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Abstract

For a company entering to a new country or market, for the success it is essential to have enough knowledge of the country or market in question. Market environment information is a key ingredient in the development of successful international marketing strategies. Company's market environment consists of economical, natural, technological, political, legal and socio-cultural environments. There are also the microenvironmental forces such as competitors, suppliers and customers that need to be taken into consideration when conducting the market analysis.

The aim of the research is to find out whether there could be demand for the phone/audio and web conference service in the business-to-business market. Conferencing services were chosen because those enable dealing with business communication such as meetings, trainings and conferences electronic way, very suitable to modern information society. Since these services are already available in Finland, Estonia was seen as an interesting new market area. This study was conducted by identifying are there prospect customers (companies): by finding out the level of the information technology in the companies, employees level of English skills, business culture and existing practices, possible competitors and available conferencing services. Information was gathered with email questionnaire sent to 896 Estonian companies, of which 45 responded. Besides the questionnaire, market information on Estonian business environment was searched from the statistics, internet, newspapers and literature. This research is based on information available 2005 and describes the situation at the time.

According to the results of the research, most Estonian companies have already heard about conferencing services, but only one in a four respondents has used them. Respondents are also interested in trying and using conferencing services, as Estonians generally tend to have positive attitude to novelties in information technology. Large international conference service providers did not yet exist in Estonian market at the time and the local telecommunication companies only offered the simple phone conferencing service. Level of information technology was good in Estonia, even modern and well sufficient to support use of conferencing services. A challenge is the fact that Estonia is a small market with restricted amount of possible customers, as most of the local companies were small or medium-sized. The cultural importance of face-to-face meetings is one of the restrictions of use, and another restriction is lack of information, know how and skills of using these services. When all findings are summarized, there were more positive aspects than negative.

Key words	Market analysis, conferencing services, Estonia, market environments
Further information	