that are applicable.\*

Owner / shareholder

CEO

Sales manager

Marketing manager

Product manager

R&D manager

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\*

**2) What kind of industry is your company active in (main field of activity)?\***

- Agriculture, forestry and fishery
- Manufacturing
- Electricity and other electrical equipment
- Construction and planning (also real estate)
- Wholesale
- Transportation and logistics
- Tourism
- IT and telecommunications
- Finance and investment
- Education (also vocational, secondary education, and science)
- Creative industry
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Validation: Min = 1800 Max = 2014 Must be numeric Whole numbers only Positive numbers only Max character count = 4 Min character count = 4

**3) Year of establishment of the company\***

\_\_\_\_\_

**4) Approximate number of employees as of 1.01.2014**

- 1 – 10
- 11 – 50
- 51 – 100
- 101 – 200
- 201 – 500
- 501 - ...

**5) Approximate number of employees as of 1.1.2013\***

- 1 – 10
- 11 – 50
- 51 – 100
- 101 – 200
- 201 – 500
- 501 - ...

**6) The company is based on\***

- Domestic capital
  - Foreign capital
  - Domestic and foreign capital
-

**Please fill in the following information about your company**

**7)** In 2013, total sales compared to 2012\*

- Increased
- Decreased
- Remained unchanged
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Validation: Must be percentage Whole numbers only Positive numbers only

**8)** What proportion of 2013 total sales came from outside Estonia (%) (For example, if in 2013 half of the company's sales were to foreign clients, then write 50%)\*

\_\_\_\_\_

Validation: Must be percentage Whole numbers only Positive numbers only

**9)** What proportion of 2012 total sales came from outside Estonia (%) (For example, if in 2012 half of the company's sales were to foreign clients, then write 50%)\*

\_\_\_\_\_

---

**Please fill in the following information about your company**

**10)** The company's export articles are\*

- Only products
- Only services
- Both products and services
- Other activities outside of Estonia (please specify, for example investment): \_\_\_\_\_

**11)** What kind of internationalization types does your company use?

- Direct export
- Direct import
- Foreign investment
- Technological cooperation with a foreign company
- The company is an outsourcing partner to a foreign company
- The company uses outsourcing services from foreign companies
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please fill in the following information about your company**

**Foreign trade show** – Event outside of Estonia, where a company can introduce their product and/or service, gather necessary contacts and partners for export development (for example Imm Cologne furniture trade fair in Germany in 2014).

**12) Has your company attended any foreign trade shows?\***

- Yes
  - No
- 

Page entry logic: This page will show when: Question #12 = ("Yes")

**Please answer the following questions about foreign trade shows and your company**

**Foreign trade show** – Event outside of Estonia, where a company can introduce their product and/or service, gather necessary contacts and partners for export development (for example Imm Cologne furniture trade fair in Germany in 2014).

Validation: Must be numeric Whole numbers only Positive numbers only

**13) How many times in the last three years has your company attended a foreign trade show with its products and/or services?\***

---

**14) The company has attended a trade show \***

- With their own booth
- With a joint booth
- With both
- As a visitor / observer
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**15) Has your company received any financial support from Estonian or foreign organizations for financing trade show attendance (for example Enterprise Estonia (EAS), European Union organizations)?\***

- Yes
- No

**16) How long is trade show attendance planned in advance?\***

- Less than 1 month
- 1 – 3 months
- 4 – 6 months
- 7 – 12 months
- More than 12 months

17) Foreign trade show attendance preparations and planning is dealt with (not taking into account trade show personnel)\*

- one person from the company
- several persons from the company (responsibilities are shared)
- third party (outsourced) and the company participates only a little in the planning process.
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

18) How many main products (product groups) and/or services are exhibited during one trade show?\*

- 1 – 2
- 3 – 5
- 6 - ....

19) Please indicate the reasons why your company attends foreign trade shows:\*

- Making contact with new potential customers.
  - Entering into new partnership contracts with potential customers.
  - Maintaining and develop personal contacts with existing customers.
  - Making actual direct sales at the trade show to new potential customers.
  - Testing new product and/or service concepts.
  - Collecting general information and information about competitors' (their pricing, products and strategies).
  - Increasing competitive advantage by attending the show, when competitors do not attend.
  - Increasing brand awareness.
  - Convincing target audience that the company is strong and sustainable.
  - Introducing a new product, product mix or service
  - Increasing personnel's motivation.
  - Teambuilding.
  - Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Page entry logic: This page will show when: Question #12 = („Yes“)

## PREPARATIONS

**Foreign market** – market other than Estonian.

**Foreign trade show** – Event outside of Estonia, where a company can introduce their product and/or service, gather necessary contacts and partners for export development (for example Imm Cologne furniture trade fair in Germany in 2014).

**Trade fair personnel** – your company's employees as well as temporary personnel, who represents your company in a foreign trade show (for example, local personnel who speaks local language and represents your company, its products and/or services in that specific trade show).

*For example: in case of the following statement “The company knows why they attend at a trade show and trade show objectives are clearly defined”, when the company has not defined*

why they attend a trade show, one should select “not applicable at all” or when a company has defined objectives, but they are not measurable, one should select “mostly not applicable”.

20) Please evaluate how following statements about trade fair preparations apply to your company:\*

	Not applicable at all	Mostly not applicable	Applicable on average	Mostly applicable	Entirely applicable
The company has defined measurable goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attending a trade show is a continuous determined activity, not a onetime marketing campaign.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade show attendance is planned according to objectives and adapted according to the show’s audience and specification.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The company has clearly defined its competitive advantage and is using them in the planning process of the trade show concept.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Top management actively participates in the planning process of the show’s booth design and communication materials.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Top management pays attention to pre-show propotional activities – sending out invitations and planning meetings at the show.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The company plans seminars and workshops at the trade show.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product and/or service demonstrations are planned in detailed as well as the design of the booth (also necessary technical solutions).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marketing and communication materials are carefully planned according to trade show objectives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For days spent at the trade show venue (including days spent in the foreign country before and after the actual trade show period) detailed individual and collective plans are put together for the booth personnel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
---	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Page entry logic: This page will show when: Question #12 = („Yes“)

## PERSONNEL

**Foreign market** – market other than Estonian.

**Foreign trade show** – Event outside of Estonia, where a company can introduce their product and/or service, gather necessary contacts and partners for export development (for example Imm Cologne furniture trade fair in Germany in 2014).

**Trade fair personnel** – your company’s employees as well as temporary personnel, who represents your company in a foreign trade show (for example, local personnel who speaks local language and represents your company, its products and/or services in that specific trade show).

**21)** Please evaluate how following statements about trade fair personnel aspects apply to your company:\*

	Not applicable at all	Mostly not applicable	Applicable on average	Mostly applicable	Entirely applicable
Trade show personnel is chosen carefully devoting time and effort, taking into account the employees sales and communication abilities and knowledge about the products and/or services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade show personnel is specially trained for attending the trade show.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade show objectives are discussed and clear to trade show personnel before the trade show.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade show personnel has actual, written, pre-planned tasks that are thought through and where responsibilities are divided among personnel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

(descriptions of tasks, to-do lists, discussing the tasks).					
Trade show personnel works professionally at the show to achieve company's objectives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade show personnel is open-minded and well-prepared.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade show personnel have specific objectives that they have to achieve during the trade show.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade show personnel's objectives are measurable and comparable with each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page entry logic: This page will show when: Question #12 = („Yes“)

## FINANCIAL ASPECTS

**Foreign market** – market other than Estonian.

**Foreign trade show** – Event outside of Estonia, where a company can introduce their product and/or service, gather necessary contacts and partners for export development (for example Imm Cologne furniture trade fair in Germany in 2014).

**Trade fair personnel** – your company's employees as well as temporary personnel, who represents your company in a foreign trade show (for example, local personnel who speaks local language and represents your company, its products and/or services in that specific trade show).

22) Please evaluate how following statements about trade fair financial aspects apply to your company:

	Not applicable at all	Mostly not applicable	Applicable on average	Mostly applicable	Entirely applicable
The company has enough financial resources to plan and attend a trade show.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



The company agrees to spend financial resources on designing the trade show booth and its displays (also promotional materials and technical solutions).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attending a trade show is the most important part of the marketing budget.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-show promotion is accounted for in the trade show budget (for example invitations, advertisements in special literature, and other promotional activities).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A detailed budget based on known expenditures is compiled, leaving a buffer for unknown expenditures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Page entry logic: This page will show when: Question #12 = („Yes“)

## POST-SHOW WORK

**Foreign market** – market other than Estonian.

**Foreign trade show** – Event outside of Estonia, where a company can introduce their product and/or service, gather necessary contacts and partners for export development (for example Imm Cologne furniture trade fair in Germany in 2014).

**Trade fair personnel** – your company’s employees as well as temporary personnel, who represents your company in a foreign trade show (for example, local personnel who speaks local language and represents your company, its products and/or services in that specific trade show).

**23)** Please evaluate, to what extent post-show work is done in your company:\*

	<b>Not applicable at all</b>	<b>Mostly not applicable</b>	<b>Applicable on average</b>	<b>Mostly applicable</b>	<b>Entirely applicable</b>
After the trade show, trade show performance is analysed and the results of the assessment are discussed and shared within the company.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

After the trade show, new clients and partners are worked with systematically and purposively.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Ideas from the trade show are acknowledged and put into practice.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Page entry logic: This page will show when: Question #12 = („Yes“)

## TRADE SHOW PERFORMANCE

Evaluation steps: Objectives were not achieved (also, were not objectives), were achieved below expectations, were achieved on average, were achieved as expected, and were achieved above expectations.

24) Please evaluate foreign trade show performance of your company:

	Not achieved at all	Achieved under expectations	Achieved on average	Achieved as expected	Achieved above expectations
Finding new contacts.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Entering into new partnership contracts with potential customers.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Making actual direct sales at the trade show to new potential customers.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Export sales increase after attending a trade show.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Testing new products and/or conceptions.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Gathering information about competitors' pricing policies, products and strategies.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Gathering information about market trends.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Gathering information about suppliers and customers.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Maintaining and improving existing customer and partner relations.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Building relationships with new potential customers and partners.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Increasing competitive advantage over competitors who do not attend trade shows.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Increasing and maintaining brand awareness.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Convincing your target audience that the company is strong and sustainable (“be visible from year to year”).	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
To introduce new product, product mix or service (also marketing communication).	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Training and developing your team.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Increasing trade show personnel’s motivation (secondment to a foreign country, breaking out of everyday routine, direct contact with the customers and partners both at the show and during evening events).	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Teambuilding.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

---

## FEEDBACK AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Do you have something to add?

---



---



---

## RESULTS

If you wish to see the results of this master thesis then please add your e-mail address. Your e-mail address information will only be used to send you the results and will not be distributed to third parties.

Your e-mail address

---

Thank you!

Thank you for your contribution to analysing Estonian companies foreign trade show planning and performance!

Best regards,

Madli Allikmäe, Master's student in Tallinn University of Technology's Export and enterprise management course.

[madli.allikmae@gmail.com](mailto:madli.allikmae@gmail.com)

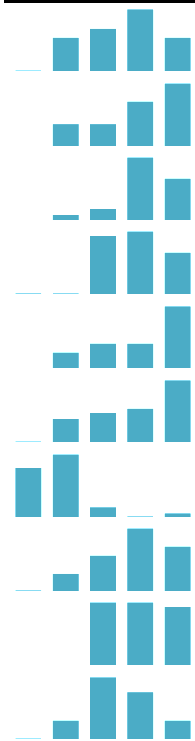
+372 56 906 255

---

## Appendix 4. Details of tabulation analysis.

PLANNING		Not applicable at all		Mostly not applicable		Applicable on average		Mostly applicable		Entirely applicable		TOTAL		AVERAGE	STANDARD DEVIATION
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
<b>PL1</b>	The company has defined measurable goals.	1	2%	8	20%	10	24%	14	34%	8	20%	41	100%	3.49	1.10
<b>PL2</b>	Attending a trade show is a continuous determined activity, not a onetime marketing campaign.	0	0%	6	15%	6	15%	12	29%	17	41%	41	100%	3.98	1.08
<b>PL3</b>	Trade show attendance is planned according to objectives and adapted according to the show's audience and specification.	0	0%	2	5%	4	10%	21	51%	14	34%	41	100%	4.15	0.79
<b>PL4</b>	The company has clearly defined its competitive advantage and is using them in the planning process of the trade show concept.	2	5%	2	5%	13	32%	14	34%	10	24%	41	100%	3.68	1.06
<b>PL5</b>	Top management actively participates in the planning process of the show's booth design and communication materials.	0	0%	5	12%	8	20%	8	20%	20	49%	41	100%	4.05	1.09
<b>PL6</b>	Top management pays attention to pre-show propotional activities – sending out invitations and planning meetings at the show.	2	5%	7	17%	8	20%	9	22%	15	37%	41	100%	3.68	1.27
<b>PL7</b>	The company plans seminars and workshops at the trade show.	15	37%	19	46%	4	10%	1	2%	2	5%	41	100%	1.93	1.01
<b>PL8</b>	Product and/or service demonstrations are planned in detailed as well as the design of the booth (also necessary technical solutions).	1	2%	5	12%	9	22%	15	37%	11	27%	41	100%	3.73	1.07
<b>PL9</b>	Marketing and communication materials are carefully planned according to trade show objectives.	0	0%	0	0%	14	34%	14	34%	13	32%	41	100%	3.98	0.82
<b>PL10</b>	For days spent at the trade show venue detailed individual and collective plans are put together for the booth personnel.	2	5%	6	15%	15	37%	12	29%	6	15%	41	100%	3.34	1.06

**DISTRIBUTION**



PERSONNEL		Not applicable at all		Mostly not applicable		Applicable on average		Mostly applicable		Entirely applicable		TOTAL		AVERAGE	STANDARD DEVIATION
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
		<b>PR1</b>	Trade show personnel is chosen carefully devoting time and effort, taking into account the employees sales and communication abilities and knowledge about the products and/or services.	0	0%	0	0%	9	22%	10	24%	22	54%		
<b>PR2</b>	Trade show personnel is specially trained for attending the trade show.	6	15%	14	34%	8	20%	8	20%	5	12%	41	100%	2.80	1.27
<b>PR3</b>	Trade show objectives are discussed and clear to trade show personnel before the trade show.	0	0%	0	0%	6	15%	24	59%	11	27%	41	100%	4.12	0.64
<b>PR4</b>	Trade show personnel has actual, written, pre-planned tasks that are thought through and where responsibilities are divided among personnel (descriptions of tasks, to-do lists, discussing the tasks).	1	2%	2	5%	17	41%	15	37%	6	15%	41	100%	3.56	0.90
<b>PR5</b>	Trade show personnel works professionally at the show to achieve company's objectives.	0	0%	2	5%	9	22%	17	41%	13	32%	41	100%	4.00	0.87
<b>PR6</b>	Trade show personnel is open-minded and well-prepared.	0	0%	1	2%	6	15%	20	49%	14	34%	41	100%	4.15	0.76
<b>PR7</b>	Trade show personnel have specific objectives that they have to achieve during the trade show.	3	7%	6	15%	17	41%	13	32%	2	5%	41	100%	3.12	0.98
<b>PR8</b>	Trade show personnel's objectives are measurable and comparable with each other.	5	12%	16	39%	9	22%	7	17%	4	10%	41	100%	2.73	1.18



FINANCIAL ASPECT		Not applicable at all		Mostly not applicable		Applicable on average		Mostly applicable		Entirely applicable		TOTAL		AVERAGE	STANDARD DEVIATION
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
<b>B1</b>	The company has enough financial resources to plan and attend a trade show.	1	2%	7	17%	12	29%	17	41%	4	10%	41	100%	3.39	0.97
<b>B2</b>	The company agrees to spend financial resources on designing the trade show booth and its displays (also promotional materials and technical solutions).	0	0%	5	12%	7	17%	22	54%	7	17%	41	100%	3.76	0.89
<b>B3</b>	Attending a trade show is the most important part of the marketing budget.	4	10%	9	22%	10	24%	10	24%	8	20%	41	100%	3.22	1.27
<b>B4</b>	Pre-show promotion is accounted for in the trade show budget (for example invitations, advertisements in special literature, and other promotional activities).	2	5%	6	15%	15	37%	13	32%	5	12%	41	100%	3.32	1.04
<b>B5</b>	A detailed budget based on known expenditures is compiled, leaving a buffer for unknown expenditures.	1	2%	4	10%	13	32%	14	34%	9	22%	41	100%	3.63	1.02



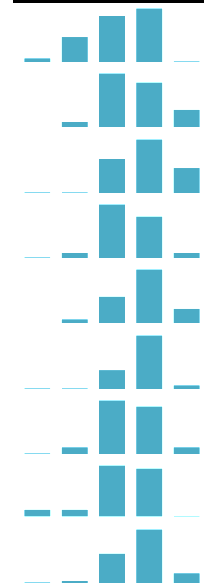
FOLLOW-UP		Not applicable at all		Mostly not applicable		Applicable on average		Mostly applicable		Entirely applicable		TOTAL		AVERAGE	STANDARD DEVIATION
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
<b>F1</b>	After the trade show, trade show performance is analysed and the results of the assessment are discussed and shared within the company.	1	2%	0	0%	9	22%	18	44%	13	32%	41	100%	4.02	0.88
<b>F2</b>	After the trade show, new clients and partners are worked with systematically and purposively.	0	0%	0	0%	8	20%	18	44%	15	37%	41	100%	4.17	0.74
<b>F3</b>	Ideas from the trade show are acknowledged and put into practice.	0	0%	0	0%	7	17%	23	56%	11	27%	41	100%	4.10	0.66





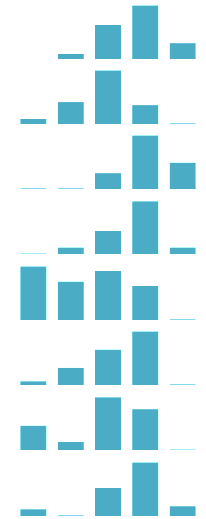
PERFORMANCE (1)		Not achieved at all		Achieved under expectations		Achieved on average		Achieved as expected		Achieved above expectations		TOTAL		AVERAGE	STANDARD DEVIATION
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
<b>IM1</b>	Increasing competitive advantage over competitors who do not attend trade shows	3	7%	8	20%	13	32%	15	37%	2	5%	41	100%	3.12	1.03
<b>IM2</b>	Increasing and maintaining brand awareness.	0	0%	2	5%	18	44%	15	37%	6	15%	41	100%	3.61	0.80
<b>IM3</b>	Convincing your target audience that the company is strong and sustainable (“be visible from year to year”).	1	2%	1	2%	12	29%	18	44%	9	22%	41	100%	3.80	0.90
<b>I1</b>	Gathering information about competitors’ pricing policies, products and strategies.	1	2%	3	7%	19	46%	15	37%	3	7%	41	100%	3.39	0.83
<b>I2</b>	Gathering information about market trends.	0	0%	2	5%	11	27%	22	54%	6	15%	41	100%	3.78	0.76
<b>I3</b>	Gathering information about suppliers and customers.	1	2%	1	2%	10	24%	26	63%	3	7%	41	100%	3.71	0.75
<b>M1</b>	Training and developing your team.	1	2%	3	7%	18	44%	16	39%	3	7%	41	100%	3.41	0.84
<b>M2</b>	Increasing trade show personnel’s motivation (secondment to a foreign country, breaking out of everyday routine and so on).	4	10%	4	10%	16	39%	15	37%	2	5%	41	100%	3.17	1.02
<b>M3</b>	Teambuilding.	1	2%	2	5%	12	29%	21	51%	5	12%	41	100%	3.66	0.85

**DISTRIBUTION**



PERFORMANCE (2)		Not achieved at all		Achieved under expectations		Achieved on average		Achieved as expected		Achieved above expectations		TOTAL		AVERAGE	STANDARD DEVIATION
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
<b>R1</b>	Finding new contacts.	0	0%	2	5%	13	32%	20	49%	6	15%	41	100%	3.73	0.78
<b>R2</b>	Entering into new partnership contracts with potential customers.	3	7%	9	22%	20	49%	8	20%	1	2%	41	100%	2.88	0.90
<b>R3</b>	Maintaining and improving existing customer and partner relations.	1	2%	1	2%	7	17%	21	51%	11	27%	41	100%	3.98	0.88
<b>R4</b>	Building relationships with new potential customers and partners.	1	2%	4	10%	10	24%	22	54%	4	10%	41	100%	3.59	0.89
<b>S1</b>	Making actual direct sales at the trade show to new potential customers.	12	29%	9	22%	11	27%	8	20%	1	2%	41	100%	2.44	1.18
<b>S2</b>	Export sales increase after attending a trade show.	3	7%	7	17%	12	29%	17	41%	2	5%	41	100%	3.20	1.03
<b>S3</b>	Testing new products and/or conceptions.	8	20%	4	10%	15	37%	12	29%	2	5%	41	100%	2.90	1.18
<b>S4</b>	To introduce new product, product mix or service (also marketing communication).	4	10%	2	5%	11	27%	19	46%	5	12%	41	100%	3.46	1.10

**DISTRIBUTION**



## Appendix 5. Detailed Pearson's correlation matrix.

Correlation table	R1	R2	S1	S2	S3	I1	I2	I3	R3	R4	IM1	IM2	IM3	S4	M1	M2	M3
PL1***	-0.048	0.239	-0.092	0.091	-0.059	-0.131	-0.138	-0.004	-0.039	0.084	0.079	0.136	0.200	0.181	-0.008	-0.098	0.075
PL2	0.141	0.458**	0.262	0.452**	0.252	0.066	0.176	0.022	0.157	0.376*	0.249	0.334*	0.354*	-0.074	0.205	0.139	0.396*
PL3	0.188	0.516**	0.249	0.485**	0.176	0.214	0.221	0.116	0.435**	0.511**	0.468**	0.446**	0.531**	0.265	0.283	0.215	0.482**
PL4	0.168	0.326*	0.353*	0.264	0.295	0.229	0.129	0.132	0.152	0.280	0.403**	0.380*	0.222	0.302	0.378*	0.213	0.181
PL5	0.016	0.438**	0.157	0.324*	0.159	0.390*	0.164	0.140	0.001	0.175	0.283	0.278	0.238	-0.019	0.032	-0.209	-0.062
PL6	0.342*	0.402**	0.177	0.468**	0.295	0.167	0.159	-0.047	0.305	0.321*	0.126	0.072	0.250	0.215	-0.343*	-0.245	0.013
PL7***	0.166	0.045	0.048	0.278	0.162	0.154	0.240	0.202	0.279	0.132	0.249	0.242	0.286	-0.014	0.126	0.279	0.260
PL8	0.182	0.405**	0.174	0.410**	0.216	-0.048	-0.136	-0.162	0.178	0.246	0.144	0.166	0.203	0.087	-0.012	-0.003	0.197
PL9	0.107	0.199	0.140	0.035	0.075	-0.022	-0.169	-0.255	0.241	0.122	0.299	0.213	0.264	0.262	0.234	0.273	0.344*
PL10	0.326*	0.384*	0.156	0.257	0.406**	-0.041	0.095	0.003	0.356*	0.389*	0.349*	0.336*	0.280	0.354*	0.315*	0.336*	0.434**
PR1	0.098	0.325*	0.239	0.369*	0.214	0.144	-0.006	-0.211	0.046	0.218	0.160	0.535**	0.458**	0.083	-0.197	-0.036	0.230
PR2	0.403**	0.307	0.158	0.412**	0.538**	-0.210	0.058	-0.009	0.242	0.522**	0.325*	0.120	0.163	0.300	-0.134	0.123	0.237
PR3	0.319*	0.200	0.191	0.077	0.149	-0.185	-0.046	-0.184	0.094	0.265	0.204	0.144	0.129	0.487**	0.043	0.197	0.215
PR4	0.366*	0.366*	-0.002	0.258	0.219	0.034	0.186	-0.084	0.462**	0.391*	0.222	0.069	0.232	0.288	0.049	0.193	0.387*
PR5	0.261	0.385*	0.195	0.364*	0.171	0.104	0.228	0.039	0.361*	0.420**	0.337*	0.396*	0.449**	0.368*	0.242	0.282	0.405**
PR6	0.323*	0.356*	0.121	0.410**	0.156	0.026	0.187	-0.055	0.454**	0.386*	0.104	0.301	0.371*	0.276	0.138	0.128	0.387*
PR7***	0.110	-0.096	-0.220	-0.024	-0.163	0.001	0.071	0.254	0.062	0.088	0.233	0.221	0.113	0.179	0.059	-0.046	-0.128
PR8***	0.192	0.274	0.015	0.126	-0.055	0.083	0.155	0.247	0.114	0.294	0.335*	0.229	0.090	0.117	0.292	0.101	0.130
B1	0.043	0.142	-0.044	0.222	0.056	-0.131	0.017	0.092	-0.106	-0.039	-0.249	0.072	0.061	-0.174	0.042	-0.169	-0.016
B2	0.157	0.306	0.009	0.381*	0.120	0.064	-0.007	-0.072	0.024	0.153	-0.076	0.214	0.220	-0.086	-0.096	-0.118	0.052
B3	0.263	0.416**	0.199	0.328*	0.364*	0.035	0.154	0.121	0.005	0.148	0.151	0.135	0.060	-0.146	0.053	-0.183	0.002
B4	0.295	0.230	0.047	0.339*	0.128	-0.002	0.123	-0.232	0.338*	0.227	0.057	0.153	0.229	0.131	-0.098	0.066	0.097
B5	0.126	0.277	0.178	0.332*	0.115	0.261	0.120	-0.176	0.352*	0.378*	0.187	0.249	0.247	0.066	-0.023	0.013	0.083
F1	0.340*	0.446**	0.325*	0.436**	0.195	-0.150	0.158	0.011	0.356*	0.458**	-0.059	0.191	0.259	0.299	-0.082	-0.227	0.045
F2	0.169	0.408**	0.027	0.481**	-0.095	-0.030	0.202	0.093	0.391*	0.375*	0.235	0.157	0.390*	0.023	0.044	-0.040	0.134
F3	0.295	0.397*	0.199	0.337*	0.044	0.246	0.242	0.159	0.261	0.407**	0.275	0.214	0.326*	0.142	0.015	0.049	0.104

\*- Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* - Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*\*\* - Items that were excluded when grouping Likert items.

Source: created by the author.

## Appendix 6. Wilcoxon signed ranks test results

Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Planning	Budget	Personnel	Follow-up
Image- building	0.006	0.753	0.009	0.000
Information-gathering	0.184	0.176	0.132	0.001
Relationship-building	0.016	0.460	0.005	0.000
Sales-related	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.000
Motivation-related	0.009	0.750	0.005	0.000

Source: created by the author based on the following SPSS outputs.

**Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>**

	image_f - plan_f	information_f - plan_f	relationship_f - plan_f	sales_f - plan_f	motivation_f - plan_f
Z	-2,723 <sup>b</sup>	-1,329 <sup>b</sup>	-2,417 <sup>b</sup>	-4,853 <sup>b</sup>	-2,629 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.184	.016	.000	.009

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on positive ranks.

**Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>**

	image_f - budget_f	information_f - budget_f	relationship_f - budget_f	sales_f - budget_f	motivation_f - budget_f
Z	-,314 <sup>b</sup>	-1,355 <sup>b</sup>	-,740 <sup>b</sup>	-2,952 <sup>c</sup>	-,319 <sup>c</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.753	.176	.460	.003	.750

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

c. Based on positive ranks.

**Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>**

	image_f - personnel_f	information_f - personnel_f	relationship_f - personnel_f	sales_f - personnel_f	motivation_f - personnel_f
Z	-2,599 <sup>b</sup>	-1,505 <sup>b</sup>	-2,826 <sup>b</sup>	-5,084 <sup>b</sup>	-2,811 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.132	.005	.000	.005

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on positive ranks.

**Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>**

	image_f - followup_f	information_f - followup_f	relationship_f - followup_f	sales_f - followup_f	motivation_f - followup_f
Z	-3,733 <sup>b</sup>	-3,239 <sup>b</sup>	-4,540 <sup>b</sup>	-5,270 <sup>b</sup>	-3,676 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on positive ranks.

## Appendix 7. Indicative interview questions

1. How do you describe the **importance of trade shows** in your marketing strategy? Why have you chosen trade shows?
2. How do you **communicate your message** to your target audience? How thorough you believe it should be?
3. Which resources do you pay the most attention to and which of the **resources effects** trade show performance the most? How is the **follow-up work** organized?
4. How and why should a company define **measurable goals** for trade shows?
5. How do you **analyse** trade show performance?
6. How do you assess whether attending a trade show is **profitable / successful** for the company? Do you think that attending a trade show is “profitable”? Different **performance categories** that you can think about are related to:
  - a. Sales
  - b. Information-gathering
  - c. Relationship-building
  - d. Image-building
  - e. Motivational
7. How and why do you contribute into **personnel choice** and their **training**? How much is **top management** involved in trade show preparations (in different trade show phases)?
8. Is their **performance measured** and rewarded in any way? Is it important?
9. How are **days at the show** organized in the on-show phase?
10. How important do you think **project management** / organized planning is when preparing for a trade show?
11. How much **financial resources** are allocated to different trade show phases (pre-show, on-show and post-show)? Why?
12. What are the **main lessons** you have learned from attending a trade show? What are the **biggest risks** of using trade shows as export marketing tool? How to prevent these risks?
13. What is the most **difficult** part when preparing for trade show?
14. What does trade show **personnel gain** from attending a trade show?
15. Is **gathering information** from a trade show important? Why? How do you prepare for that?
16. What should be different in **entrepreneurship policies** so that companies could maximize the return from trade shows?
17. What **capabilities** should be increased so that companies could maximize trade show performance? Would **cooperation with universities** be interesting to companies?

## Appendix 8. Transcribed interviews.

1. How do you describe the **importance of trade shows** in your marketing strategy? Why have you chosen trade shows?

**C1:** I think that trade shows are the only marketing expense basically, thus, in that sense it is the most important one, yes. We do not do any marketing campaigns or any such marketing – trade shows are one thing and secondly, we are present in different online environments, where architects or distributors can see our products. Architects can gather information about us from there. Also, professional industry magazines are also used. Trade shows are important, in bigger trade shows, they have tours for journalists. Exhibitors can register for tours, so that journalists would attend their booth. Later of they can take contact with you for more information, if they are interested. Trade shows are strategically important not only for marketing purposes. For example, a month ago we were in Shanghai – we want to be first ones in China, before we are replicated. We want to show that there is such a product and we are the first ones. Asia is opening up for us through trade shows, we have received orders from Taiwan and Japan from that Shanghai trade show already.

**C2:** For the whole export department that we have (6 people), we go to trade shows for over ten-fifteen times a year. We categorize trade shows as follows. Ones that we just visit to see what is happening on the market, what are the latest trends. Just to see the trends and meet with the partners. The other one is where we have our own booth or our partner has a booth and we are there to support. Why? Because you cannot get all the information from Estonia. All our sales people, marketing people, production people go on foreign trade shows to be up to date with outside trends. You have to know about the packaging, tastes etc. You do not make any deals via e-mails, you have to meet face-to-face and years of work.

**C3:** For tourism companies trade shows are very important. Attending shows in Finland, Sweden and Russia helps a lot. You can cooperate with your partners. You cannot get the information online. You have to go there, to get the information.

**C4:** Important in two ways. Firstly, it is a good meeting point to meet our regional partners and clients. Secondly, if we want to show new products. It is very important for us to be present in those trade shows, show our strengths and showing our image. It is also an event that our employees look forward to. It is motivating for them. Showing our references is also important.

2. How do you **communicate your message** to your target audience? How thorough you believe it should be?

**C1:** Depends on the show (interior design, flooring), its target audience and the products that we exhibit. Central logos depend on the product and its brand. Luckily, it is not very difficult to differentiate. Most of the people like our floors, so the innovative products attract attention. We get contact to visitors quite easily. Some companies call us because they want

to use our flooring in their booth. Further on, comes the price, so the end customer sees a rather high price in Europe.

**C2:** In all markets we have a different message. For example, the Netherlands, Finland and Russia cannot be compared. In the Netherlands, basically no one knows us and we are there to support our partner with his import portfolio. We are there to give him the security that we support him, we increase his credibility. Thus, buyers and distributors can receive information. In Finland we do not need any introduction. There we do not need to introduce ourselves, but to communicate different consumption ways. In Russia, it is also increasing the partner's credibility.

**C3:** The message was thoroughly thought through, which is rather difficult. But this is a year's long work. Mostly to visit partners, tell them that we exist. You have to talk and explain a lot.

**C4:** We have videos and commercials that communicate our message. We do not have a special message for trade shows, it is consistent throughout our branding.

3. Which resources do you pay the most attention to and which of the **resources effects** trade show performance the most? How is the **follow-up work** organized?

**C1:** First of all, our product has to be interesting and secondly, the people who represent us at the trade show, have to be good salesmen. Often, they do not even have to be sales person as such, our best salesman is our development director, who is also the author of the idea. He knows the product thoroughly and everything around it. Local area managers are definitely always present at trade shows. At the moment people are firstly interested in the technology and the idea. After that comes the square meters and other technical/practical information. Another important thing is to know the local language. For example, in Poland we had to use the help of trade show representative, who knew the language. Luckily, Polish people also know Russian.

**C1:** We also do pre-show promotion and ask for our partners to attend our booth. Also we try to offer our products to different showrooms (innovativeness or top companies or something). At the moment, we are in a stage where it is offered to us, but if not, we try to offer ourselves. Also, we put our company in the lists of all the tours (journalists and visitors). It is important design and prepare the booth for the trade show. Usually we have specially made floors, lightning videos and so on in our booth. Transportation and tolls also need organizing.

**C1:** Generated leads are divided among regions. All of the contacts are gathered into one place. Contacts are divided usually by countries. We distinguish between very important and not so important leads too. The people who got the contact comment on what they talked about with the customer, what is the probability of sales, adds all the notes and contact information into the same place. It is important to take follow-up contact, some not so

important contacts will get a bit less personal follow-up e-mail. Important contacts will already receive an offer.

**C1:** We are also thinking about expansion, but we need to think strategically and this has to be in cooperation with our export strategies, export markets and investments. We want the investment to open up some markets to us, not to be just money for the company. At the moment we can prioritize the projects and thus we can handle the volumes. Thus, the cooperation of sales and production is essential.

**C2:** Our importer gathers the contacts, we give out information about the product. Sometimes we are in direct contact with some partners, but mostly through partner. So we do not do much follow-up work. Partner does the sales work. Pre-show and on show-phase requires work from us. Post-show we do not do much at least intentionally and purposefully, except sending out gifts or something.

**C3:** Three months before started most of the work, you prepare tours, send promotional materials to print and some month before you arrange meetings. We had a general joint booth, where we had our own table and some logos, but not very personalized design.

**C3:** Trade shows vary across countries too. In Scandinavia most of the work is done during the show, however, in Russia, the partners want you to come to their office have a drink and meet up outside the trade show too.

**C3:** Follow-up work is very important for us. You have to realize the sales and it can take time. For example, we had to explain our accountant that it can take up to five years until you can see results from a trade show. The contact that you make, they have to see where they can get clients, how to arrange the trips, how to fit these services into their portfolio and so on. It takes time. Sometimes you even do not have direct flights and you have to start thinking about the infrastructure. After the trade show, we also had a department meeting, to share all the information in house. Shared information on the server is also necessary, so all the contacts are mapped and all employees have access to it.

**C4:** You have to register for the booth, make a prepayment and start with negotiations about the design (we outsource it). Product development has to think ahead already for the next year's trade show, because if we want to exhibit something new, they have to develop it and plan their work so it would be finished by the time of the trade show.

**C4:** Sales department deals with the follow-up work. They make a small report and everyone who needs this information will get it. It is shared in the house.

4. How and why should a company define **measurable goals** for trade shows?

**C1:** At the moment we are in a stage where our goal is to be present and show that we exist. We do not analyze how much we sold in the end of the day. Our volumes are rather low at the moment and of course we want to earn money in the end. But at the moment, mostly we



want contacts, useful contacts, so we can work with them further on. We do not count the square meters that we sold, we count how many useful contacts we got. Seeing distributors around the world is very important. For example in some region trade shows, you can meet people from nationalities who you otherwise would not meet (Panama). You can convince them that your company actually exists in a place like Estonia.

**C2:** Every trade show has its own goals. We think it through and discuss it within the department. We have different experiences and if we discuss it through, we can share great ideas. If we go to get familiar with the market, then it is difficult to measure it. We always try to connect trade shows with shop visits, visiting bigger partners. We never just go to a trade show. Meeting partners is very important to us. In the Netherlands it is easier and more measurable. They sell on spot to alcohol distributors. Direct sales. In Finland it is prohibited. There you can measure how much cocktails you poured out, but this does not show anything. It is important to give out information and tell the story there. So, it is very different across target markets. In Sweden, where I will go shortly, my intention is to meet up with a potential partner, with whom we have not cooperated yet. I will go visit the trade show, three shops and meet up with the partner. I believe that this day is a really really productive one, in comparison with just surfing online.

**C3:** Yes, we had measurable goals, new and old contacts. You should have measurable goals as it is difficult to reach your objectives there. Otherwise your work is useless. You have to communicate with your partners before the show, make sure that they find time to visit your booth. The effort takes time, so you have to be prepared. Face-to-face contact and direct communication is important. E-mail communication does not work.

**C4:** In the past few trade shows we have used an electronical solution, which helps in lead generations. Visitors have bar codes and we can easily manage leads, send them information and so on. We have some steps what we want to do in the trade shows, who we want to see, certain partners or so. But we do not define and agree upon certain numbers what we want to achieve. Trade shows are a natural part of our business and not like the only source of sales. It's a good meeting point. We count the contacts, agreements, feedback and so. I do not see why counting contracts would be beneficial in our industry.

5. How do you **analyze** trade show performance?

**C1:** No, we do not analyze it like that. We count the generated leads. It is basically gut feeling and successful leads that make it profitable.

**C2:** Not specifically. We do little follow-up work. Most of it is done by our partners. We have export department meetings where we discuss our experience and basically gut feeling tells us how it went.

**C3:** Yes, we analyze how much we get new contacts, which are old contacts that we managed to get active again. When do we receive reservations? This we take a look at bi-annually.

**C4:** Number of contacts. Otherwise we do not analyse any relations etc.

6. How do you assess whether attending a trade show is **profitable / successful** for the company? Do you think that attending a trade show is “profitable”? Different **performance categories** that you can think about are related to:
- a. Sales
  - b. Information-gathering
  - c. Relationship-building
  - d. Image-building
  - e. Motivational

**C1:** Trade shows also give a lot of information about competitors and the industry. It is a relatively good source of information. You also get feedback for your product. If some people really like our product then they come and say it. This is also motivation for us and we would not receive such information through other channels.

**C2:** I cannot answer for the company, but for me personally, I think of how much I learned and how much I made mistakes. Every mistake is just one way to learn how things cannot be done. After some trade shows you can see that actual sales increase, for example Prodexpo on Russia. Finland on the other hand is a very stable market and things do not change quickly for us. Getting new thoughts on how to support sales better is a good indicator that we have done well.

**C3:** We do not sell on spot mostly. Information-gathering is also important, you get to know who your competitors are. Not only other travel agencies but also spas and flight companies, who have a large market that they can get good deals in the hotels and with transport. In Finland Estonians are known, but in Sweden, how surprising it can be, they do not know very much about Estonia. They know Latvia more, so you have to talk about the country, its capital and nature to Swedish people. Incoming tourism companies usually are going together with Visit Estonia or in a joint booth with other tourism companies. You have a lot of competitors around. On the other hand, in some cases this has helped us a lot. You share experiences and get to know what sells and what does not. We have sometimes had arranged trips afterwards for business communications. In tourism industry, there is a big lag between trade show attendance and when you can see the effect of it. In some cases when the result is not visible for a long time, for example Sweden, it seems that trade show has not been profitable. But it takes time, so you have to be patient.

**C4:** If we have met up with our partners, seen informative things, had some client meetings etc, then we are satisfied. Of course, we are disappointed when some clients who received our invitation did not come, but they might have had a good explanation. If one third of the customers who receive invitations come, it's a huge success. We are satisfied if around one fifth comes. We think it in that way, if we have three new contacts from the trade show and we have managed to talk to three existing customers about our sustainable partnership then for us, the trade show has been successful. Trade show is a good review, marking the

territory, good relationship building place. For example, you can open the year with your customers in a more informal environment, when the trade show is in January or February. This, a bit more free environment is a good place for the business. If you had a good informal contact with your partner, it is also very good for us.

7. How and why do you contribute into **personnel choice** and their **training**? How much is **top management** involved in trade show preparations (in different trade show phases)?

**C1:** We agree on the main points, what are our message that we communicate, what we want to do. Also we think about topics that we will leave out of the priority. At the moment we are ready to discuss every projects and orders. If we hire a local person (outsource due to lack of local language skills) then we of course get them acquainted with out topics, but with other booth personnel we cooperate on a daily basis, so everyone is on the same page anyway. We agree in certain things for the trade show as a natural part of the work. So there is no need for a complicated personnel training.

**C2:** Attend the ones who have to attend, who will benefit from it. Salespeople, sometimes people from the production and product managers. It is our interest that we keep an eye on the trends and trade shows are important for the management as well. They acknowledge the results from there, as we communicate them inside the house as well. When I had my first trade show in the Netherlands then our local partner trained me quickly on spot. They were there with their own booth and I was there to support him and he told me about some approach techniques and so on. We definitely share all what we know, and our partners are very good in that sense. They know the market very well and they know how we can best support them. We usually do not go to new target markets with trade shows, rather, I go there, meet up with potential partners. If we get to the partner, then they go on a trade show with their portfolio, where our products are represented. Sometimes production people also go on trade shows. They also need information and all trends of production gives them a lot of new ideas.

**C3:** Personnel is chosen according to the visitor profiles and the country. Depending on the country focus and which connections the trade show country has with your customers and partners. Its combined work with the agencies, because you cannot sell only Estonia – you have to sell several countries together as a destination. I believe that we have not had any newbies, all of the booth personnel is experienced, has done it for years. So no special training is necessary.

**C4:** Salesmen and product developers are usually at the booth, some management people are also there. They have thought through their goals. Booth personnel is not especially trained for trade show attendance. People are experienced and if someone attends the first time they are supported by the experienced personnel. We collect contacts collectively, not individually. We monitor trade show days in a more informal environment. The booth personnel will go have dinner in the evening and they can discuss the information they

gathered during the day as well as any other experiences. Individuals' performance is not measured or benchmarked among others.

8. Is their **performance measured** and rewarded in any way? Is it important?

**C1:** No, we have a collective goal to collect contacts and generate leads. The outcome is more collectively measured. The area manager will work with the contacts later on, but we all want him to have these contacts. It is everyone's interest.

**C2:** Personnel does not have certain measurable goals either. If we come back from the show, we have an export meeting, where we share all gathered information. Biggest part of the 'how it went?' receives an answer there. If our partner tells us, that we were a lot of help, then this is also an indicator of success for us. It is important to show, that the producer is on board with the partner, they bother to come to the show, to support their partner.

**C3:** We did not measure the performance of individuals. We helped each other out if needed and we combined all the information and contacts together afterwards.

**C4:** No, it's a collective effort. Everyone helps each other out if needed.

9. How are **days at the show organized** in the on-show phase?

**C1:** As there are around 1 to 3 persons in the booth, it is handled on spot. People go have lunch one by one. All the promotional materials help as well, so that if target audience have to wait a bit until booth personnel is free to have a conversation with them. Sometimes we organize dinners with local partners in the evenings, but usually we are trying to avoid organizing bigger events.

**C2:** When we are in a trade show together with the partner, then we have one to two people in the booth. Nothing is especially organized.

**C3:** You walk around, see the trends and new partners, and have meetings. So called professional days are necessary, when they do not let in ordinary people, but only decision makers. In some cases it is very hard to sell at the last day, when you are an incoming tourism company. It is rather pointless as during the last day not many decision makers attend the show.

**C4:** It comes naturally. We also do not have excessive people in the booth. Sometimes we have organized promotional seminars, which is a bit more focused sales event. The speaker prepares for it and can give an overview to a bit larger audience. This is usually organized together with relationship-building. We offer some drinks and snacks also, so that after the presentation everyone could socialize.

10. How important do you think **project management** / organized planning is when preparing for a trade show?

**C1:** One person is responsible, but most of the people work together and cooperate.

**C2:** Export department goes to work there, to stand in the booth. Other departments go more to conduct market research and broaden their view, meet up with other marketing and sales people. In the budget you can see basically a year ahead, how many people can attend some trade shows. At the moment I know already that I will be in Germany on a trade show next March. Registering for the booth is minimally half a year ahead. If I just go attend a show as a visitor then I do not plan very much ahead, it is more spontaneous. How much time I have to take the trip. We do not deal with booth design and materials so much ahead, because we do not know what market trends or our priorities for the German market are in a year. Some three months before the trade shows, the marketing department will actively cooperate with us. We chose the products or product portfolio to exhibit.

**C3:** It is important. For us, during a foreign show the partner takes responsibility and you cooperate. So you do not have to put so much effort in project management. It is totally different with domestic trade shows where you have a joint booth as regions. Everyone wants to be visible and no one actually agrees on how to present the overall region. So in the end there is a big mess. It has taken years to get a unified result with the booth design.

**C4:** There is usually two to three people who are responsible, one person who is in charge. Someone is in charge of logistics. The booth personnel is also present to meet with their customers.

11. How much **financial resources** are allocated to different trade show phases (pre-show, on-show and post-show)? Why?

**C1:** We have a calendar year list/table for all the trade shows that we would like to attend. All the dates, contacts, visitor profiles, exhibition fee and so on is put together. Then it is easier to decide on what shows do we go. We always have one person who keeps an eye of trade show management. Everyone has their own role in trade show management, but one is responsible. Usually it is a person with marketing experience and background. Many people are related with attending a trade show, starting from the accountant, marketing manager and ending with the people in the factory.

**C1:** Luckily we produce and design the booth ourselves, so we do not have to pay for that. We also have a lot of marketing people in our management, so they deal with promotional materials, of course, we have to pay for printing. Sometimes we take more electronical materials than printouts. For the US, we have to make different promotional materials, because the metrics system is different. In China, the language is different, so that has to be outsourced for example (the client themselves ordered the translating). We have hired a Japanese student once for the pre-show planning phase. He found the contacts and organized us meetings for the trade show period. And when we went to Japan, then the student helped us to generate actual leads from these contacts.

**C2:** You have to pay for the travel costs, the booth, the design and the promotional products, dinners with partners and so on. It is a big cost, it can be reduced in some places, but we do not see that it could be replaced with some other activity. Design is outsourced to an advertising agency. We tell how much room we have and we want the focus to be on that specific product.

**C3:** In joint booths we shared the rent, all travel costs we had to cover ourselves. The amounts are not so big for advertising materials.

**C4:** We make indicative budgets. It usually is exceeded, but we also apply for financial aid if possible. We never exaggerate with the expenses, if needed you can make some budget cuts as well. The booth is designed to have a stock room, areas for discussion, personnel room and so on. The booth has to be in a good location. We invest in that.

12. What are the **main lessons** you have learned from attending a trade show? What are the **biggest risks** of using trade shows as export marketing tool? How to prevent these risks

**C1:** Everything has to be on time, the materials, the packaging, transportation etc. Transportation is the most difficult one. It is possible that all the products and materials are stuck on the border, but you have to leave buffers, so that it would not be a big problem. Getting everything done on the “thirteenth” hour, is usual, but we get more experienced every time.

**C1:** There are no risks or real danger from trade shows. The biggest risk might be that trade show did not pay off, that you did not get enough contacts. The trade show was wrong, we should not have gone. But mostly we know where we are going. There are very many trade shows were we could attend, but our people all over Europe are very professional and they know which shows we should attend and which not. We pick trade shows carefully. Otherwise the budget goes bust. It costs a lot, but on the other hand we understand that this helps us. Even though our demand is already bigger than our production capacity, we still go.

**C2:** That you do not have the right target audience. For example, in the Netherlands there is basically no point in attending the trade show during the last day, as no decision makers are there. Most of the visitors are students during the last day. Some materials have not reached the show venue. Once we took wrong promotional materials to the show (in Russian when they had to be in Dutch). Attending a wrong trade show, which you thought will be very beneficial for you, but the weather outside is so good that visitors will just not attend the show. This has also happened. You have already gone there and spent the money.

**C3:** I do not believe there is any business risk with the shows. Perhaps when competitors start stealing your contacts. We know some tourism agency managers in the Baltics who do that, so you have to be prepared. You have to take that into account and do your work better.

**C4:** Logistics is mostly the biggest risk: something is left behind, something does not get to the venue. Sometimes we have ordered too little electricity. But we learn from that and get more experienced. If we plan to show prototypes on the show and the client wants to change something technologically in the last minute then we may not be able to finish the new version on time.

13. What is the most **difficult** part when preparing for trade show?

**C1:** To pick the right trade show.

**C2:** Agreeing on priorities with the partner is the most difficult thing. So that they would understand the trade show concept as we do. The goal has to be agreed upon. The partner's priority can be totally different than ours. Our interest is that our products are the most important ones in the trade show. That the sales focus is where we wish it to be – getting a higher priority in partner's sales portfolio is the most difficult thing. Competitors are right there at the same booth with you. In vodka segment it is very difficult to distinguish, but in liquor products, not so difficult.

**C3:** Working hard at the trade show itself is nothing compared to the infrastructure problems. You do the sales work, and then there are no connections or direct flights. This is sad, because you cannot influence it. Raises the question 'what next'? It is difficult to work so close to your competitors. If you do all the introductory and explanatory work, already have the contact they may interrupt and offer a deal for the contact. We even had arranged meetings with some people, when competitors came to disturb. We have had to tell our competitors that this is not the most ethical behavior.

**C4:** It is important to get a booth in a good location.

14. What does trade show **personnel gain** from attending a trade show?

**C1:** Motivation - I would say so yes. In France and Italy, where our local manager is there and tells us that we should go, then this is motivation for him. He can invite local partners and clients there, we are there to support him. For those people, who go from Estonia, it is very exhausting. In April, we have been in the US, Shanghai (takes 10 days), two trade shows in Europe. It is not a vacation, booth personnel has to go there, put up the booth, it is also physically demanding. On the other hand they enjoy seeing what others do, talk directly to clients, to see the world in every way. And if then they receive good contacts or orders, then this is also motivating.

**C2:** Our export department travels a lot, so this is nothing new for them. But some of our employees who go once a year somewhere in Moscow or Cannes it is motivation. They go with a group, they have a synergy, a lot of new ideas – for them it is definitely motivating.

**C3:** For booth personnel it is motivating. You can do sales work and travelling is motivating for me anyways. All of the events around the trade show are also a lot of fun and educating. You get to meet a lot of different people, see new places.

**C4:** Yes, it is motivating for people. The company pays for the dinners and they are excited about all the information which they get from the show. They also share their experiences during the evening dinners, so that everyone would be on the same page.

15. Is **gathering information** from a trade show important? Why? How do you prepare for that?

**C1:** If we know that some competitor is also attending the trade show then we go and see him, talk to him etc. But this is not a goal itself, to gather information. Market research or competitor analysis is not the reason why to go to a trade show, this is something that comes along. What is interesting to us is all information about new materials, because wood is becoming a scarce resource in Europe and in China. New technological trends are interesting, design trends. All materials that are built to supplement wood, are good source of information to us too. Our interest is to combine these new innovative materials in the end. In some places we can use some less natural materials, even though we want to keep it natural. In Asia, we also get information about the business culture and foreign markets. How should we communicate when we send a container to Japan or Taiwan. We learn about that in trade shows. Also we can learn about Arabia (Lebanon), which is also a very difficult business environment.

**C2:** You go around, see what the trends are and so on. It is important, but we do not plan for that especially.

**C3:** We always want to know what the trends are, what our partners do and what are competitors doing. If you attend a trade show then you go around there yourself. After the show you also have a city day or something. You arrange meetings and take the most of the period when you are already there.

**C4:** We get a lot of information about trends and competitors. We see what is important technologically and where the emphasis is put on also in legislative terms. This helps to choose partners in our further activities if we know, who is technologically more advanced.

16. What should be different in **entrepreneurship policies** so that companies could maximize the return from trade shows?

**C1:**

**C2:** We have to sell the story of Estonia. Some of the promotion that we do, is basically tourism education. The support from the country could be better. Of course we are very grateful for the help they have given us. One trade shows in France that we which it is too expensive, could be in the list of countries that are supported. We are present there, but it is



extremely expensive. All of the trainings that they offer are good, EAS's local partners are also very helpful, even though the project is in its baby steps. We hope to cooperate more with them when this project evolves further.

**C3:** On a country level, the focus of countries should be more purposeful. Changing the target country every year does not bring the results, because you have to work years for that tourism to establish. You also have to cooperate with other countries. Especially due to tourists from outside Europe, who come to Europe for a longer trip. They want to see many countries. Combining and cooperating will help you and your competitors.

**C4:** It would be easier for us to do business abroad if we would feel that we are supported domestically. Domestically we have to compete with foreign companies and the cheapest ones win in procurements. But then we do not have any references from our domestic country. Protectionism in some form could exist – support from the country. Also, showing Estonia as a country in the trade shows would help a lot. So that Estonia and Estonian companies would be introduced. These organizations should find out the most important trade shows for Estonian industries and then be present there, show that the country is exporting such and such things. Help to make Estonia visible.

17. What **capabilities** should be increased so that companies could maximize trade show performance? Would **cooperation with universities** be interesting to companies?

**C1:** Everything has to be thoroughly thought through, what use we shall get from that. Of course, we are interested. At the moment we have so much work that we cannot do it all ourselves. If someone would help us, students want to help or something, then of course we are ready to discuss it. It depends on how to do it, also. We are open to discussions in that sense. I believe that it depends on the stage that the company is in also. With us it is rather difficult, because we are all hands on in the company – the management and shareholders. We go really into details and choose exactly where we want to go. We would not want to do double work. Students would not be motivated also, if they do a lot of work and then we change it all and do it in our way. In some companies where the processes are more stable, there it could be somewhat easier. We change our mind too often and sometimes do really quick changes.

**C2:** Pre-work perhaps. In the sense that the country supports with hands-on work in representing the country. For trade shows specifically, no. Training students would take too much effort. But I have thought about international students. Estonian students who have gone to study abroad. They could help in the trade show to introduce Estonia. They could also help in market research about bars (trend setting places) and trends. If students could help with booth design and budgeting and other pre-show work, then there's a question of time management. If they would offer a project, with actual decisions and goals, then of course. Then it would help a lot. Otherwise it would be wasting our time. Luckily we have a separate export department and marketing department, who support us with trade shows. Also partners help us a lot.

**C3:**

**C4:** For example, if we would like to go on a trade fair in regions which have a different business culture as we are used to (for example Arabic countries), then it would be good to be educated on that. Or that someone shared their experiences on how to act, what to pay attention to etc. I believe that we would not be interested in cooperation with universities, as we are rather experienced, we have the financial resources and so on. But cooperating with companies who do not have a lot of personnel resources to manage trade shows, they would probably appreciate this help a lot. A lot of help would be if competitors from the same industry would be offered to join their resources in trade shows and that way they would receive help on how to promote that industry in Estonia, for example.