Barcelona – Preparing for a Russian Tourism Revolution

Katharina Warkentin
Barcelona, 15.09.2014
Bachelor Thesis

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Preface

The thesis report at hand was written as the final examination of the international Tourism and Leisure Management study program of Saxion University of Applied Sciences in Deventer.

The project was written in collaboration with the client ‘When In Barcelona’ and played an important role for the future employment of the researcher at the client’s organization. The researcher will be in charge of establishing a relationship with the Russian tourism market in Barcelona and will use this research as a market entry.

The project was quite extensive due to the broad field research that was conducted. A document analysis was useful for acquiring knowledge about Russian tourists in general and specified to Barcelona and interviewing the suppliers of ‘When In Barcelona’ was valuable to find out more about the relationship between Russian tourists and the suppliers.

Through my own Russian background and the prior work with Russian tourists in Barcelona I was interested in investigating more about this increasing market, but was surprised by the bad image that Russian tourists have in Barcelona. Therefore the thesis project was a great combination of my own interests, the advice for my client and the ability of setting a milestone for my future work.

Herewith I would especially like to thank my clients Ida Maria Mogren and Silje Sandvik, CEO’s of ‘When In Barcelona’ for the opportunity of working together, trusting in me, the constant support during the thesis project and the future collaboration after this project. Furthermore I would like to express my thanks to my examiners Tatiana Alekseeva, Ruud Klep and Adrienn Eros for all the advice, help and support.

Barcelona, 25.08.2014

Katharina Warkentin
Summary

Barcelona; a city full of culture, history, Spanish lifestyle – and Russian tourists. The amount of Russian tourists in Barcelona has been increasing rapidly in the past three years and in the meantime they are indispensible.

On the one hand side does the hospitality industry in Barcelona appreciate Russian tourists and perceive them as an important group due to their increase and the fact that they are one of the biggest spending nations in Barcelona. On the other hand side employees in the hospitality industry are led by prejudices and negative implications when dealing with Russian tourists and they cannot establish a good relationship with them. Currently their interactions are mostly led by misunderstandings and miscommunications.

As for the fact that the client 'When In Barcelona' will start working with the Russian tourism market, the preparation of their suppliers is an important step towards this rather unknown market. Therefore the research was conducted in order to find out how 'When In Barcelona' can dispose and inform the suppliers in about important information derived from the research in order to prepare them for the Russian tourism market properly by means of a communication plan so they in exchange absorb this information and actually make use of it. Thereby the communication plan is the form of the advice and assists the client by the successful transmittance of the acquired knowledge to their suppliers. The project is important for the company as they want to establish a good cooperation with Russian tourists in the future. They value to satisfy all their clients and want to do the same for Russian tourists. Nevertheless, due to the still existing prejudices, which are led by nescience, this is currently impossible. The core concepts of this project are therefore travel behavior, communication plan and models like De Caluwe's and Vermaak's change paradigm as well as Schmoll's model of travel behavior that supported the research.

The field research hereby was conducted within a qualitative research design by means of a single case study approach due to the fact that the central assignment refers to how to make suppliers more familiar with Russian tourists. The field research about the travel behavior of Russian tourists was mainly conducted by document analysis. To find out more about the relationship of suppliers and Russian tourists, interviews were conducted. The execution of the personal interviews involved a sample that was heterogeneous and consisted of seven respondents from the business network of 'When In Barcelona'. Amongst these were three hotel employees (two from a 5 star hotel and one from a three star hotel), two restaurant employees, one vineyard owner and one holiday apartment owner. Thereby they were interviewed about what they know about Russian tourists, what kind of experiences they have had with Russian tourists, what they would like to know more about them and so on. The collected data were analyzed by means of the deductive coding process and put into meaningful aspects.

It was useful to conduct the field research as it helped to understand how the suppliers perceive Russian tourists and what kind of relationship they have, what they think is necessary to improve this relationship and what would be useful to know about them. Furthermore, especially the document analysis was helpful in establishing a concrete picture with facts and figures about Russian tourists in Barcelona. The results of the research indicated that the suppliers have a problematic relationship with Russian tourists especially due to a lack of knowledge about their mentality and culture and the
language barrier. This often leads to situations of misunderstanding and miscommunication. The research also revealed that younger Russians are increasingly coming to Barcelona and that their mentality is currently changing into becoming more open-minded and adapted to the Western European standards. In addition to that did the interviews reveal that suppliers find it important and necessary to change something in order to be able to adapt to the Russian tourist market and provide them with a better service. In addition to that did the research investigate how change is being handled in the supplier’s organizations and the way they prefer to have change introduced within their organizations.

After the results were analyzed, the advisory part, addressed towards the client, was developed. Thereby the focus was on how the client could communicate the valuable information, that has derived from the research about Russian tourists in Barcelona, to the suppliers in a convenient way that would make them use it in the future. The preferred recommendation is to establish a web forum; a web based communication exchange platform.

To sum up, the empirical and theoretical data that are provided through the research show that the client needs guidelines in form of communication to be able to lead its’ suppliers to introduce a certain change within their organizations, adapt better to the Russian tourism market and develop a positive relationship with it for the future collaboration of ‘When In Barcelona’ and the Russian tourist market in Barcelona.
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1. Introduction
The chapter at hand provides the fundamental information that are useful to understand the context of this research project.

1.1 Background Information about the Client
The client of the thesis project at hand is called ‘When In Barcelona’ consisting of 2 young women from Sweden and Norway who opened their travel planning company for the Scandinavian market in Barcelona 2 1/2 years ago concentrating on providing their customers with the best and a unique travel experience in Barcelona. They have a broad network of companies that they work with.

Silje Sandvik is one of the two founders of ‘When In Barcelona’. After receiving her diploma in a management study including sales, marketing and business economics at the University of Oslo, she worked as a travel agent at the Norwegian Travel Agency ‘Barcelonaekspertene’ for two years and planned tours and events in Barcelona. Within that position she was also responsible for customer relationship management. Since 2011 she works for her own expanding company in product management and distribution and plans private journeys as well as business incentives. Their success is reflected via recognition of different travel magazines and cooperations with renowned tour operators like Scandi Tours.

1.2 Reason for and Relevance of the Thesis Project for the Client
The number of Russian tourists in Barcelona is constantly increasing, however Barcelona’s hospitality industry has a lack of knowledge about the travel habits and the behaviour of Russian tourists, but rather focuses on negative prejudices and assumptions. The reason behind my thesis assignment is that ‘When In Barcelona’ wants to get to know the travel behaviour of Russian tourists in Barcelona in order to be able to adapt and prepare the companies they work with in Barcelona to that behaviour to be able to expand to that market and offer the right product. The companies that work with ‘When In Barcelona’ are generally speaking suppliers of tourist services or goods and are worked with on a regular basis, several times per week. This group of suppliers consists of restaurants, hotels, owners of holiday apartments, vineyards amongst others. As ‘When In Barcelona’ stands for offering tailor-made products and services, they are in contact with their suppliers quite a lot in order to plan menus, discuss upcoming events, make reservations etc. They see it as valuable to stay in good contact with their suppliers to be able to maintain and augment their business networks as well as provide their clients with the best customized products and services. With the communication plan that will result from the research project ‘When In Barcelona’ will be able to inform their suppliers and let them adapt to the Russian tourism market in Barcelona for a proper start together into that expanding market.

1.3 Objectives and Goals of the Thesis Project and the Research
The number of Russian tourists that come to Spain and especially to Barcelona is constantly rising. In 2013 Barcelona received 233,823 Russian tourists, an increase of 22% to 2012 (ABC CATALUÑA, 2014). According to Jose Ignacio Carabajal, Spanish ambassador to Russia, Spain is expecting 2.5 million visitors from Russia annually in the future (Voice of Russia, 2013). About 62% of these tourists stay in Barcelona or the surroundings (Spanish News Today, 2013). Nevertheless the bad image of Russian tourists of being difficult and constantly drunk (Business Insider, 2013) or having “no knowledge of basic etiquette” (Obraztsova, 2010) also has reached entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry of Barcelona and most of them do not know or are rather ignorant of the Russian travel market which has...
a huge rising potential. As the client, ‘When In Barcelona’, is interested in approaching the Russian travel market in Barcelona they would like to have research conducted that would help them solve the following management question:

*How can we inform and prepare our cooperating companies about the travel behavior of Russian tourists in Barcelona in order to adjust their way of working according to the travel behavior and mentality of Russian tourists?*

Therefore a research will be executed in which the current situation of Russian tourists in Barcelona as well as the relationship of the suppliers of ‘When In Barcelona’ with Russian tourists will be investigated. More precisely, the research part of the thesis will provide information about the travel behavior of Russian tourists, their motivations and reasons to go to Barcelona, their expectations and drawbacks of going there as well as the perception of ‘When In Barcelona’’s’ suppliers of Russian tourists in Barcelona, previous experiences with them and opinions. In addition to that an advisory part of the thesis project in form of a communication plan will provide recommendations and strategies for introducing certain changes in the ways of working with Russian tourists as well as educative information about them in order to be well prepared for that market. Hence the objective of the project as a whole is the following:

The objective of this thesis project is to design a communication plan in which the client is advised of implementing specific steps in order to inform and prepare their suppliers about the travel behavior of Russian tourists in Barcelona and leads them to adjust their products and services.

1.4 Research Questions

The first research question concerns the behavior of Russian tourists in Barcelona. After researching the domain of travel behavior in general, especially the models of Schmoll and Mathieson and Wall about travel behavior, which will be explained later, the sub questions below the first research question evolved. These questions will be answered by means of analyzing online data, such as studies about Russian tourists in general as well as specified to Barcelona, as well as newspaper articles and already existing interviews with experts in that field. .

**Research Question 1:**

What is the travel behavior of Russian tourists in Barcelona?

- What is the tourist profile of Russian tourists?
- What stimulates Russians tourists to travel to Barcelona?
- Which external variables influence Russian tourists when travelling to Barcelona?
- Which characteristics and features does Barcelona have as tourism destination that attracts Russian tourists?
- In what way do Russian tourists differ from tourists from other countries?

The second research question concerns the relationship between employees that work in the tourism industry in Barcelona and the Russian tourists. In order to support the second main research question
and come to a more clarified answer to it, the according sub questions help to structure the research in a more proper way and are helpful to lead into the right direction and gain deeper insight into the relationship between employees in the tourism industry in Barcelona and Russian tourists.

**Research Question 2:**

What is the relationship between entrepreneurs in the tourism sector in Barcelona and Russian tourists?

- What do current entrepreneurs know about Russian tourists in Barcelona?
- How are entrepreneurs in the hospitality sector of Barcelona affected by Russian tourists?
- How do those entrepreneurs perceive Russian tourists?
- What do they need to consider in regards of Russian travel behavior in order to change and adapt their tourism products?

**1.5 Global Work Breakdown Structure of the Thesis Project**

The global work breakdown structure for the research project at hand involves the subprojects that are being conducted. After the thesis assignment was acquired from the client ‘When In Barcelona’, the work breakdown structure begins with the first stage of establishing a theoretical framework whereby the utilization of several databases described in the following chapter were used for literature search in order to define the core concepts of the project. To select the most reliable and relevant literature the AAOCC criteria was applied. After that the data found in the literature is reviewed and analyzed to form the theoretical framework with the most valuable sources in terms of definitions of the core concepts and their relationships between each others. The theoretical framework is rounded off by the recording of the data in written form and by referencing the sources.

The second main stage of the project involves the preparation as well as execution of the field research. Thereby the research objectives in addition to research questions and sub questions are formulated firstly followed by the research design including the research strategy (case study), the selected method of data collection, the operationalization of the core concepts as well as the selected data sources and the methods of data analysis. Once the foundations are done the interview guide and questions with help of the operationalization can be prepared in coordination with the operationalization and is tested afterwards. The data collection method in this case is conducted by interviews with the prior carefully selected respondents. After the data collection the phase of data analysis begins including open and axial coding and structuring. The collected and analyzed data is translated into significant conclusions in order to answer the research questions. Appendix IV provides the transcripts with the commentaries that the researcher made during the coding process. The final coding result can be found in appendix II.

The last stage of the thesis project involves the advisory part whereby the objective and certain key aspects need to be determined first. By means of the analyzed result from the field research the advice alternatives are developed in order to provide the client with several solutions for their management problem. Nevertheless, it is necessary to select one advice approach which is most suitable for the management problem of the client whereby certain criteria for the selection are established to be able to justify the selection. Lastly the implementation plan for the selected advice is developed and the research project is rounded off.
1.6 Reading Guide to the Thesis Project
The thesis project at hand consists of three main chapters. The first chapter is an introduction and provides background information about the client as well as an introduction into the thesis project including the objectives and central research questions. The second chapter deals with the theoretical framework of the project. This chapter involves the definitions of the core concepts and their relationship amongst each other. The third chapter concerns the research part, whereby the methodological aspects are justified in terms of research strategy and design, methods of data collection, selection of data sources, operationalisation of core concepts as well as the methods of data analysis. This is followed by the analysis and conclusions of the literature review and the field research. Lastly does the advisory part provide the client with recommendations and conclusions of the research project.

2. Theoretical Framework
The chapter at hand provides information to the core concepts of travel behavior and communication plan and change strategy as well as it describes the set-up of the research design. The theoretical framework plays a significant role as it sets the very first base for the research and presents the information that are needed to build up the further research. Without the theoretical framework it would be quite difficult to understand the rest of the research project as fundamental and relevant knowledge about theories and concepts would be missing. Even though it is not connected directly to any research question, it provides all the necessary information that are important to progress with the research, such as definitions of core concepts and the operationalizations.

2.1 Travel Behavior
Travel behavior is considered as the manner of how travelers comport themselves before, during and after travelling corresponding to their own attitudes. Pearce (1992) defines tourist behavior as a complex process which is “discretionary, episodic, future oriented, dynamic, socially influenced and evolving” (Pearce, 1992). Oftentimes it is also considered as a so-called “vacation sequence” that includes an amount of stages that are interrelated from the first identification of needs up to the consumption as well as the evaluation of the experiences of tourists (Goodall, 1991). Generally speaking each of the stages mentioned above can be influenced by certain external and personal variables, e.g. money and time constraints, social factors, influences through the media, etc. Thereby Pearce (1992) accentuates that tourism behavior is a process of consumption which is continual, multidimensional and cyclical and it occurs throughout a span of a lifetime in which tourists can progress further and become more experienced. Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) describe that consumer behavior in tourism concentrates on the decision making process in regards of how a vacation should be spend. In addition to that does Solomon (2012) state that tourist behavior is the result of certain actions that are taken by travelers when deciding about a journey and that is why the decision making process is the foundation of travel behavior.

For any entrepreneur in the tourism industry it is valuable to know the travel behavior of certain target markets. Not only does the knowledge about the travel behavior facilitate in the development of tourism products, but it is also helpful for the improvement of marketing strategies, increase of customer satisfaction as well as improved service delivery and the enhancement of a competitive advantage according to the travel behavior (Van Vuuren, 2011). The steadily increasing globalization
has a big influence on the tourism sector and leads to a boost of cultural exchanges. That is why it is of utmost importance to understand the tourist or travel behavior of certain target groups to be able to approach them in the right way and adapt to their travel demands (Cooper & Hall, 2008). The tourism industry itself highly depends on the decisions a tourist makes and what the motivation behind those decisions is which reflects on a tourists’ behavior in general (Crompton, 1979). Important factors thereby are culture, financial aspects, previous travel experience and travel motivation (Ankomah & Crompton, 1993). Throughout the years there have been many studies concerning travel behavior and travel motivation and experts like Venkatesh (2006) refer to tourism behavior as the demand to explore and experience something unsighted and unacquainted that urges and motivates people to travel. Schmoll’s model of travel decision supports the important theory of Crompton and provides the most important aspects that are significant for the travel decision of a traveler and therefore the tourist behavior.

Tourist behavior is constantly depending on certain variables of environmental and personal interactions. Hence tourist behavior is also described as the manner of how tourists act in compliance with their stance over certain products and their reaction on it by using the product. March and Woodside also mention that it is crucial to apprehend the way how characteristics of a person concur with the characteristics of a certain situation and thus apprehend the positive as well as negative aspects that have an impact on the choices a tourist makes (March & Woodside, 2005). Various experts have researched tourist behavior and have determined a number of factors that have an impact on travel behavior; aspects that motivate a tourist to travel, factors that are situational or environmental and the personal attitude of a tourist (Venkatesh, 2006). Within these aspects motivation is determined as the starting point of a decision-making process in tourism and especially concentrates on demands (wants and needs) that cannot be satisfied at home. Motivation is an important aspect when a tourist wants to fulfill those wants and needs as it reflects on the decisions in regards of travelling as well as the level of satisfaction. March and Woodside (2005) explain that the motivation to travel is one of the most significant psychological factors that influence a tourists’ behavior. Motivations can be defined as the inner condition or specific demands of someone compelling people to behave in a certain way (George, 2004). Taking into consideration Maslow’s theory about the hierarchy of needs, which is often used to depict the fundamentals of motivation, in Crompton’s theory it is connected to tourist behavior. Maslow uses five stages that refer to basic needs of humans, namely physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem and self-actualization. Due to the fact that tourists have certain needs, Crompton determined seven socio-psychological aspects that motivate people to travel. These include the want to escape from the everyday routine, to discover and evaluate oneself, to relax or participate in leisure activities, to gain a certain level of social reputation, to regress, to strengthen family relations and to support social interaction. It is important to know what kind of motivations tourists have as those can directly influence the tourist behavior (George, 2004). A deep insight into travel behavior plays a significant role in the field of tourism as it assists to develop as well as implement suitable strategies according to certain travel behaviors (March & Woodside, 2005). Throughout the years many different types of research in regards of tourist behavior, decision making in tourism and motivation for travelling have been conducted. One of the most basic decision making process is depicted below.
The model adapted from Moscardo (1996) includes the very basic steps that a tourist goes through when preparing to travel. It is considered as a quite pivotal process and lacks other important factors that influence the tourist behavior. Other rather elaborated models, such as Schmoll’s (1977) and Mathieson and Wall (1982) take these significant aspects into account. Schmoll developed a complex model in which he takes important factors into consideration like travel stimuli, external variables, personal and social factors as well as features of the touristic services. A model as such should not just rely on theoretical practice due to the fact that strong motivations, personal drive that derives from the socio-economic environment of a tourist as well as needs and aspirations. In his model he suggests four successive fields (travel stimuli, personal and social determinants, external variables, field characteristics and features of the service) whereby each of these fields has certain influences as well as considerations (Pizam & Mansfeld, 1999). While having a broad range of different models regarding travel behavior, this research project will take Schmoll’s model and the five stage model of Mathieson and Wall (1982) into close consideration when analyzing the Russian travel behavior. The table below gives an insight into the factors that influence travel behavior according to Schmoll (Pizam & Mansfeld, 1999). The importance of those factors is also supported by the definition of Belch (1978) in which he describes that tourist behavior “is the process and activities people engage in when searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy their needs and desires”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel Stimuli</th>
<th>Certain external impulses that may increase someone’s needs or desires to travel in matters of stimulation (e.g. trade publications)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Personal and Social Determinants</td>
<td>Factors that determine the goals of customers in matters of travel desires and expectations, can be determined by personality, socio-economic factors, attitudes and values</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Variables</td>
<td>Involves the confidence of travelers in the service provider (travel agent) destination image and bygone experience as well as cost and time constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics and Features of the Service Distribution</td>
<td>Examples of cost/ value relations and attractions/ amenities, that have an influence on the decision process and result</td>
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Furthermore the model is based on the following three premises.
1. The process of decision making and the potential results of those decisions are affected by four sets of variables, namely customer goals, travel opportunities, communications effort as well as intervening or independent variables.

2. The sets of variables mentioned above and their individual components can be identified.

3. The distinct process of including several phases that are successive.

The descriptive model of Schmoll has the purpose of showing the relevant variables as well as their relationships between each other. In addition to that the model cannot be quantified nor can it be used for predictions or to forecast the demand for certain services or destinations. Instead does Schmoll indicate that the model can be of assisting use in indicating specific factors that influence and determine tourist behavior. Furthermore it can be utilized in planning research and to determine certain criteria that can identify target markets. Figure 3 below depicts the model of Schmoll.

Another significant model is the travel-buying behavior model of Mathieson and Wall (1982) which is a linear model that is based on the classical models of consumer behavior in general, with five stages identifying interrelated factors as seen below. The interrelated factors thereby are tourist profile (including the age, education, income, attitudes, previous experience and motivation), travel awareness (the image of a destination’s facilities and services), destination resources and characteristics (attractions and features of the destination) and trip features (distance, trip duration and perceived risk of the area visited) (Cooper, 2008). Due to the fact that Schmoll’s model involves all the aspects that are mentioned in the prior mentioned theories about tourist behavior, the research about Russian travel behavior in Barcelona constantly connects to the particular stimuli in order to develop a clear picture.
2.2 Communication Plan

A communication plan is an important and helpful tool in organizations as it provides a focus in general or in specific projects, as well as a sort of control and guidance. At the same time a communication plan can avoid staff members to get overwhelmed due to the fact that certain steps are being followed. Essential aspects of a communication plan are set objectives; what is supposed to be achieved with the planned communication. Furthermore, the ways and tactics of how to achieve the objectives, the audience (who is the communication plan addressed to?), the time frame in which certain steps of the communication plan are to be achieved as well as the measurement instruments of how the outcome of the communication plan is, are significant factors that need to be set up in the initial of every communication plan. The communication plan can include spoken, written as well as electronic intercommunication. In the context of the research project at hand a communication plan will be developed in which the client 'When In Barcelona' will receive advice about how they can introduce the acquired information about Russian tourists and their travel behaviour to their suppliers so that those would accept it and so that resistance stays as low as possible. There are seven important steps that need to be followed when developing a communications plan. The table below presents the steps and what needs to be done in connection to those (Hovland, 2005).

When defining the objectives of the communication plan you need to keep in mind the information that you have collected or researched prior to it. In this case the outcomes of the field and literature research will be used to establish clear and realistic objectives of what the communication plan should intend to achieve. Another quite significant part of a communication plan is to determine the audiences and clearly state who this communication plan is addressed to and who it should influence. Specific goals will provide a guidance in terms of services, products and activities that should be utilized in order to achieve the objectives. The step of identifying the main messages involves certain tools that shall be used to reach the goals, such as marketing tools like posters or covers. Furthermore it is of utmost importance to clarify a time frame which can lead your audience and oneself. Lastly the evaluation of the communication plan and its' effectiveness has to take place. Thereby it can mean that a report on the progress is being established in specific periods of time or a single briefing about the outcomes will be held (Ashraf, 2011).

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<td>1.</td>
<td>Developing goals for your communication plan</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Defining the key audiences</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Identify the main messages</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Establishing a tactical outreach plan</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Creating materials</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Setting a time frame</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
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2.3 Change Strategy

De Caluwe and Vermaak (2004) developed a change strategy in which they connect individual concepts for change with different types of managing and organizing and combine them with colors. Due to the fact that each company has its own way of management and organization as well as culture the orientation towards changing and learning differ. Their strategy involves five completely different types of thinking in regards of change and combine these with aligning beliefs as well as convictions about change, types of effective interventions and manners about how to change something or someone. Each color (yellow, blue, red, green and white) is connected to a theory concerning change and is used as a tool for communication for change strategy. Their extensively applied strategy is considered as “robust and versatile” and is depicted below (De Caluwe & Vermaak, 2004).

In the yellow-print thinking it is assumed that people only tend to change their beliefs or opinions if their personal interests are considered or if there is space to contribute own ideas. Thereby the combination of ideas and opinions is one often used approach. Within this change process change is rather seen as a negotiation that trying to combine the opinions into a feasible and broadly accepted solution. It is implied that already a change occurs when bringing a group of people to the same opinion. Resistance might occur when someone with power disagrees. In order to avoid resistance different types of interventions are used, such as the facilitation of communication, negotiation and conflict resolution. It is difficult to predict the change as it depends on personal opinions and beliefs. In general the interests and opinions of the changing group have to be constantly taken into consideration.

The blue-print thinking focuses more on the rational design of change as well as its’ implementation. Hereby the authors assume that a change will occur if the result is clearly specified to the involved participants. Due to that fact it is significant to control, plan, manage and monitor the change process constantly. This process of change is considered as rather independent of people and managers have higher power to lead the change process towards the desired result as the whole process is planned accurately. Preselected indicators help to monitor the progress continuously to analyze if the process is happening in the right way. In case there are discrepancies, the progress has to be adjusted in accordance with the prior determined ranges of money, time, quality, organization and information. Interventions that are likely to be used are SWOT analyses, quality management and benchmarking. Significant factors that should be bared in mind within this process is that it needs to be planned and organized precisely first, one owns’ expertise should be used and personal ideas or wishes of people should not interfere, but the result should always be in front.

The red-print thinking functions by the stimulation of people or by presenting that the change is quite appealing. This process implies the distribution of rewards in exchange for good work and taking on responsibilities, whereby the focus is on talents and competencies of the employees and on reaching a good combination of the wants and needs of the employees and the ones of the organization. This process works closely with the human resource management in terms of rewarding, which can be a promotion, salary, a positive review or a bonus. Useful interventions are recruitments, assessments, work design or programs for employee wellness. The incorporation of this process is often connected with motivational speeches as well as team building events and social activities in order to create a
good atmosphere and solidarity. The result of the change can be predicted, but not guaranteed in advance as it is dependent on the response of the employees.

Another method is the green–print thinking which is closely connects change with learning whereby people get motivated in order to learn and expand their competencies which positively effects the organization. The collective learning or advanced training of business related matters supports the organization as a whole to learn and to change. Situations are set up in which employees can learn or train new aspects together and give each other feedback in an effective way. Interventions can be simulations, action learning, coaching, leadership training and feedback. Significant factors hereby are the mutual motivation and collective learning.

The last process of change is the white–print thinking which is defined as a process that lets people act without any instructions and rather focuses on self–organization. Due to learning, developmental and evolutionary aspects new patterns of behavior and structures can arise and change occurs autonomously. People work more independent and are proactive and the organization fully relies on the behavior and strength of its employees, whereby the leading managers need to arouse inspiration, energy and self–confidence of employees in order to receive positive results. Interventions that are likely to be used in this change process are open space meetings, dialogues and discussions and self–steering teams. Influencing factors are the wants and needs as well as the strengths of people. Generally speaking does the leading head of the change process need to monitor the process and evaluate which factors influence change. While giving people sufficient free space to express oneself, it is also necessary to remove obstacles and start initiatives (De Caluwe & Vermaak, 2004).

De Caluwe's and Vermaak's change strategy is a valuable tool to avoid resistance and to find the best suitable change strategy when wanting to implement change by means of certain operations in a company. As the result of this project will be a communication plan, De Caluwe's and Vermaak's theory will be used as strategy for the client in order to avoid resistance of the suppliers when presenting the actions of the communication plan. Therefore the core concept of change strategy plays a significant role as it helps to reach the overall objective of designing a communication plan about the travel behavior of Russian tourists in Barcelona which will be used by the client to advice their suppliers about what needs to be adjusted in matters of products and services in order to adapt accordingly to the Russian tourist behavior. With the help of this theory the client will be able to know how to avoid resistance.

2.4 Relation between the Core Concepts
Tourism is one of the industries where many factors play significant and influential roles which are assimilated and which can lead to successive change, meaning that if one factor changes, another aspect changes as a result of it. A changing consumer demand and tourist behavior means that that the supply of tourism needs to be adapted to the demands as well as the behavior in order to successfully provide an adequate tourism product (Van Vuuren, 2011). Tourists have certain motivations and expectations when they travel and certain behavioral pattern. All of these can change in a life span of a tourist as he experiences new things and matures in different ways. As an entrepreneur in the tourism industry it is therefore of utmost importance to know one’s target market and the behavioral pattern to keep up the competitive advantage and provide the best suitable product (Isaac, 2009). Within these regards it is clear that the concept of travel behavior is connected to
change as there is constant change that is influenced by many factors (economy, environment, etc.),
but that also influences other significant sectors (Van Vuuren, 2011). The connection to the core
concept of communication plan consists in the fact that the results of researching the travel behavior
as well as the change strategies that are likely to be applied by the suppliers of ‘When In Barcelona’ will
assist in establishing the advise for the client by means of a communication plan. This communication
plan will provide ‘When In Barcelona’ with the actions that need to be done to solve their management
problem.

3. Research Part
The objective of this research is to gain a deep insight about the travel behavior of Russian tourists in
Barcelona as well as the attitude of entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry of Barcelona towards
Russian tourist. This will be used to find out where the problem of the rather negative relationship
between suppliers and Russian tourists is and. The knowledge, that will be acquired in this research,
will be used to inform them about valuable and important information to adjust their products and
services accordingly. The focus of the project at hand lies on answering the central research questions
and the corresponding sub questions, which were developed in regards to the management problem
and the objectives of the project and the objectives of the research mentioned above. The first
research question deals with the behavior of Russian tourists in Barcelona. After the domain of travel
behavior has been researched in general in the theoretical framework, it was adapted by means of the
models of Schmoll and Mathieson and Wall about travel behavior. Furthermore did the theoretical
framework help to evolve the sub questions for the first research question. These questions will be
answered by means of analyzing online data, such as studies about Russian tourists in general as well
as specified to Barcelona, as well as newspaper articles and already existing interviews with experts in
that field.

Research Question 1:

What is the travel behavior of Russian tourists in Barcelona?

- What is the tourist profile of Russian tourists?
- What stimulates Russians tourists to travel to Barcelona?
- Which external variables influence Russian tourists when travelling to Barcelona?
- Which characteristics and features does Barcelona have as tourism destination that attracts
  Russian tourists?
- In what way do Russian tourists differ from tourists from other countries?

The second research question concerns the relationship between employees that work in the tourism
industry in Barcelona and the Russian tourists. In order to support the second main research question
and come to a more clarified answer to it, the according sub questions help to structure the research in
a more proper way and are helpful to lead into the right direction and gain deeper insight into the
relationship between employees in the tourism industry in Barcelona and Russian tourists.
Research Question 2:

What is the relationship between entrepreneurs in the tourism sector in Barcelona and Russian tourists?

- What do current entrepreneurs know about Russian tourists in Barcelona?
- How are entrepreneurs in the hospitality sector of Barcelona affected by Russian tourists?
- How do those entrepreneurs perceive Russian tourists?
- What do they need to consider in regards of Russian travel behavior in order to change and adapt their tourism products?

Even though the two research questions do not include questions regarding the core concept of communication plan and change strategy, it must be clarified that the results of these two questions conjoined will lead to significant information that is needed for the communication plan.

3.1 Methodological Justification

The following chapters describe the set up of the research project in detail and present all important steps that have been executed.

3.1.1 Research Strategy and Design

The research strategy of the current thesis project was conducted in the framework of qualitative research in terms of a case study for diverse reasons. Due to the fact that a case study is an empirical inquiry it leads to an investigation of a phenomenon which is contemporary and in its’ real-life context. After doing an extensive literature review on the core concepts of this project it became clear that the best way to approach and conduct the field research is to utilize a variety of data, excluding numerical data. Written documents, interviews and observations of situations and persons as well as field notes and audio and video recordings can be examples for the data in qualitative research (Murray, 2009). Due to the fact that the research project at hand was executed in order to achieve a deeper understanding of, generally speaking, the Russian travel market in Barcelona as well as generate a new communication plan for the currently rather ignorant entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry in Barcelona towards Russian tourists, a qualitative approach and, more specific, a case study is the best research strategy. Murray (2009) defines a case study as “the intensive, in-depth study of a specific individual or specific context or situation. The real strength of the case study method is its potential to illuminate a ‘case’ in great depth and detail and to place that case in a ‘real’ context”. The best situation for applying a case study is when using descriptive or explanatory (why and how questions) questions in the research in order to obtain an understanding of people or events at first hand (Yin, 2006). In this context an example for a descriptive question would be ‘what is the tourist profile of Russian tourists’ and an example for an explanatory question would be ‘How are entrepreneurs in the hospitality sector of Barcelona affected by Russian tourists?’.

The cases that are studied in this project include Russian tourists in Barcelona and the hospitality industry in Barcelona and can therefore be considered as a multiple case study as the study researched two phenomena of people. This also provided more space to compare and gain a wider scope of data. A theoretical perspective in the very beginning of the study helped to gain insight into the theoretical
concepts of the research project, such as travel behavior, change strategy and communication plan, and has built a foundation for the field research.

3.1.2 Methods of Data Collection
As the research at hand was conducted as a case study it speaks for itself that the study is exploratory in its’ nature and is therefore useful for developing a new model, a communication plan for the entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry in Barcelona, in this case. By means of a case study the behavioral and social scientific research could be undertaken in order to gain an in-depth insight into the concepts of this research (Yin, 1994). Due to the fact that the case study method allows the researcher to use several methods of data collection, the methods of data collection in this research involved a documentary analysis to assist finding out about the travel behavior of Russian tourists as well as interviews with entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry in Barcelona, such as restaurant owners, hotel employees, employees in a vineyard, but also experts that work with Russian tourists in Barcelona. As for the fact that Russia’s population is that large, it would not be valid enough to interview only a few of them. Hence the research about Russian tourists was conducted in form of analyzing documents and literature while the research about the situation and attitude of entrepreneurs towards Russian tourists in Barcelona was conducted by means of personal interviews in order to get a true insight into the real problems that are being faced. The documentary analysis was used to answer the first research question including the sub questions. Semi-structured interviews, mostly in English, have been performed with seven respondents that were selected from the suppliers of ‘When In Barcelona’ and the interviews lasted from 20 to 60 minutes.

3.1.3 Selection of Data Sources
Within the case study approach of this thesis project the data sources were selected by means of the purposive sampling method, which means that the data sources that are researched cannot be considered as representative of a whole population, but is rather utilized in order to provide information for quite specific needs or purposes (Murray, 2009). Furthermore the purposive sampling method entails that the participants of the research, the respondents are preselected according to relevant criteria. Within the field research of this research project the target group for interviews consisted of seven entrepreneurs from the hospitality industry in Barcelona. Compared to other researches, the investigated sample is quite small and the researcher judges whom to investigate. The main purpose hereby is to focus on certain characteristics of the group of interest in order to answer the research questions in the best possible manner. In this case the criteria for selecting the most relevant participants include the following factors:

- Work in cooperation with the client ‘When In Barcelona’
- Work with an international tourist market
- Located in Barcelona or close surrounding
- Spanish nationality
- Personal customer service and interaction

As the advisory report is a product for the client ‘When In Barcelona’ it is primarily important that the respondents work in cooperation with them to be able to address them at firsthand about potential changes. The respondents should work with an international group of tourists because it provides them with more knowledge about different types of tourists from different cultures as well as lets them
compare and recognize certain differences. Due to the fact that the study concentrates on tourism market in Barcelona, one of the criteria is to be located in Barcelona. Personal customer interaction is of highest importance as only people who work with Russian tourists directly are able to build a strong opinion based on real experiences and not just prejudices. Due to the fact that ‘When In Barcelona’ works with different types of entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry in Barcelona, the participants consist of restaurant employees (managers and waiters), hotel employees (guest relations, receptionists), apartment owners that rent out apartments specifically to tourists and a vineyard owner. Thereby the first contact was established via the client in order to explain the importance of the project for the client as well as for the potential valuable result of it for the respondents themselves. With the purposive sampling method it was reassured that the respondents that were selected were likely to supply the most valuable answers about Russian tourists and their experiences with them. Initially it was planned to interview ten participants, but due to time limitations from side of the participants, as high season in Barcelona was starting, the number went down to seven. However, a good level of saturation was reached with the seven respondents and provided enough information to continue. Finally the group of respondents consisted of two restaurant employees, two hotel employees, one vineyard owner and two apartment owners. During the interviews the anonymity was reassured, but to keep a personal touch, different first names were used when talking about the respondents.

3.1.4 Operationalisation of Core Concepts

As the interview guide was prepared in close accordance with the operationalization of the core concepts it assured that the validity of the interview is accurate, meaning that it will be geared towards answering the research questions. To be able to prepare an interview guide as an instrument for measurement the core concepts of travel behavior and change strategy were operationalized. The operationalization of travel behavior is based on the models of Schmoll and Mathieson and Wall explained in further detail in chapter 2. The combination of those two models resulted in the following operationalization of travel behavior:

- **Travel stimuli** (advertising, promotion, travel literature, suggestions/ reports from other travelers, travel trade suggestions)

- **Personal and social determinants of travel behavior** (socio-economic status, personality features, social influences and aspirations, attitudes and values, desires & needs, expectations, motivations)

- **External variables** (confidence in travel trade intermediary, image of destination/ service, previous travel experience, assessment of objective/ subjective risks, constraints of time, cost, etc.)

- **Characteristics and feature of service destination** (cost/ value relations, attractions/ amenities offered, range of travel opportunities, quality/ quantity of travel information, type of travel arrangement offered)

- **Tourist profile** (including the age, education, income, attitudes, previous experience and motivation)

- **Trip features** (distance, trip duration and perceived risk of the area visited)
The operationalization of the core concept of change strategy was established on the basis of De Caluwe and Vermaak’s change paradigm in order to find out how change is likely to be introduced in the supplier’s organizations and was solely used to advise the client in the end about how to remove obstacles and avoid resistance. The operationalization resulted in the following:

- Yellow–print thinking (uniting of everybody’s interests)
- Blue–print thinking (formulating clear goals/results)
- Red–print thinking (stimulation of employees through rewards/penalties)
- Green–print thinking (collective learning situations)
- White–print thinking (let employees identify the need for change on their own)
- Necessity for change
- Type of interventions

The interview guide was developed on the basis of the operationalized core concepts in order to obtain the most relevant and valuable information from the respondents. Due to the fact that semi-structured interviews were used the researcher was flexible in the order of questions and was able to change and add more questions during an interview. This was useful for obtaining the most valuable and relevant information as one could adapt to each sample of respondents accordingly.

### 3.1.5 Methods of Data Analysis

Data Analysis means to put together certain facts and figures in a systematic way in order to be able to utilize the acquired data to approach the research questions. The data analysis for the research project at hand was conducted in several stages in coherence with the research literature by Boeije (2010). Seven personal interviews were executed in which entrepreneurs from different organizations in the hospitality industry in Barcelona were interviewed about Russian tourists, their perceptions, attitude towards them and current interactions, etc. These interviews were transcribed to obtain the data in written format and systematically divided into reasonable open codes. Thereby same codes were given to certain data that is meaningful for the research and that is similar to other codes. Once the process of open coding was finalized and an analysis of open codes and the distribution into categories with umbrella codes has been arranged, the axial coding of the data started. While in the open coding the focus lies on defining concepts and categories in order to build the founding units of the analysis, the axial coding concentrates rather on utilizing these concepts and categories to confirm the accuracy of the responses and to distinguish what the relation between the concepts and categories is. The approach of axial coding is simply a rather direct one to reassure that all the significant aspects are identified (Boeije, 2009). A deductive approach thereby correlates the major categories that were established within the operationalization of the core concepts. To visualize the coding a table was developed in appendix II. To finalize the data analysis a selective coding as well as an exploratory analysis was conducted in order to define the relationships between the core concepts.

### 3.2 Literature Review

The chapter at hand presents the results that have derived from the literature review. Literature review is conducted in order to build a foundation for the field research that follows. Webster and Watson (2002) mention that literature review “...creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge” and is therefore used to justify certain ideas that contribute to the further research. A quite important aspect
of literature review can be lead back to the fact that it creates a better understanding to phenomena that are being researched. Thereby it assists in providing a firm ground in theoretical terms for the research as well as it determines how validated the research problem actually is. There are three important steps within literature review; the input, the processing and the output. The input stage below mainly presents the findings about Russian tourists in Barcelona that derived from within this research included the reviewing of documents such as newspaper articles, prior studies about Russian tourists, online publications and interviews. Thereby a focus lies on documents that were rather current and applicable to the research. In the processing stage these documents were sorted and analyzed, while the output stage concentrates on summarizing the analyzed data that is important for the research. In the research case at hand the literature review describes the findings that derived from the literature review and mainly deals with Russian tourists in Barcelona as well as their effect on the hospitality industry in Barcelona. Within the past couple of years the amount of Russian tourists in Barcelona has been increasing constantly and the hospitality industry of Barcelona is slowly acknowledging the importance of this group of tourists and has started to implement actions to attract more Russian tourists to Catalonia’s capital. In order to evaluate the literature review Schmoll’s model of travel behavior was used as guidance for the organization of the data. The first research question “What is the travel behavior of Russian tourists in Barcelona?” is closely connected to the literature review as the results answer this research question as well as the according sub questions by means of the analysis of the literature review. Due to that fact the sub questions of the first research question will be analyzed and answered in the following sub chapters one by one. The selective code of Profile of Russian tourists in Barcelona as established after the open and axial coding of the prior conducted interviews and resulted in the sub aspects of travel stimuli, personal & social determinants, communication, comparison to other cultures, external variables, characteristics and features of service destination, influence of Russian tourists on the hospitality industry of Barcelona, influence of children/ Russians in their 20’s and 30’s as well as reason for differences. Thereby Schmoll’s model of travel behavior was used to segment certain aspects, such as travel stimuli, personal and social determinants, external variables as well as characteristics and features of the service destination which show the coherence within the applied model of decision making process of tourists. Again it builds a steady foundation and helps answering the second research question. The chapter at hand provides analyses as well as answers to each research sub question as well as a final answer to the main research question.

3.2.1 What is the travel behavior of Russian tourists in Barcelona?

**What is the tourist profile of Russian tourists?**

**Analysis:** According to the Catalan News Agency (2014) there was an increase of 22.1% of Russian visitors from 2012 to 2013 amount a total of 233.823 Russian tourists that stayed in hotels in Barcelona in the past year and approximately 800.000 Russian tourists passed Barcelona (Catalan News Agency, 2014 & Trindade, 2013). Barcelona’s tourism board stated that Russians have spent about 146.6 million Euros with credit cards in 2012. While being the sixth largest nation visiting Barcelona after France, the UK, Germany, Italy and the USA, they are accounted for being the highest spenders in Barcelona in a per day ratio. Russian tourists spend 125€ daily and stay 8 – 10 nights in Barcelona. The Russian tourist is likely to be a repeating guest who mostly stays in four or five star hotels and
mainly stays in the centre of Barcelona (Angles, 201). In comparison to the last year this year started out very well with a 37.7% increase in January compared to the number of arrivals from Russia to Barcelona in January 2013 (Benvenuty, 2014). Several reasons contribute to the increasing number of Russian tourists in Barcelona. Amongst these one of the most important one is the simplification of visa regulations for Russian citizens travelling to Spain. In 2013 the policies for obtaining a visa to go to Spain were simplified and now can citizens that already have applied for a visa can prolong their visas for one more year automatically, which is called a ‘multi-entry visa’ (Arias, 2013). Due to the high increase of applications for Spanish visas (a 23.4% increase in 2012) the Russian consulate hired additional employees and increased the duration for issuing of a visa from 7 days to 4 days only (Rivas, 2013). In addition to that the Russian government was collaborating with the EU trying to eliminate the obligations for obtaining visas to travel to countries such as Spain, but due to the political incongruities with the Ukraine the negotiations for this were suspended in March this year (Anglés, 2014). The simplification of granting visas even goes a step further this year as the so–called ‘Visado Premium’ will be inaugurated meaning that staff of the consulate will go ‘door to door’ to the citizen, that have applied for a Spanish visa, in order to collect the documents needed for the application. This action was launched as there is about 5–8% of the population that would be able to afford and is willing to go to Spain for vacation, but does not do so due to the difficulties of obtaining a visa (Benvenuty, 2014).

Furthermore the increase of direct flights between different destinations in Russia and Barcelona made it more attractive for Russian tourists to go to Barcelona. By now Barcelona is connected to a versatile offer of destinations by direct flights such as Novosibirsk, Khabarovsk, Kazan and Kaliningrad apart from the main cities Moscow and St. Petersburg (Ros, 2014). This year Barcelona is addressing new markets from the former Soviet Union and offers direct flights to Moldavia, Kazakhstan and Armenia (Sans, 2014). During low season there are 14 weekly flights connecting Barcelona to Russia while in high season this number increases to 200 weekly flights (Benvenuty, 2014).

As stereotypes in Barcelona still indicate that only rich Russians come to Barcelona to go shopping or spend some days in luxury hotels, research has proven that this stereotype is not true, especially due to the constantly increasing amount of Russians from the social middle class arriving. To clarify the personal and social determinants of travel behavior it is important to understand factors like the socio-economic status, personality features, attitudes and social influences. According to a study conducted by the provincial administration of Barcelona in collaboration with the Serhs group states that about 25% of the Russian tourists in Barcelona are the complete opposite of being rich and spending only about 59€ per day during their visits while 27% of Russian visitors have a daily spending above average spending 177€ accounting to an average daily spending of 125€ (Spanish News Today, 2013). Thereby the Russian tourists in Barcelona can be divided into two main tourist groups: the ones from 35 – 54 years old that have been to Barcelona before, always staying in four or five star hotels. Their main reasons for going to the Catalan capital are the history, shopping, culture as well as leisure. On the contrary there are the tourists that are younger than 35 coming to Barcelona for the first time and mainly attracted by beach and sand holidays. Jaume Garau, the person in charge for the study about Russian tourists in Barcelona, explained that the half of Russian visitors have a monthly salary less than 940€. About 56% of the Russian tourists in Barcelona are from only ten cities in Russia, namely Moscow, St. Petersburg, Krasnodar, Kazan, Omsk, Volgograd, Chelyabinsk, Samara, Astrahan and...
Yekaterinburg alluding to the fact that the 15 million Russian citizen that travel abroad do that due to better connections and higher incomes than people from smaller towns. Barcelona’s Tourism Board thereby sees the need in having to concentrate more on promotional activities in the cities mentioned above (Gutiérrez & López Alonso, 2013). Due to the fact that still 96% of Russian tourists plan their trips through traditional tour operators and mostly pay their travels in cash one can assume that Russians are still somewhat skeptical in concern of security (Spier, 2013). By booking their trips through tour operators they can assure that they do not have to worry about any additional problems, but get everything from flights, hotels and excursions already planned out for them. This kind of behavior also shows that they are comfortable and rather psychocentric travelers, which means that they prefer to go to familiar places and to have everything planned instead of experiencing something new (Travel Industry Dictionary). Thereby 60% of visitors come to Barcelona to visit the adjacent Catalan coasts while 38% are attracted by Barcelona for the history 35% choose Barcelona because they can combine a broad variety of shopping opportunities with climate. However, Russia’s middle class is changing into becoming a lot more interested in cultural activities, but prejudices about Russian’s coming to Barcelona to shop along Paseo de Gracia still exist. Anastasia, a Russian tourist that was interview on the streets of Barcelona, was asked if she came there for shopping. Her reaction is a face of dislike and she comments “No, to visit museums and the beach”. Another Russian family, the Cheltsovs, were interviewed about their motivations to go to Barcelona and they clarify that they are not “…the typical Russian tourists you would think of in Barcelona. We come here because we want to enjoy the culture and because we are curious” (Gayá, 2012). Comments like those show that the Russian tourist is changing and becoming more and more interested in culture. However, since Russian tourists started to appear increasingly in Barcelona only about 5 years ago, where the majority was interested in exploring the luxury stores on the main shopping street, the prejudices are still set in peoples’ minds. And today’s Russian tourists become a bit offended hearing that.

Generally speaking does the Russian tourist travel with a partner, especially Russians from the upper social class, with the family (the majority of the middle class) and with friends. While the upper class is attracted to Barcelona because of the shopping facilities and cultural activities as well as the local cuisine, the middle class is more interested in the sun and beach tourism (Gutiérrez & López Alonso, 2013). Generally speaking Barcelona is accounted for offering a great mix of attributes for a tourism destination; a broad range of cultural and historical attributes combined with a good climate, beaches as well as mountains and accommodation offers for every type of traveler (Jones, 2013).

Apart from all the different positive aspects that attract Russian tourists to come to Barcelona there are several factors that bother Russians when staying in the Catalan capital. The fact that there is not enough customer/ tourist care in their language bothers 48.7% of travelers in Barcelona as they prefer having guides or hotel employees that are “someone of their own mentality” says Irina Churay, a translator working with Russians in Barcelona (Llewelyn Leach, 2013). Additional aspects include the high prices outside the hotels (28.4%) and the procedures for granting a visa (24.1%) that Russian tourists in Barcelona complain about (Piacente, 2013). The social class in Russia’s society plays an important role and it is known that Russians find the reflection of wealth and power as vital to demonstrate their social class in any possible way. Hofstede (1984) mentions that nations living in a country with a high difference between social classes leads citizens wanting to belong to a higher social class in order to be able to have a higher status in their society. Due to the fact that Russia is a
country with a powerful, but considerably small percentage of rich people compared to the high number of people living below the average income, Russians see it as significant to show their status and power by all matters (Hofstede, 2001). In connection with that, travelling abroad is seen as a status of high social class amongst Russians and Russians are willing to invest into being able to have a higher recognition due to their social status (Solomon, 2012). Therefore Barcelona is not only attractive for Russian tourists due to the destination attributes mentioned earlier, but also because it is seen as “trendy” at the moment and is popular among Russians to there and hence contributes to the social status symbol. In addition to that they can go shopping for luxury brands in Barcelona for a much more reasonable price in comparison with Russia. “Fine feathers ought to make fine birds” is a Russian saying and focuses on people’s outward appearance, what brands they are wearing and how you look like (Brú, 2013). On the one hand side Russian tourists are attracted to go to Barcelona to go shopping, to spend a versatile vacation without restrictions; while on the other hand side they are watching out for money preferring to go shopping in Barcelona than in Moscow for example. The expectations that Russian tourists have when coming to Barcelona include spending a laid–back vacation and receiving the best service in a warm climate. In addition to that Russians are considered as quiet loyal people; if they like on tourist destination and have a satisfying and pleasant stay, the will return. Hoteliers in Barcelona know that Russian tourists are more demanding than other nationalities in regards of service, exclusivity and a broad offer of activities, but by now they also know that they are worth the effort (Jones, 2013).

Answer: The profile of a tourist consists of several aspects; demographic characteristics of a tourist, the socio–economic status, social influences, attitudes, motivations, desires and expectations. Thereby it can be concluded that there are two main travelling groups from Russia; the elderly generation of 35 – 54 years, whereby a majority has been to Barcelona before, and the group of Russian tourists that is younger than 35 are the two main Russian tourists groups. While the older generations prefer to stay in luxury hotels during their trips the younger ones as well as families with children prefer to stay in rental apartments or 3 star hotels. The average daily spending of Russian tourists amounts to 125€ per person whereby 25% of the total Russian tourists in Barcelona spend only 59€ per day and 27% spend 177€ per day and more. The majority of Russian tourists travels for leisure reasons with the partner, as a family or in a group of friends. Russians are motivated to go to Barcelona due to the combination of several aspects; warm climate, historical sites, culture, shopping and the Spanish lifestyle. Russians are people that have a quite skeptical nature and are careful with new trusting new people, but are in general very interested in exploring Barcelona for the above mentioned mixture of sites and not just for shopping as prejudices would include. They stay about 8–10 days in Barcelona and are the sixth largest nation travelling to Barcelona. Russian tourists expect to receive good service for what they pay and, especially nowadays, travel to Barcelona to escape the political dissonances that are taking place in Russia and to enjoy the unconcerned Spanish lifestyle for a while. There are a few aspects that Russians do not like about Barcelona or respectively desire to have changed. For once it is the visa regulations that hinders about 5–8% of Russia’s population to travel to Spain. In addition to that they wish for more Russian speaking personnel in order to receive better customer care in their own language as the majority of Russian tourists does not speak English nor Spanish. The third aspect they desire to be different are the prices outside of their hotels or accommodations. In contrast to the prejudices that exist about Russian tourists regarding their wealth, it is significant to mention that the Russian travelling middle class is constantly increasing.
Furthermore it is important to mention that Russians consider traveling abroad as a symbol for social status and are thereby influenced by their own community.

**What stimulates Russians tourists to travel to Barcelona?**

**Analysis:** Spain is one of the most popular destinations of Russian tourists next to Turkey, Greece and Egypt. Thereby about 70% of the total Russian tourists travelling to Spain stay in Catalonia, and more specifically Barcelona. The three main tour operators for the Russian market with a seat of Spain are Natalie Tours, Tez Tours and TUI and work in cooperation with Russian travel agencies to attract Russian tourists as well as provide them with the best possible travel experience in Barcelona. Generally speaking Russian tourists are considered as being quite affected by promotion (Benvenuty, 2014). Therefore, if destination promotion is carried out properly and is supported by a strong marketing campaign, Russian tourists are very likely to “buy”. Factors such as contact with the media in Russia, articles in magazine as well as using celebrities for representatives of a destination are valuable to pitch a destination like Barcelona to Russian tourists. Barcelona’s tourism board is aware of that and conducted ten promotional activities in Russia last year especially aiming at wealthy tourists. Not only social networks (especially Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) are being used for promotional reasons, but also innovative actions like the campaign ‘Catalonia. Like. Share’ with which ambassadors, chosen through an application platform online, represent Catalonia as a tourist destination with promotion on trucks and trailers. One of the main aims of the promotional activities is to involve the society of Catalonia including businesses and organizations as well as citizens as first hand representatives (Espasa, 2012). Due to the fact that the Tourism Board of Barcelona is realizing and accepting that Russian tourists are currently one of the most positively influential nations in Barcelona, certain products are starting to be adapted to address the Russian tourist community in a better way. The Tourism Board as well as the association ‘Amics del Passeig de Gracia’ and the ‘Confederación de Comercio de Catalunya (CCC)’ have created brochures printed in Russian including information about what Barcelona has to offer on cultural and business terms and about what Russians like most in Barcelona; history, culture and shopping information amongst others (Trindade, 2013). A milestone has been set by Catalonia’s government and the Tourism Board of Barcelona and the importance of Russia as a tourism destination has been identified. Pere Duran, the General director of the Barcelona’s Tourism Board mentioned: “It is useless to invest a single euro looking for tourists in the Spanish market; we prefer to look for them in markets with a higher purchasing power” (Catalan News Agency, 2013).

**Answer:** Concerning the stimuli that influence Russian tourists to travel to Barcelona involve several marketing campaigns that have been specifically elaborated for the Russian market in and that were held in Russia in the past year. Travel literature in Russian exists about Barcelona and is helpful to inform Russians about everything they need to know about the city. The first milestones were placed and the promotion will be increase in the future to make sure that the Russian market stays with Barcelona.
Which external variables influence Russian tourists when travelling to Barcelona?

**Analysis:** Taking a closer look at the external variables that affect Russian tourists when travelling to Barcelona, an outstanding fact is that 96% of Russians book their travels via traditional tour operators (http://blog.eatb.es/blog/russian-tourists-love-barcelona-and-catalonia/). This aspect shows that Russians are still quite new tourists as they started traveling about 20 years ago, when the Soviet Union did not exist anymore. While tourists from countries like Germany or France mostly book their holidays online and individually, Russian tourists are more skeptical and have more trust in traditional tour operators that plan everything from flight to hotel to excursions (Gutiérrez & López Alonso, 2013).

All in all Barcelona has a good image in Russia and in whole Europe for “being the most cosmopolitan, modern and avant-garde city in Spain”. Alina Laitsava, a Russian tourist that comes to Barcelona for the third time already explains *“We like the city, the weather, the people…and the stores. Over here everything is quite upbeat. In Russia the whole world is very concerned about the fact if the Euro rises, if the Ruble falls. The best for the spirit is to spend a few days in Barcelona.”* (Benvenuty, 2014). This comment alludes to the idea that Russians go to Barcelona to escape from the current political problems and the daily routine to enjoy Barcelona’s great attributes. Due to daily flights from Moscow to Barcelona and increasingly more flights during high season a trip to Barcelona does not involve big constraints of time and it is even worthwhile to go for a few days only with a flight duration of only about 4 hours and flight costs from 150€.

**Answer:** Due to the fact that Russians are still relatively new and inexperienced tourists, the majority of 96% book their vacation through a traditional tour operator. Barcelona is ‘trendy’ in a way for Russian people at the moment and has a good reputation due to its diverse combination of destination features. It is a symbol for the social status to travel to popular destinations like that. The attractive flight connections from ten cities in Russia to Barcelona and new opening routes facilitate the arrivals and avoids constraints of travel times.

Which characteristics and features does Barcelona have as tourism destination that attracts Russian tourists?

**Analysis:** Another important part that is significant to investigate about to know more about Russian tourists includes information about the characteristics and features that Barcelona has to offer as a tourist destination. Barcelona has a broad variety of attractions and amenities that cover everything any tourists could wish for. An immense amount of cultural facilities such as museums, exhibition centers, architectural milestones like Gaudi’s Sagrada Familia, Casa Batllo or La Pedrera fill the city for art lovers, historians and give the city a special vibe. The shopping fans can enjoy several main shopping streets from luxurious and famous brands to local and unique boutiques. All in all Barcelona offers a great combination that is appreciated by Russian tourists a lot; warm climate, beach, mountains, culture, history, shopping and Spanish lifestyle.

As the Tourism Board of Barcelona is acknowledging the importance of the increasing arrivals of Russian tourists, more direct and frequent flights are offered to and from Russia with a wider range of cities. The Russian tourism market is still quite new, but entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry are seeing the urge to change and adapt to this market.
**Answer:** The broad range of accommodation facilities can satisfy the needs and wishes of every type of tourist in Barcelona; from cheap hostels, over rental apartments to high luxury hotels. Accordingly are Russian tourists able to find the accommodation that fits their standards best in terms of price and standards. As mentioned earlier there is a large variety of attractions offered from cultural and historical sites, museums, exhibition centers, architecture and events. The various tour operators that work for Russia in Spain, about 50, sell travel packages that include flights, accommodations and excursions as well as provide Russian tourists with travel information about Barcelona. These kind of services facilitate the travel planning for Russian tourists. Even though Russian tourists would prefer to have cheaper prices outside of the hotel, the majority goes on vacation without restrictions and acclimatizes to the own budget in terms of accommodation and spending.

**In what way do Russian tourists differ from tourists from other countries?**

After conducting the interviews it was clear that Russian tourists are not really comparable with tourists from other countries. Even though a few aspects can be compared, there is almost always something that does not fit. Russians were compared with Arabic tourists due to the high demanding side. However, Arabic people are quite likely to speak good English. They were compared to French tourists as those also like to have their own privacy and their poor English language skills, but the difference is that French people tend to be more easy-going in precarious situations of miscommunication or misunderstanding. Other than the French Russian tourists react in a defensive way and get frustrated in situations where miscommunication is a part of. The comparison with elderly German people was connected to the conservative and rather strict nature of both. Lastly Russian tourists were compared to tourists from other Eastern European countries. Nevertheless, these are more open-minded. The fact that all of the comparisons had negative connotations shows that the suppliers are still in a phase where Russian tourists are perceived in a wrong way.

**What is the travel behavior of Russian tourists in Barcelona?**

To sum up and to answer the first research question, the research resulted in a broad picture of the travel behavior of Russian tourists in Barcelona and delivered some interesting results. To conclude and to answer the first main research question it needs to be clarified that there are two main age groups of Russian tourists in Barcelona; 35–54 years old and tourists that are younger than 35. Russian tourists stay about 8–10 days in Barcelona and spend 125€ daily on average. They are interested in going to Barcelona due to the combination of the facilities that it offers; history, culture, warm climate, Spanish lifestyle and shopping. Russian tourists expect the best service possible when they travel and travelling abroad is considered to be a symbol for social class. A few things such as visa regulations, prices outside of the hotels as well as a lack of Russian speaking personnel are seen as negative aspects by Russian tourists in Barcelona. Younger Russians prefer to stay in apartments or 3 star hotels while elderly Russians are more likely to travel without restrictions and spend more money on a luxurious accommodation. They get stimulated by tour operators that collaborate between Spain and Russia and promotional campaigns that emanate from Barcelona’s Tourism Board and that are specifically addressed to the Russian market. The image of Barcelona as a tourist destination plays a significant role in the travel behavior as Russians tend to prefer destinations like Barcelona that are popular amongst their nation and that are easy accessible.
3.3 Field Research

In order to be able to answer the second main research question ("What is the relationship between entrepreneurs in the tourism sector in Barcelona and Russian tourists?") suppliers of ‘When In Barcelona’ were interviewed about their current relationships with Russian tourists. The combination of the sub questions results in the answer for the second main research question. The interpretative analysis at hand depicts the results that were found during the field research focusing on the personal interviews that were conducted with employees from the hospitality industry in Barcelona in regards of Russian tourists. The conclusions were drawn from the coding process of the data analysis, which resulted in the following selective codes: Profile or Russian tourists in Barcelona, relationship of suppliers of ‘When In Barcelona’ with Russian tourists in Barcelona and Change. Per selective code there are several axial codes that will be presented in this analysis. While the document analysis was rather focused on answering the first research question, the interpretative analysis concentrates more on answering the second research question.

What do suppliers currently know about Russian tourists in Barcelona?

**Analysis**: Travel stimuli of tourists concerns what stimulates them to travel to a destination. The results show that the suppliers believe that mouth-to-mouth marketing is a valuable promotional factor between Russian tourists. Due to the fact that the majority of the suppliers does not have specifically Russian promotional advertising yet, they think that this is one of the strongest promotional activities at the moment which leads to the assumption that Russians trust suggestions or reports from other travelers. Respondent Donald mentioned that a small article was published about his work place in a magazine in Russia addressed to Russians, which brought quite an amount of Russian guests. The respondents from the accommodation sector were of the opinion that Russians find them through pages like airbnb.com or the rather luxurious ones through the trust or previous experiences with the hotel brand. Other answers showed that Russians also just do spontaneous walk-ins if they are attracted by the interior in case of restaurants, while Bianca, the apartment-owner pointed out that she is thinking about translating her apartment offers on certain websites into Russian. However there was no real necessity for that so far as Russian tourists have been arriving also without translation. Most of the respondents clarified that it would make sense to translate certain promotional aspects into Russian, but all of the respondents seemed quite satisfied with the results that they have at the moment regarding the amount of Russian tourists that arrive without it. The answers allude to the fact that the suppliers see it as additional work or extra effort to help attract more tourists.

The interviews resulted in a relatively surprising opinion about the personal and social determinants of Russian tourists. The suppliers answered quite explicit about the average age of Russian tourists. While the majority is composed of middle-aged tourists in their 40’s and 50’s there is an uprising age group; the younger ones in their 20’s and 30’s, that are going to Barcelona for vacation in an increasing amount. Thereby certain characteristics about Russian tourists were inquired and it emerged in a division between the younger ones and the character traits of the middle aged tourists. Younger Russians travelling to Barcelona are considered as more open and more interested.
Furthermore they prefer to stay in apartments or cheaper hotels and belong to the lower middle-class, as they are more careful with money and the accommodations they stay at in order to avoid any additional costs that could occur. The fact that they are considered to be easier to assimilate with by the Spanish respondents lead to the assumption that they have more characteristics of Spanish people by means of being easy-going and a rather Western European lifestyle. Generally speaking do the Spanish suppliers believe, due to prejudices, that Russians that travel earn more money and spend it without thinking.

“...hmm I wouldn’t say wealthy, but you can see that they have...more money to spend and that they are doing a nice vacation without any restrictions in any way...” (Donald, personal communication, 24 April, 2014).

Thereby it can also be concluded that the middle class is quite careful with money while the upper class does not care, so one can say that the suppliers see a difference in characteristics as well as behavior with money between the two age groups.

“Hm, I guess middle class or lower middle class…It’s pretty clear that they are careful with their money; when the apartments are cleaned you can see that they buy groceries and cook in the apartment, which is a sign for travelling on a low budget...and also the fact that they are staying in an apartment and not a hotel shows that…” (Bianca, personal communication, April 30, 2014).

Analyzing the communication of Russian tourists and the suppliers of ‘When In Barcelona’ it becomes quite obvious that communications plays a significant role in the negative implications of the relationship of the two cases. A quite surprising result was that the majority of Russian tourists that come to Barcelona either have relatively bad English or Spanish skills or none at all which makes the communication a difficult part. Not only do Russians prefer languages that are similar to Russian, which makes them feel more secure, but they also react in a rude way as an act of defense if the communication is not working. The Spanish suppliers try to handle this problem with humor and mention things like the following when asked about how situations of miscommunications are handled:

“Basically with hands and feet! Each time it was a terrible situation trying to tell people about wines, about the vineyard and so on! Mostly one out of, I don’t know, maybe 1 out of 5 people speaks English, that is sufficient to communicate, but that’s not always like that…” (Alejandro, personal communication, May 5, 2014).

The fact that Russian tourists get frustrated and insecure and even dismiss situations abruptly when communication is not working properly implies that they are ashamed in a way, but that they are still trying to hide the shame due to their high level of pride. While other cultures, such as the French or Italian, can take situations as such with humor and laugh about themselves, Russian tourists see it quite strictly as a big problem.

“Yes, yes and then they get really frustrated and just leave…I don’t know, it might be some kind of insecurity...instead of a deep breath, calming down and trying to explain…” (Ana, personal communication, April 23, 2014).

In addition to that the lack of communication skills leads them to avoid any futile conversation and leads to short talks that only concern the very important information that are needed. A conversation
with a waiter in a restaurant, for example, consists of “yes” and “no” whereby experience shows that it is better not to overwhelm them with too much information about new sorts of food

“So when you explain or suggest something they look at you and just nod or shake with the head, so if you would ask “would you like bread with tomato?” they look at each other, they talk to each other and say something in Russian that you don’t get to understand and then it’s just “yeah” or “no”… ’no bread?’ – “no” (Donald, personal communication, 24 April, 2014).

As mentioned earlier a big difference is noticeable when they talk to Russian speaking staff as they appear a lot more confident and pretentious immediately. The security of being able to communicate empowers them again, not only in terms of money. The combination of poor communication and their mentality makes it difficult to gain a foothold as they have a rather ‘cold’ and contained culture as it is. Nevertheless, it has to be distinguished by age as the younger generations speak better and more English and are more open and easy-going. As mentioned earlier this must be the constantly increasing result of Westernization.

**Answer:** The knowledge of the suppliers about Russian tourists resulted in a broad range of information. The most important ones are thereby that the majority of Russian tourists in Barcelona is middle-aged (in their 40’s and 50’s), but that there is also an increase of younger Russians that arrive to Barcelona. The middle social class and the upper class are mostly represented, whereby the middle class is rather attentive with a budget and tourists from the upper class travel without restrictions. The respondents also answered that Russian tourists are increasingly coming to Barcelona and that communication is a big problem due to the lack of English and Spanish combined with their introverted nature. They often travel in couples whereby the men seem to be in charge and they travel increasingly with friends. High expectations towards service as well as the demand for the right amount of attention are common aspects. In general they segmented into the two age groups whereby elderly Russians are more conservative, contained and speak only little English. The younger generations have more knowledge in English and are more open-minded and interested. Generally speaking do the suppliers know that Russian tourists are very likely to avoid any type of futile conversation with strangers and prefer their unshared privacy. Furthermore are the suppliers well aware of the fact that Russian tourists have more patience when they notice that there is a sensitive situation including misunderstandings or miscommunication. While other cultures tend to react in a rather positive way in precarious settings, Russians tend to stay strict and serious. The suppliers reassured that the cultural differences, that themselves are not well aware of, are catalysts for complication of things.

Furthermore do the suppliers know that Russian tourists tend to be careful or skeptical in new situations (about food, languages, etc.). If they have the opportunity, Russian tourists speak more to Russian speaking employees. They trust more in them, but also complain about things that they do not like and that they cannot express in another language.

**How do the suppliers perceive Russian tourists?**

**Analysis:** When investigating how the suppliers perceive a typical Russian the majority of answers had quite negative connotations and the suppliers often seemed to be a bit ashamed to admit those answers. Reassuring comments were used to not be misunderstood too negatively.
“but don’t get me wrong, it has nothing to do with racism or so and we still all do the same very best services for them as for others!” (Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2014).

“…and I hope I don’t sound harsh or anything…” (Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2014).

“Well, that’s a difficult question…obviously each Russian is different, but I guess the one thing that seems to be similar all the time to me is that it’s hard to get to a certain casual or friendly point with…” (Bianca, personal communication, April 30, 2014).

Typical Russian tourists were described as being easy to identify in regards of their outward appearance. The fact that they seem to have a heavy energy, that they are quite reserved, demanding and skeptical makes it difficult for the suppliers to build a casual, but friendly relationship to them as they do with tourists from other countries. These kind of character traits increase the gap between Russian tourists and the suppliers and makes them alienated as well as create a distant and dismissive attitude towards them. Situations where employees ask their colleagues to handle or take over Russian guests show that they are generally speaking difficult to please due to their high demands and not everyone is able to cope with that. The suppliers prefer to work with more laid-back and simple guests that they can assimilate with and be on the same wavelength with.

“A lot of my colleagues react in a kind of negative way when they know that Russian tourists are arriving and comments like “Oh no, Russians arriving” appear” (Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2014).

“A little bit of rejection I would say…there is a phrase that we sometimes use, not offensive and not bad, but here in Spain they say a lot “Pan con pan” which means…you know eating pan con pan (bread with bread) is very stupid and we use it for people who don’t really want to think, they don’t really want to do anything new, but they rather want the usual pasta with tomato” (Donald, personal communication, 24 April, 2014).

“Not much…we always hope for fun and curious guests and, well, yeah, I’ve heard some colleagues say comments like “let’s hope for some Spanish Russians” meaning that they hope that those certain Russian tourists have accumulated to the Spanish casual and easy-going lifestyle…but in general we are happy about every guest we get!” (Alejandro, personal communication, May 5, 2014).

The quotes above show that Spanish suppliers still have not established a positive or casual relationship to Russian tourists in Barcelona yet and that antipathy exists towards them. It seems like there is a certain dislike, fear or ignorance in regards of Russian tourists and that supplier blame it on the fact that Russians are not open-minded. Their high expectations and their demanding attitudes put additional pressure on the suppliers. The result is a combination of not understanding the different mentality with the attempt to please the high expectations, desires and needs.

“M: Hmm, I guess I would say that they are quite demanding and they have high expectations when they travel.

K: What do you mean by that?
M: Well, how to explain?... I think that they think that when they spend money on something they have the power to expect a lot for it... my guess is that they think that that is how they have to behave kind of...” (Maria, personal communication, May 20, 2014).

Russian tourists are described as special customers and they seem to consider the fact of having money as a code of conduct for a predominant behavior. They like to have money and they like it even more to show that. An assumption for this behavior is that they need and want to compensate the difficult lives that they lived through during times of the Soviet Union and now want to show the world that they achieved something, be treated well and get attention.

“And in addition, a lot of them have lived through difficult times of Glasnost and Perestrojka, so maybe they are trying to compensate their time now and enjoy to the fullest.” (Maria, personal communication, May 20, 2014).

Russian tourists travel mostly in couples whereby the men are normally in charge and even if they are not the wealthiest ones they like to make the impression that they are as money is considered as a symbol of power for them. The more money they have the more predominant and the less friendly they seem to be. This was especially noticeable comparing the answers about Russian tourists from respondents in a five star hotel and luxurious restaurants with the apartment owner or employees in a three star hotel. In any case Russian tourists are described as difficult, more complicated than others and more demanding. Furthermore they like their privacy and do not want it to be intruded; they tend to stay serious and strict in the majority of contacts with Spanish employees and tend to avoid engaging into new things such as food, culture and so on. All respondents mentioned the different mentality and cultural background of Russian tourists as significant factors for the difficulties and even more the fact that they are unfamiliar with the character traits of this mentality. The respondents clarified that Russian customers are more likely to speak and express what they feel in full range to Russian speaking employees while they avoid speaking with only English or Spanish speaking staff as much as they can. Their trust into the own culture shows insecurity of being misunderstood, but also pride in terms of cooperating with the own nation. Apart from all the negative implications about Russian tourists it was mentioned that they are in a process of changing towards a more open-minded nation that adapts more and more to Western European mentalities. On the one hand side it is noticeable that especially the younger generations are changing mentalities and are more open-minded already. On the other hand side they are after all travelling abroad, but are still relatively new and inexperienced tourists that need to be supported during their process of change.

“Oh, somehow withdrawn and a bit skeptical, but I think they are also changing more and more into being more open-minded” (Alejandro, personal communication, May 5, 2014).

“Yeah, I have been talking to our Russian ‘assistant’ and she explained to me that Russians are not the most experienced tourists yet, but that a lot of them are adapting more and more to Western European standards and mentalities and of course this takes time and that it is important to come a step forward to them as well in order to help them to not being so ‘isolated’” (Alejandro, personal communication, May 5, 2014).
Comparing Russian tourists with tourists from other countries was interesting in order to see what kind of relationships the suppliers have to other cultures and if there are similar problems as with Russians. The results were quite surprising though as the respondents found similarities to other tourists, but also always a significant difference. The essence of Russians was compared with tourists from Eastern Europe, Arabics, Germans and French. Eastern Europeans in general seem to have the same character traits as Russians, but are more open-minded which could be explained by the fact that other Eastern European countries are much smaller than Russia and almost automatically deal more with other countries. The comparison with Arabic tourists was justified by the demanding nature of both cultures, however Arabic people tend to speak quite good English. Another comparison included elderly Germans who tend to be conservative and often also do not speak English. Furthermore Russians were compared with French people as they also like to have their privacy and not always speak English. Nevertheless French people take it with humor if they cannot communicate perfectly with someone due to language discrepancies. Even though they were compared with other cultures, the connotation was always a negative one and respondents only thought about negative character traits of Russian tourists and concluded that Russians are definitely more complicated than tourists from other cultures and that in general other cultures are able to react friendly or positively when sensitive situations occur.

“Hm, to me kind of all Eastern European cultures are quite similar...they are all quite like, hm, this is maybe too deep, but it is very easy to ‘break’ as soon as they...hmm...they’re pride gets harmed a bit they get really, really small...so that could be one ‘box’ that I would put them in...but they are a bit harder than the usual, because French they just speak French, but they don’t have this heavy energy and they don’t leave if they don’t understand, we can have a laugh” (Ana, personal communication, April 23, 2014).

**Answer:** Due to a lack of knowledge about the Russian mentality and prejudices from years ago the perception and image of Russian tourists in Barcelona is still negatively connotated. Descriptive words like skeptical, reserved, proud and withdrawn are common to describe a typical Russian tourist in Barcelona. In addition to that they are considered to be special customers with higher expectations than other tourists. Nevertheless, apart from the negative implications, the suppliers also notice that Russian tourists are in a process of change into becoming more open-minded and adapted to the Western European standards.

**How are entrepreneurs in the hospitality sector of Barcelona affected by Russian tourists?**

**Analysis:** Investigating the external variables from the view of the supplier that affect the travel behavior of Russian tourists it appears that Barcelona has a good reputation as a tourism destination in Russian social circles at the moment and that Russian guests tend to return if they had a pleasant stay. As a matter of fact a lot of Russians are coming for business to Barcelona more and more and combine it their business trips with leisure. The peak seasons of Russian tourists in Barcelona are national holidays and during winter as they like to escape the cold winter months in Russia.

The supplier answered that there is a broad variety of characteristics that Barcelona has as a tourism destination that attracts Russian tourists to go to Barcelona including a range of different accommodation types ranging from apartments to high class hotels. Furthermore does the beach, the
climate as well as the immense amount of historical sites motivate Russians to visit Barcelona. Lastly Barcelona offers a wide range of shopping facilities that please every taste.

Generally speaking did the respondents account Russian tourists as an important group of tourists that influence the hospitality industry in Barcelona in several ways. Due to the fact that they have been increasingly coming to Barcelona in the past couple of years the respondents see a potential for future cooperation with them and believe that there will be further increase if the right actions will be done. As Russian tourists are one of the highest spending cultures in Barcelona they support Barcelona financially in big amounts even though they are not the largest culture of tourists. Another significant aspect for the suppliers was that Russians are arriving to Barcelona and to their facilities even without or only little promotion in Russian or promotion that is specifically addressed to Russian tourists. This leads to the assumption that if there would be more promotion specifically adapted to Russians the increase would be even higher.

**Answer:** The suppliers agree on the fact that the influence of Russian tourists on the hospitality industry is not the biggest one at the moment, but it is constantly increasing. In financial terms it is already one of the highest spending nations in Barcelona. Due to their high spending power and increasing amount of Russian guests it is important for the hospitality industry to take action and introduce a change in order to change people’s mindsets about Russian tourists towards a more positive one.

What do they need to consider in regards of Russian travel behavior in order to change and adapt their tourism product?

**Analysis:** Analyzing the possible reasons for the differences of Russian tourists and others as well the problems that occur with the suppliers, the respondents mentioned that the combination of the completely different mentality and the lack of communication are the most significant factors that aggravate the relationship. Thereby suppliers were also of the opinion that not just the different mentality, but the little knowledge that the supplier themselves have about the mentality of Russian tourists hinders the establishment of a good relationship.

“I think it would be good to know more about them to be able to lose those prejudices and understand their mentality better.” (Ana, personal communication, April 23, 2014).

“Hm, maybe it would be useful to know important facts about their mentality, how they like to travel and how to deal with it?” (Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2014).

“I think usually it’s the mentality and the communication that are connected and that make it a big problem because if you have that mentality of being enclosed in yourself, then you don’t want to communicate in another language…you know it’s like if I go to Russia and I only want to speak Spanish, then it’s kind of my own problem….” (Donald, personal communication, 24 April, 2014).

“On the one hand side because we have noticed an increase of Russian tourists in the past months and years and on the other hand because Russians have a very different mentality I would say…” (Alejandro, personal communication, May 5, 2014).
To conclude the opinions and impressions that the respondents had regarding the profiles of Russian tourists make it noticeable that the majority of opinions had negative connotations about the character traits of Russian tourists. The fact that they are perceived as being withdrawn, skeptical and seemingly rude resulted in the idea that the suppliers do not have enough knowledge about the mentality of Russians and therefore situations with a lot of misunderstanding are common. Nevertheless the image as well as the mentality of Russian tourists is in a process to becoming more open-minded and they are adapting more to Western European standards and mentalities. As the respondents perceive Russian tourists as a positive influence for the hospitality industry in Barcelona, the importance of a need to change is undisputed.

**Answer:** For the future it is important to collaborate with the Tourism Board of Barcelona in order to point out how important it is to satisfy the needs and wishes of tourist groups that support the city financially and have potential for further growing. Not only should the knowledge about their mentality and their travel behaviors increase, but also should Russian tourists be more understood and tolerated. Due to the fact that they are quite inexperienced customers they need a certain support to become more open-minded while the tourism industry in Barcelona can adapt their tourism product and service in a more realizable way.

**What is the relationship between Russian tourists in Barcelona and the suppliers of 'When In Barcelona'?**

Answer: The analysis about the relationship with 'When In Barcelona's' suppliers and Russian tourists in Barcelona resulted in the following axial codes; current relationship, communication and future relationship. Thereby the current relationship is dominated by prejudices that were kept during the years. Even though it was mentioned partly that those prejudices are wrong, they still occur in the working environments.

“I think it would be good to know more about them to be able to lose those prejudices and understand their mentality better.” (Ana, personal communication, April 23, 2014).

“Yes, without a doubt! A lot of my colleagues react in a kind of negative way when they know that Russian tourists are arriving and comments like “Oh no, Russians arriving” appear.” (Sofia, personal communication, May 2, 2014).

“Yes, definitely! The fact that it is very difficult to communicate with them, and that not only because of the language barrier, but also because of their skeptical touch, does create a certain fear and prejudices or comments? Yes…it’s shameful, but there is always someone who says something like “Oh no, some more lovely Russian guest”” (Juan-Carlos, personal communication, May 16, 2014).

“Yes, for some reason they do! I am often asked about my Russian guests in a way like “Oh, god, you had a group of Russians staying in your apartment? How did that go?”” (Bianca, personal communication, April 30, 2014).

It seems like even though prejudices do exist they are not quite specific as such and are rather justified by clichés and not by first hand experiences. All respondents mentioned that Russian tourists behave differently with staff in the hospitality industry that speaks Russian; they are more confident and more
secure. They do appreciate Russian speaking staff as well as they appreciate employees that give an effort to say something in Russian even if it is only one or two words. In situation where they can identify that employees are trying to do an effort to accommodate them well, they tend to become friendlier and it becomes easier to “break the ice” and loosen up precarious situations. Even though there are negative associations about Russian tourists, the respondents find it important to treat every guest, no matter what country he/she is from, the same and provide them with the best possible service. Towards Russian tourists some respondents emphasized on the need of special patience with them as it often takes an extra effort to facilitate them when explaining certain things. Due to the fact that miscommunication is a frequent content of the relationship with Russian tourists, respondents are afraid of the fact that certain situations are handled unprofessionally, e.g. when Russian guests are arriving at a hotel and a warm welcome is not possible due to misunderstandings which can upset the guests right from the beginning. The respondents are well aware of the high demands and high expectations of Russian tourists and show understanding. Knowing that the prejudices exist between employees about Russian tourists, the respondents lead that back to the lack of knowledge about the mentality and character traits of Russian tourists. Even though there are dissonances the suppliers are eager to provide their relatively new customer group with an honest service and try the best to satisfy their wishes and needs. Expressions like “pan con pan” (bread with bread) concerning Russian tourists that do not want to experience anything new do not have negative connotations, but are rather used as expressions between colleagues about certain people that behave differently than other tourists. Respondents that have contact with repeating guests mention that those guests are more adapted to the Spanish lifestyle and the Western European mentality and are therefore more easy-going and open-minded. Furthermore they appreciate when employees remember them and build up a rather casual relationship. This aspect shows that Russian tourists tend to lose their skeptical touch and start to trust people more after several interactions.

“Ya, they appreciate it a lot! And now when they come here they don’t mind if they have to wait, they don’t mind if we have to change a plate or something like that…and there is one lady who is kind of a vegetarian, well she doesn’t eat pork and she likes that I remember that and we always have good small talk with these kind of people and it’s just nice to have them!” (Donald, personal communication, 24 April, 2014).

In the hospitality industry it is common to work with different kinds of cultures and people throughout which one gains experiences and learns how to behave in certain situations with certain people. In the case of Russian tourists the respondents learned that it is helpful to ease up situations with them by making an effort of speaking Russian, even if it is only one word and by showing them that you care about them as customers.

“Well, I kind of try to deal with Russians if I am here at that moment…when I speak or try to speak Serbian to them they kind of feel more…confident? And even though we don’t understand each other, they have more patience and are more willing to try to understand” (Ana, personal communication, April 23, 2014).

“Yeah and I had a table where we trying to describe some plates and then I said ‘kartoshka’ and they laughed and ordered it and it did really help to ease up the situation” (Donald, personal communication, 24 April, 2014).
“I mean...of course they are not very open people, but generally speaking they are quite simple if you come make advances to them and show them that you care about them as your guests…” (Maria, personal communication, May 20, 2014).

In general the respondents seem to behave shyer when having to interact with Russian guests due to previous experiences, prejudices and the predominance that Russian tourists seem to project through because of their mentality. The communication is a vital part of the relationship of the two cases; the Russian tourists and the suppliers of ‘When In Barcelona’, however the respondents find it difficult to establish a friendly and casual relationship with Russian tourists as the constant miscommunication as well as misunderstanding of the reciprocal mentalities, values and beliefs hinders it. The lack of English or Spanish of Russian tourists and the lack of Russian of the suppliers minimizes the communication to a limit and puts them to situations where they have to communicate with “hands and feet”. As mentioned earlier Russians are more likely to speak to Russian speaking employees and appreciate their attendance. They are trusted more, but also have to deal with all negative aspects that Russian tourists are not able to express in English or Spanish. Oftentimes does the lack of communication provide a bad first impression and tenses up situations from the start if the suppliers are not able to explain themselves and vice versa.

“Well, negative in those cases where it’s impossible to give the guests a warm welcome because of language barriers...it’s not great having to welcome people when they are tired and exhausted after a flight and have some requests or something and all you can do to help them is make them wait for your Russian speaking colleague!” (Juan-Carlos, personal communication, May 16, 2014).

Due to the problematic communication suppliers often extra explanation and attention effort is required. Thereby the respondents conclude from experience that it is better to keep explanations about food for example to a limit in order to avoid overwhelmed customers because of too much new information.

“Exactly, but that’s what I say; if you get rude to them or give bad service to them, you won’t even get anything away from that apart from a bad comment and a bad review so try as best as you can or even ignore them a little bit in a friendly way, but don’t get into the same path they are doing; not communicate well, not give info – no, give them information about the food, but don’t overwhelm them with all those new things, but just try your best.” (Donald, personal communication, 24 April, 2014).

In all of the situations with precarious communication it is significant to stay friendly and positive and to give your best as a service provider in the hospitality industry. The respondents agree on the fact that for their future relationship it is important to make advances to Russian tourists and support them in their situation as relatively new tourists as they acknowledge the importance of the Russian tourist group with potential growth in the upcoming years. As at the moment the suppliers do not have enough knowledge about the mentality of Russian tourists, which often leads to misunderstandings, apart from the lack of communication they see an importance in change towards a better understanding and provision of a well adapted service to this major tourist group.

“I mean everybody knows the problems, but nobody does anything to improve it! And considering them being a nation that is rapidly growing in the tourism of Barcelona, I think something should change for sure!” (Donald, personal communication, 24 April, 2014).
“A: You're right! I guess it would be good to be able to prepare better! I am always so ashamed when we have Russian guests and I cannot communicate properly with them...I am so happy that we have found our Russian speaking assistant which is a blessing to us and very, very helpful!”(Alejandro, personal communication, May 16, 2014).

“Yes, I could imagine that it would be helpful to inform everyone in some way about Russian tourists by means of...their culture maybe and the way they travel...” (Maria, personal communication, May 20, 2014).

In addition to that the respondents find it important to win the trust of Russian tourists, to always stay positive in difficult situations and to put oneself into their position. Even though there is some disagreement about the fact that Russians expect employees in Spain to speak Russian, the respondents mention that there should be more understanding and tolerance towards Russian tourists and the cultural difference.

“Yes, I would say so! I simply respect their culture and mentality...they must have their reasons for being a bit reserved, but I am sure we seem different to them as well when we go to Russia! I can't change it and I don’t see why I should!”(Bianca, personal communication, April 30, 2014).

For the future the respondents feel that it is valuable to establish a positive relationship with Russian tourists in order to assure future cooperation with them.

“I think they are quite important in matters of financial "support"...I've read an article in the newspaper not too long ago where it said that Russians are the biggest spenders in Barcelona, so yes, I think they are important and not just because of money, but also because of the fact that it is such an enormous country, so if Barcelona becomes "friends" with a country like Russia we can be sure, that there will be more and more guests coming from there!”(Alejandro, personal communication, May 5, 2014).

**Answer:** Moving back to the second main research question one can easily say that the relationship between Russian tourists and the suppliers is quite complicated at the moment and requires some additional work. The field research showed that interactions with Russian tourists involve a lot of communication problems resulting in bad associations. The suppliers are aware of the problems and agree that a change should happen for future positive collaborations with Russian tourists in Barcelona.

The interview included questions about change in order to find out if a change should be introduced, what kind of proposed changes would be welcome and how change is handled in the organizations currently. The majority of respondents feels that it is important to introduce change to adapt better to the Russian tourist market in Barcelona for several reasons. First of all it is vital due to the increase of Russians in Barcelona as well as the cultural and mental differences that complicate many situations and raises many misunderstandings. In addition it is important to change in order to improve the communication with Russian tourists. Even though the Russian tourist market is still quite new in Barcelona, it already brings immense amounts of tourists and financial support and is a highly increasing potential market for the future that needs to be treated properly. A certain change is also important to be able to satisfy the needs and expectations of Russian tourists to be able to establish a relationship for the future with them. Thereby the focus is on having the hospitality industry acknowledge the importance of Russian tourist and the need for change. A difficult challenge, but
another idea concentrates on changing the mindsets of people in Barcelona about Russian tourists and establishing a rather positive image. The changes that were proposed include aspects like knowledge of some Russian words as that could ease up situations, crash courses on Russian language, Russian mentality and travel behavior, the translation of promotional aspects as well as information material. In addition to that the respondents believe that it could be of use to inform employees in the hospitality industry about Russian culture, mentality and put attention to the importance of the need to change. One of the most appreciated changes would be Russian speaking assistants or employees which already exist in several organizations and has proved to be an advantage. In order to find out a good way to introduce change it was investigated how change is being implemented currently and what kind of steps are already included in the change planning process. This resulted in a variety of ways to implement change. While some situations require direct explanations from the top management some changes are simply introduced via instructions sent by e-mail. For changes including technology it is more common to be shown personally in order to assure the correct appliance of the change as here more costs might be involved. Some organizations show a hierarchical system where the management makes decisions and does not leave too much room for additional ideas. Others have a rather flat system and involve the employees for better results and more motivated staff. Generally speaking it was said that change tends to happen automatically or naturally without specific steps to be followed. Nevertheless unknowingly there are steps involved in the change planning process which result in the following steps: identification of problem, the necessity of change that is either proposed by employees or by the management, a collection of ideas, discussion of realization, task division, brainstorming, presentation of best ideas and goals, trainings and workshops, supervision and instructions. In order to avoid resistance the respondents mentioned that the offer of rewards would be pleasant as well as providing workshops where employees could learn together in groups as it seems to be easier and more fun. Lastly the involvement of employees is considered to be helpful to avoid resistance as they earn responsibilities and feel valuable in the change process. Originally this research project was supposed to be result in a change management. However this aim changed and a communication plan will be established instead. The information about change within the supplier’s organizations will be used by the client to know how to support their suppliers and how to avoid resistance.

3.4 Reflection on Validity and Reliability

The chapter at hand deals with the validity and reliability of the research of this project. The research in this case was based on current literature such as articles on websites and newspapers, results of prior conducted studies about Russian tourists. Books in this regard were not used as the topicality was not justified. Websites were carefully chosen in order to assure the reliability by means of the AAOCC criteria. Due to the triangulation approach the reliability of the research was guaranteed as more than one data collection method was used (interviews and literature search). Hereby it is also important to mention that the research was transparent meaning that all methodological steps were described in advance. The combination of different data collection methods and the currency of the used data supports the reliability of this project. The fact that the document analysis of literature used for this research had consensus with several answers within the interviewing, e.g. regarding demographical characteristics of Russian tourists show that the research was reliable. The seemingly honest opinions and experiences of the respondents were helpful for the elaboration of the results.
The construct validity is assured due to the fact that the measurement instrument was developed on the basis of the operationalization of the two core concepts. During the data analysis of the conducted interviews the process of coding was executed deductively, which means that the codes were established during the process of coding. Due to the fact that the focus was constantly closely connected to the theoretical concepts support the construct validity.

The triangulation of data collection methods helped to provide an investigation from different perspectives, whereby interviews as well as a document analysis were conducted. As for the fact that the sample can be considered heterogeneous, taking into account that respondents were chosen from different companies, this data collection method also provided an insight from different perspectives contributing to the internal validity. In addition the fact that conclusions were made in connection with the earlier analyzed theory of the core concepts and the cases contributes to the internal validity as well.

The external validity in this research is disputable and rather limited as the research had a qualitative approach. First of all were the conclusions of the research made based on the subjective opinion of the researcher in connection with the prior studied theories. As the respondent sample only amounts to seven respondents and is connected to the quite particular context of Russian tourists in Barcelona and their relationships with employees in the hospitality business, the sample cannot represent the whole population of employees in the hospitality industry in Barcelona due to the fact that there might be some that have never worked with Russian tourists. Nevertheless, in accordance with this project the sample is focused on the employees or suppliers of ‘When In Barcelona’ specifically for a future collaboration and therefore can be generalized on that specific. All in all it can be concluded that the validity and reliability of this research were supported and reassured due to different data collection methods and the fact that it was closely linked to one specific context.

4. Advisory Part
The field research showed that the majority of the organizations, in which the respondents work, have a difficult relationship with Russian tourists. Difficult in this sense means that the interaction with Russian tourists is mostly led by miscommunication and misunderstanding. As the research revealed, the suppliers have troubles getting on the same wavelength as Russian tourists. They substantiate this by the fact that the suppliers do not have enough knowledge about the relatively new tourist group of Russians in Barcelona. Due to the fact that their mentality is completely different, it is difficult for them to read and understand their behavior.

The research project at hand resulted in the data that was found through empirical as well as theoretical data collection methods supporting the fact that it is necessary to introduce a change in the organizations of the suppliers of ‘When In Barcelona’ in order to be able to prepare better for the Russian tourism market in Barcelona and create a foundation for future cooperation with them. Therefore, the objective of the advisory part is to provide the client ‘When In Barcelona’ with advice in form of a communication tool as part of the communication plan. The communication plan will guide the client on how to deliver information that was acquired during the research to their suppliers in the most convenient and attracting way while the communication tool will show what exactly needs to be done in order to have a successful outcome. With this communication plan the client will be able to
know what steps and actions need to be taken in order to transmit the information to the suppliers and how to avoid resistance. The final goal for the client 'When In Barcelona' is that their suppliers get to know what should be changed within their organizations to get prepared for the Russian tourism market in the best possible way. By means of the communication plan the client will know who their target audience is, what their goals and objectives are, what the tools are that will be used to achieve the goals as well as how and when the outcome will be monitored and evaluated. Furthermore will this plan help 'When In Barcelona' to push their clients to proceed a change in their own organizations in regards of Russian tourists. Within each approach the same information would be communicated from the client 'When In Barcelona' to its' suppliers, simply in a different way. A general summary of the information to be transmitted is presented in the communication plan in appendix III. The alternative solutions that are presented below are the tools of how the actual communication plan can be transmitted to the suppliers from the side of the client. Due to the fact that aspects such as the goals, the key audience, the main messages as well as the time frame of the communication plan are quite clear, the alternatives assist in providing the important information in regards of the what material and what the tactical outreach plan of the communication plan are and what needs to happen. The focus of the alternatives lies in rounding off the communication plan by evaluating what the best alternative is. 

Therefore each of the alternatives can be connected to the communication plan and mainly supports the way of introducing and implementing the communication plan. Once the final and preferred alternative is chosen, the communication plan is presented by adding the significant aspects like tactical outreach plan and the material. Furthermore were the alternatives chosen taking into consideration the replies that were given from the suppliers in regards of how change within their own companies is being introduced at the moment as well as their preferred ways of introducing change.

4.1 Evaluation and criteria

Three alternative solutions on how the client will deliver the acquired information about Russian tourists to their suppliers will be presented. In order to decide what the best suitable, convenient and effective solution, criteria are set up which evaluate each solution. The chosen criteria thereby are depicted in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
<th>Meaning of points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Effort/ Work load | How much work will the client have to invest to implement this solution? | 1 = A lot of work  
2 = Average amount of work  
3 = Little work effort |
| Costs         | How high are the costs (monetary and other resources) to implement the solution? | 1 = High amount of costs  
2 = Average amount of costs  
3 = Little amount of costs |
| Time          | How much time will the client have to invest to implement the solution and achieve the desired result? | 1 = High amount of time  
2 = Average amount of time  
3 = Little amount of time |
| Resistance    | How resistant will the suppliers be towards the adaption of solution?        | 1 = High amount of resistance  
2 = Average resistance       |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feasibility/ effectiveness</th>
<th>How feasible is it to reach the desired outcome of the solution?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not feasible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Averagely feasible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Very feasible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 = Little resistance

**Evaluation criteria**

After the different solutions are described, a matrix presents the most effective and convenient. Thereby points will imply how positive or negative the criteria is as explained in the table above ‘Evaluation criteria’. The solution that results with the highest points is the most suitable one.

For the client it is of high importance that the solution will involve a minimal work effort due to a large work load in their own company and the desire to communicate the results in an easy way. Besides that, time and cost play a significant role. The Russian tourism revolution in Barcelona is a growing, but already an ongoing process. Therefore, the implementation of the advice needs to involve as minimum time as possible. The cost criteria will be further explained in a cost/ benefit ratio and does not only imply monetary costs, but also the resources like personnel, whereby it can be said that the lower the investment, the better. The resistance will be formulated in terms of De Caluwe’s model of change paradigm, whereby the focus is on having as low resistance as possible from the suppliers in order for them to accept the information about Russian tourists that will be communicated to them from the client. The criteria point for feasibility focuses on combining the rest of the criteria and the decision of what the most feasible solution is to reach the desired goal of communicating the information that is acquired during the research to the suppliers to make them use it.

4.1.1 Web Portal

Taking into consideration that nowadays the world of tourism barely works without technology and that the client ‘When In Barcelona’ is based on an internet company, the first alternative solution is to create a communication web portal. This alternative communication tool supports the way that change is successfully introduced within the supplier’s companies at the moment such as using technological devices like e-mailing or simple explanations from the managers with instructions of how to introduce change. Furthermore does the web portal involve the suppliers in the decision process of change, which was stated by several respondents as being a positive way of reducing resistance as the suppliers are provided with information on the web portal, but they can actually process this information in the way they prefer to. A web forum will be a website, which only allows access to the client and the suppliers, with an informational section, a section for news and updates as well as an option for the participants to exchange knowledge and experiences about Russian tourists in Barcelona. The informational section will especially provide the information that was found during the field research and that were the answers to the research questions such as the definition of the profile of a Russian tourist, what stimulates Russian tourists to travel to Barcelona, what kind of external variables influence Russian tourists when they travel to Barcelona as well as how they differ from tourists from others countries. Furthermore it will provide the information about the current relationship of suppliers of ‘When In Barcelona’ with Russian tourists. This will provide the suppliers with the experiences of other suppliers and can lead as a motivating fact for discussions in the exchanging section. In addition to that useful Russian phrases and a translation help will be introduced in the forum considering the fact that lack of communication and misunderstanding is the major negative aspect that hinders the suppliers to build a positive relationship with Russian tourists.
The research has shown that the Russian tourist industry is an already ongoing, but also growing market. A web forum is a valuable solution as it provides space to keep suppliers updated with new and current information. The amount of work or effort that will be invested by the client is quite low due to the fact that the information that needs to be communicated to the suppliers, can be taken from this research project basically directly. The development of the web portal would be done by their IT supporter and therefore ‘When In Barcelona’ needs to decide on the exact information they would like to communicate to their suppliers from this research project. In addition to that they would need to inform their suppliers about this web portal.

The cost/ resources are considerably low as well due to the fact that their website does exist already and the web forum could simply be added as a feature to their existing website. No additional costs would derive from this solution, neither monetary nor personnel resources as the major aspects already exist. Due to the fact that the information to be communicated to the supplier is already summarized and the web forum would be established be outsourced to the IT supporter working for ‘When In Barcelona’ the timely effort that the client is convenient as no direct work would be done by the client itself. It would be important to set up clear deadlines with the IT supporter in order the web forum to be established in an acceptable time frame. As this might not be easy to influence, the criteria of the time constraint is only average. Generally speaking is the intension of delivering the, information that was acquired in this research, that the suppliers absorb the information about Russian tourists in Barcelona and introduce a change in regards of this tourist group to provide a better service and product to them. De Caluwe’s change paradigm explained that in situations where change should happen, resistance is a major point that needs to be avoided in order to actually imply a change. By establishing a web forum the Red–Print Thinking can be used to avoid resistance. Bartering plays a role in this context; the suppliers can be brought around by explaining to them that ‘When In Barcelona’ will be sending more and more Russian customers if the change process is elaborated right and an effort is made. If this is not the case, ‘When In Barcelona’ will stop sending Russian clients and eventually also quit the whole collaboration with this supplier as mutual supporting is a valuable factor for ‘When In Barcelona’. This can be monitored by the activity frequency in the web forum. As the research showed, the suppliers find Russian tourists a very valuable and growing group of tourists in Barcelona one can see that they are interested in working with them. The suppliers are aware of the fact that they bring revenue and therefore it is significant for them to acquire knowledge and stay up to date. The red–print thinking will therefore avoid resistance as they will know that, in return for accepting and acknowledging the information communicated by ‘When In Barcelona’, more Russians will be send by the client.

Regarding the effectiveness, one can say that it is very high for several reasons. First of all, the suppliers receive valuable information, which they can use for others business cooperations apart from the one with ‘When In Barcelona’. They do not need to prepare or research anything, but just have to read and adapt this information. Not only will they have information about the travel behavior of Russian tourists in Barcelona, but they can also read or hear about other companies’ experiences with Russians. In addition to that a web forum gives them a freedom of time as well as it does for the client. The client can monitor the frequency of activity by making little online quizzes to test their suppliers if about the productivity and if they are really making an effort to adapt the transmitted information. This also connects to the green–print thinking of De Caluwe and therefore supports the preferred way of
introducing change in the suppliers’ organizations, namely with learning situations. Due to the time of technology, that we live in, this solution is quite feasible and realizable. People tend to choose technological options over others due to the quickness as well as mobility. For the client this solution of communicating the acquired knowledge about Russian tourists is best as all of their suppliers can be approached at the same time, but can choose their exact time frame. Overall does the minimal work effort that the client needs to invest as well as the minimal cost of this solution lead to the fact that this solution suits the client ‘When In Barcelona’ best.

4.1.2 Workshop

Another alternative approach that the client can use in order to communicate the knowledge that was found during the field research about Russian tourists in Barcelona is to do a workshop. Thereby the client can prepare workshops for their suppliers; one per organization or connecting several suppliers in one workshop if time and travel dimensions allow it. ‘When In Barcelona’ will initiate those workshops and set up times and locations with the according suppliers, whereby the client ‘When In Barcelona’ will adapt to their wishes in order to avoid time and location constraints. This alternative was established in regards of the respondent’s preferred ways of introducing change within their organizations. A high amount of respondents mentioned that the preferred way of introducing change involves group learning situations such as workshops or meetings as these implicate more of a easy-going studying atmosphere and the suppliers enjoy the networking and sharing of experiences with their colleagues. In this case the suppliers can choose themselves who and how many participants they will involve. The workshops will start with a presentation held by the researcher presenting the current problem with Russian tourists, the future plan of ‘When In Barcelona’ of working with the Russian tourist market in Barcelona, facts and figures about Russian tourists that have derived from the field research including the current relationship of suppliers and Russian tourists. A crash course with useful Russian phrases and how to pronounce them will be given as the field research unfolded that the use of Russian words eases up tense situations with Russian tourists and they appreciate the effort. It is clear that in a short period of time the suppliers will not be able to learn to communicate in Russian, but ‘When In Barcelona’ will propose different options for Russian language courses that take place in Barcelona that the suppliers can decide upon if they would like to invest in more elaborated courses. Another option for the further elaboration of Russian courses would be a language teacher that visits the companies, for example ones per week, to do a language course with the employees. These costs would have to be carried by the organizations of the suppliers. An advantage hereby would be that ‘When In Barcelona’ would organize these ‘private’ language courses to facilitate the suppliers and that they would be able to reward their employees with an additional language possibility. The workshop will also include a brainstorming session in order to collect ideas for the code of conduct about how to behave with Russian tourists.

Considering the criteria to evaluate how suitable this option it is clear that the effort for the client itself is very high as the organizational aspects for this project will have to be planned by the client. Due to the amount of planning and organizing a workshop the demands in regards of time are very high and require a lot of flexibility if trying to organize one workshop for several suppliers. It is not easy to find one date that could suit several suppliers in the hospitality industry. Therefore the amount of effort as well as the expenditures of time for the client are negatively influenced and require high amounts and not convenient. The costs in this regard are average. In monetary values there will be costs for
printing material or renting audiovisual equipment (beamers, screens, etc.) that will support the workshop. Regarding other resources it is clear that at least one employee will be needed to present this information and to lead the workshop. The resistance of the suppliers can be avoided easily within this solution as their preferred approach for a change process is the green-print approach which leads to change when people are put into learning situations. As for the fact that several respondents agreed upon the idea that change can be best implemented when these kinds of situations are provided and new things can be acquired through working within groups, the resistance against participating in an informative and interactive workshop would be very low. The effectiveness of this solution would be average. It is considered to be a fun and interesting way of learning and the suppliers are likely to participate actively. Nevertheless will it be rather difficult to reconcile every aspect and to remain updated as the Russian market is growing and currently in a process of change. The difficulty lies in providing the most current information about Russian tourists, which will be difficult when organizing a one-time workshop. Therefore the effectiveness is positive by means of the fact that the suppliers would be interested in learning, but rather negative concerning the fact that it will require a lot of work and time effort and will be difficult to remain up-to-date.

4.1.3 Manual
A third option for the client to communicate the information to their suppliers can be a printed manual. This printed manual will include all the important information about Russian tourists that the suppliers need to acquire in order to adapt better to their wishes and needs. The reason for providing this alternative supports the idea that the suppliers responded that currently the introduction of change also works by the distribution of written information about certain changes that are then applied by the suppliers. This manual will be handed out or sent to every supplier with several copies and an instruction about what the client wants the suppliers to do, to acquire and to establish with this manual. If the solutions of a manual will be implemented, the work effort for the clients will be to establish the manual with the knowledge that was acquired with this research project and which needs to be communicated to the suppliers. It would be the assignment of the client to write this manual, print it and to deliver it to the suppliers. Even though the information to be communicated is provided already, ‘When In Barcelona’ needs would have a considerable amount of work to invest. The positive factor hereby is that the costs or resources to be invested would only amount to printing and delivering costs. No extra employee would be needed as they could divide the work within existing employees. The timely effort is average as the development of a manual would not be that time consuming as the information is already existent. However, it will be difficult to evaluate when the suppliers read the manual and when they start applying the information. It might be a challenge to handle the resistance of the suppliers in this case as they would solely depending on their own organization of adapting this information. As several respondents mentioned that they often have situations in their organizations where change happens automatically by receiving orders or guidelines from the top management, the yellow-print thinking might apply. This means that resistance can be avoided in a change process when common interests are brought together since the suppliers have the freedom of deciding how exactly to implement the information that they receive from the client. Another change paradigm could be the white-print thinking, which will make change happen if there is space for spontaneous ideas. For both of those paradigms the client does not have much influence and it implies that change will eventually happen at some point, but lacks concreteness. Communicating the information to the suppliers by means of a manual reduces the influence that the client should have as the suppliers
simply receive a manual and are to adhere to it. The clients himself would not do much more and therefore does not have any impact on the result and on the fact if the suppliers are actually making an effort to adapt to these information. Automatically does this reduce the feasibility and the effectiveness as monitoring the outcome would be difficult as well as keeping suppliers up–to–date with certain things.

4.2 Evaluation of alternative solutions
The evaluation of the alternative solutions and which tool ‘When In Barcelona’ will use to communicate the information that was acquired from this research project resulted in the idea that a web portal will be the most suitable solution for the client. The criteria for this solution resulted in the highest amount of points as can be seen in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Web Portal</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Manual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work/ effort for client</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness/ Feasibility</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation per alternative

Comparing the single factors it is clear that using a web portal as a communication platform between the client and its’ suppliers is most convenient. Establishing a web based forum supports the client in all criteria in a positive way as described above; low work effort that the client needs to invest, low costs due to already existing resources such as a website and an IT supporter, relatively little time consuming. Furthermore can resistance be avoided due to a reward based approach; if the suppliers show interaction and involvement in the forum by e.g. exchanging their experiences about Russian tourists with other suppliers, they will be rewarded in terms of receiving more Russian customers. The fact that it is a technological system, it fits right into today’s society and makes it interesting for the suppliers to interact. Furthermore it provides the client as well as their suppliers with freedom of time as they can choose themselves when and how much to read. Furthermore each employee will be able to access this portal from any computer and does not urge to have a big meeting with each employee which will be hard to organize. The client especially appreciated that fact as for example with the idea of organizing a workshop it would be difficult and complicated to find a time when the majority of suppliers and employees would find time. To monitor the effectiveness of the web portal, small quizzes and questionnaires about Russian tourists will be placed in the web forum, which the suppliers would have to fill out within certain deadlines. This will show if they are actually involved and participate in the process. All in all it is clear that this solution is quite suitable from different points of views, both for the client as well as their suppliers as it gives them enough freedom in the adaption of this information, but it requires them to work in order to be rewarded. The research implied that suppliers find Russian
tourists as a very important group of tourists in Barcelona and that it is necessary that a change happens in order to provide them with the best possible services and products. This is the major aspect for the suppliers to be active in the web forum as the will acquire more knowledge as well as more Russian customers. The communication plan below presents how this alternative and preferred communication tool is adapted to the actual form of advice, which is the communication plan, that is given to the supplier.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>The main goal of this communication plan is to communicate the information that was found in the research project from the client to their suppliers and make them acknowledge and use it within their organizations in order to adapt or change their services and products to the Russian tourist market in Barcelona. This should happen in a way that is most convenient to the client himself. The final indirect goal of the communication plan is for the suppliers to establish a good relationship with Russian tourists in Barcelona by adapting their products and services to their wishes and needs on a collaborative basis with ‘When In Barcelona’.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Audiences</td>
<td>The communication plan is to be presented from the client ‘When In Barcelona’ and it addresses their suppliers, which are ultimately supposed to be influenced by the communication plan. The key audiences already belong to an existing network of the client and therefore they can easily be reached via their regular communicating ways of personal interaction, e-mails and phone calls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Messages</td>
<td>The main message that needs to be understood by the key audience, the suppliers, involves the information about Russian tourists. Firstly the client needs to establish a sense of urgency by means of informing their suppliers about the future plan of ‘When In Barcelona’ to open the Russian market within their company as well as the problems that are currently apparent in regards of the Russian tourism market in Barcelona. The client then needs to communicate that a web based forum will be their platform for communication which will include all important information needed, like significant facts and figures about Russian tourists and the important influence they have on the hospitality industry in Barcelona will be transmitted. The client should present the advantages and remove obstacles that will derive if the suppliers do participate actively in the web portal such as receiving more Russian customers, that it is provides them with major information, gives them freedom of time as well as will keep them updated about Russian tourists in Barcelona. The main messages to communicate to the suppliers should also include the short-term wins that will be generated for the suppliers if they participate actively in the web forum such as acquiring knowledge about Russian tourists, specifically in Barcelona (their travel behavior, their mentality, Russian language basics, etc.), establishing positive relationship to Russian tourists, avoiding misunderstandings and miscommunications and removing prejudices and fears of Russian tourists. The summarized information that belongs to the main messages and should be shared with the clients can be found in appendix III. This can be flexible edited.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Tactical Outreach | ‘When In Barcelona’ will use a web based forum as a platform for communication.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>This forum can be accessed by the employees of the suppliers and provides them with all important information as well as it allows them to exchange experiences and ideas in regards of Russian tourists.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>The main material that 'When In Barcelona' will use to communicate their messages to the audience is the web portal. However, within this web portal there are other materials, such as an option for exchanging experiences as well as quizzes and questionnaires. By means of this it will be avoided that printed materials are uselessly printed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>The client needs to work closely with their IT supporter in order to have the web portal programmed as soon as possible. Once there is a finishing date set (approximately 1 month from now) the client will contact the suppliers two weeks in advance in a round mail introducing the web based forum and informing them about the urgency to change something. Furthermore will the client set up time-frames of about 2 – 3 weeks which give the employees of the suppliers the possibility to learn about Russian tourists by researching the web portal. Quizzes or questionnaires will also be introduced about one week in advance. The client will check the forum on a daily basis to check for new entries. On a weekly basis the activity of each supplier will be measured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>The productivity of the suppliers is evaluated by means of login times, written comments and participation of quizzes and questionnaires. This will show the client how effective the communication plan is and if the suppliers do adapt the information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Implementation of the Advice

In order to effectively implement the communication plan including the chosen alternative of a web portal the following chapter provides a step–by–step description by means of the PDCA cycle (Plan, do, check, act). The PDCA cycle is a strategic way of introducing change within organizations. Thereby Shewhart, the developer of this cycle, explains that the planning step concentrates on establishing goals, setting up a theoretical plan as well as defining beneficial outcomes. The second step “Do” focuses on actions that are need to be taken in order to actually develop a certain product. The next step involves “checking” in which the progress and the outcomes are to be monitored and the validity can be checked. The last step is called “act” where the actual idea is implemented. The whole PDCA is an ongoing process and organizations can go back to the “planning” phase to continuously improve. (Mind Tools).

First of all it needs to be clarified that the client will receive a communication plan which can be defined as the overall advice for the client that derived from this research project. This communication plan, which can be found in appendix IV, explains steps that need to be accomplished in order to implement it in the correct way. The advice in form of a communication plan that concentrates on the communication tool of a web portal incorporates aspects like the goals, the key audiences, the main messages, the time frame, the materials, the tactical outreach plan as well as the evaluation. Due to the fact that the communication plan provides the client with information on the above mentioned aspects and rather provides them with operational information, the implementation chapter at hand
focuses on how the client can implement the tool of communication. Furthermore it depicts how the client can assess if the suppliers are actually making use of the web portal and if it is valuable for them as well as on which activities the successful implementation is based.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was clarified in the beginning of this research project that the main problem of the client is that there is not enough knowledge about Russian tourists in Barcelona within their suppliers, but a rather negative attitude towards them due to the lack of knowledge. This problem was focused on in the research and it resulted in a product for the client, the communication plan that focuses on the tool of communication, the web portal. The communication plan in chapter 4.2 presents the main goals, the key audiences, the tactical outreach plan, the materials, time frame and how to evaluate it. Therefore will the communication plan be adhered to when implementing the communication tool of a web portal. There are several actions that need to be taken within the planning section of implementing the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Information
The research revealed important information about Russian tourists in Barcelona. The main information that are to be presented to the suppliers throughout the web portal are presented in appendix III and constitute of a summary of the major findings from the research. Further information, such as little translation helps and updates/news about Russian tourists in Barcelona will be collected on the way in cooperation with the researcher. Thereby the clients has to decide what exact information should be provided on the web portal.

2. First Contact with Intermediary
As mentioned earlier the client does have an IT supporter already that has developed their company website and is maintaining it currently. It is important to establish the urgency of creating the web portal as the Russian tourist market is already an ongoing trend and needs to be prepared for as soon as possible. Thereby it is significant to provide exact information on what the client wants to add to the web portal, the amount of suppliers this should be accessible for and certain aspects that should be considered, such as that the client themselves are able to edit content if necessary etc. In addition to that should the time frame as well as monetary aspects be discussed with the IT supporter as for the fact that the web portal needs to be launched as soon as possible.

3. Establish Awareness
As the basis for the web portal is already provided, it is important for the client to introduce the idea of a communication tool to his suppliers in order to establish awareness of the importance for ‘When In Barcelona’ that the suppliers take part in this in order to have a successful outcome for all participants. Thereby it is important to explain the future plan of ‘When In Barcelona’ of introducing the Russian tourism market.

4. Benefits for the Suppliers
In order to make the idea of using a web portal as communication tool attractive for the suppliers, it is necessary to inform them about the benefits that can be accounted as indirect rewards for the suppliers if they will participate actively in the web portal. Benefits thereby are that the suppliers will gain knowledge about Russian tourists in a comfortable, flexible and not time consuming way. This will not only help them in their work cooperation with the client ‘When In Barcelona’, but will assist them in their everyday work environment. Furthermore will the web portal offer them the opportunity of exchanging knowledge and experiences and network with other suppliers while establishing a win-win situation for themselves and the client.
Once the client has passed the main planning and preparing stages, several actions have to take place in order to keep the implementation process flowing. While in the planning phase the focus lied on informing and preparing all the participants (IT supporter and suppliers) as well as raising their interest to participate, the step at hand focus on rather specific actions that are needed to launch the web portal.

1. Summarizing the information
In the prior phase the client has established the ideas of what kind of information should be provided in the communication tool for their suppliers. Now these information need to be summarized and put on paper. The client should use the summary about general findings about Russian tourists in Barcelona, that is provided in the appendix III as well as add information that are considered as valuable for the suppliers to know. The client has to keep in mind the objective of the communication plan and the corresponding communication tool, which is to provide the suppliers with knowledge and information about the Russian tourist market in Barcelona in order to get adapted to this important group. Therefore it is significant that the information needs to be clear, easily understandable and valuable.

2. Providing the selected information to intermediary
The IT supporter is provided with the selected information so that the major components are given and the IT supporter can put them into the right places. As the urgency in matters of short time frames was already clearly established in the planning step, the intermediary will need to be pushed to actually develop the web portal. Thereby it is important that the client holds close contact to the IT supporter in order to avoid time delays and overcome obstacles that might appear while establishing the web portal. The step at hand can be considered as the most important one as the launch of the web portal relies mostly on the IT supporter. This is why the close interaction during the establishing of the product is significant. The interaction hereby should happen in terms of phone calls, e-mail conversation as well as personal meetings.

3. Introducing the web portal to suppliers
Once the web portal is ready and includes all the information as well as an exchange platform in which the suppliers can share their experiences, the suppliers have to be contacted again to introduce this portal with instructions and user access has to be provided per supplier. Within this step the urgency of actually participating in this web portal has to be clearly stated once more as it leads back to the benefits, presented in the planning step. As these benefits are presented to the suppliers in advance in an attractive way, they client should adhere to that and provide the suppliers with a short introduction of the web portal by sending out instructions via a video or a written instruction. With this step the communication tool is launched and the further steps should include the maintenance and checking of how effective the web portal is. Once the web forum is created and launched, the suppliers receive access codes and the exchange of information starts. From here on the client’s task is to monitor the activity and participation of the suppliers and post updates if there are any about the Russian tourist market in Barcelona.

Within this step ‘When In Barcelona’ will already have the web portal introduced. The next step is to monitor and evaluate how effective it is and if the suppliers do actually participate.
1. Checking criteria
First of all does the client have to set up criteria with which the importance can be evaluated as well as the client can see how much the suppliers make use of the communication tool. The criteria for the evaluation are set up directly with the client in order to point out the aspects that are clearly of high significance for the client. Thereby the main focus lies on direct participation of each supplier as well as the contribution or exchange of experiences. The IT supporter as well as the client themselves have the role of an administrator meaning that they can access the statistics and see the amount of log-ins and the amount of shared information. Furthermore should the client check directly with the suppliers on a monthly basis on what their opinion of the web portal is and if they believe it is useful and effective. The client should set up guideline of how often the suppliers should participate or give feedback on if they believe it is successful in order to consider how valuable the web portal is.

2. Consequences
In case of low participation, the client should approach the suppliers again to motivate them and barter them with a higher amount of Russian tourists that will be sent if participation is higher. Furthermore should the client focus on pointing out the benefits that derive from the participation.

3. Final Check
The client has to elaborate closer on the fact if the web portal is being used and is appreciated by the suppliers. This should happen on personal feedback from the suppliers as well as the statistics with which the client can tell if the wished participation is too low or satisfactory. Thereby the client should stay in close contact with the suppliers to find out if a rather negative or low use of the web portal is visible.

ACT
The step of “checking” evaluates the implementation that has been dealt with so far with which the client has been able to find out the major pitfalls by consulting the IT supporter regarding user statistics, contribution and share of experiences etc. The “act” step is needed in order to consider what exactly should be improved or changed in case the original plan of using the web platform as a communication tool within the communication plan does not function as planned. Apart from monitoring the web forum, the client should have short meetings with the managers of the suppliers in order to see if something should be changed, if the web forum is of further help or should be eliminated and reflect the past outcomes.

1. Positive outcome
In case the participation of the suppliers is high enough and the clients evaluate from the feedback that the web portal is being appreciated the web portal can be seen as being positively adapted. Thereby the suppliers can review the reasons for the positive outcome and acknowledge them while eventually going a further step and introducing more information or more learning aspects about Russian tourists in Barcelona to the suppliers.

2. Negative outcome
If for instance it is clear that the web portal is not being used often enough or the suppliers do not find it useful, the client is in need of finding out the exact reasons for this negative reception. Thereby aspects such as time, effort, interest, benefits for the suppliers need to be considered.

3. Adaptation
In both cases, be it positive or negative does the PDCA cycle not stop here. Especially if it is a rather
negative outcome does the client have the chance to elaborate further on one idea and basically start from the beginning. If it is a positive outcome, the client should use it as a reliable personal feedback and should concentrate on improving it further as it is clear that the suppliers are interested.

‘When In Barcelona’ should adhere to the steps of the PDCA cycle when implementing the communication plan in order to achieve the best possible result. Due to the fact that in this process several types of stakeholders with different characteristics are involved (size of company, level of employee involvement, etc.) it is quite difficult to set a specific time frame for the advice. However, it is significant that the establishment of the communication tool takes place as soon as possible. Certain deadlines can be set by the client after all.

4.4 Cost Benefit Ratio
When implementing the advice it is valuable to know what benefit will derive from the costs that are invested into the implementation, whereby the costs can be monetary ones as well as they can concern other resources such as work effort, time or personnel. The form of advice is a communication plan with the goal of communicating the acquired research results to the suppliers of the clients by means of a web forum. As already described in the evaluation of the alternative solutions, opting for a web forum has positive implications in several aspects. As described earlier the investment of monetary and non-monetary resources is quite low when developing a web forum. The client is not in need of hiring any new personnel as an already cooperating IT supporter, who monitors their website, will establish the web forum with the information that is provided in this research project. Therefore the work effort for the client itself is very low as the information to be presented does already exist and the work for establishing the web portal can be so-called outsourced to a professional that already works with them. The time that needs to be invested is quite difficult to measure. Even though deadlines will be set (when web portal needs to be finished, when suppliers will adapt the information) it might happen that time constraints will appear as it is not easy to monitor if participants stick to the deadlines. All in all it can be said that the investment that the client has to deliver in order to achieve the goal of communicating the research results to the suppliers to make them use and acknowledge it, is quite low while the effectiveness is very high. The suppliers are provided with valuable information about the Russian tourism market. Since the majority of respondents explained that they perceive Russian tourists in Barcelona as a very important tourist group that requires more attention and better adapted products and services, they will be eager to participate and make a change happen. The diagram below roughly presents the input that the client will invest by implementing the web portal on the top side. The lower part show that the benefit compared to the costs is very high and that it results in achieving the main objective of the project of communicating the acquired knowledge about Russian tourists in Barcelona to the suppliers and lead them to adapt it to their products and services according to that certain tourists group.
However, in order to calculate the benefits it is necessary to quantify them. This will be done by means of a time span of one year with no significant decrease or increase. The IT supporter receives a fixed monthly salary of 150€ which will also cover the launch and maintenance of the new web portal. The salary of the clients themselves is difficult to concretize as a fixed salary does not exist. As an average we will calculate 20€ per hour and that approximately 10 hours per month would be dedicated by each of the managers to the web portal. The average amount of suppliers that the client works with is about 30. Due to the rise of the Russian tourism market the client expects to receive 40 Russian tourists per month in the first year. Even though this is only a very small percentage of Russian tourists that come to Barcelona, this is realizable for the client accounting the fact that they work with other nationalities too and are still a quite small growing company. Considering that on average Russian tourists spend 125€ per day (Spanish News Today, 2013) the client can account that each Russian tourist, that will take on the clients’ services, will spend about 80€ (average price of the client per tour/activity per guest). Of these 80€ about 40% (= 32€) are costs for the clients resulting in a profit of 48€ per Russian tourist. Therefore if the communication tool works out successfully, the following cost/benefit ratio will be achieved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th>BENEFIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IT supporter: 150€ x 12 months</td>
<td>1.800€</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work effort of client: 20€ x 10 hours x 12 months x 2</td>
<td>4.800€</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Tourists: 40 per month x 80€ x 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td>38.400€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 tourists per month x 32€ (costs) x 12 months</td>
<td>15.360€</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21.960€</td>
<td>Remaining benefit: 16.440€ (for year 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the table above it is clearly visible that that the remaining benefit after investing into the project is quite high resulting in 16.440€ for the first year. To sum one can say that the correct implementation of the project will result in a high benefit. Therefore, the client will be able to benefit from a cooperation between the research project at hand as well as the loyalty and participation of all affiliates.

HIGH BENEFIT:
- Communicating research results about Russian tourists in Barcelona to suppliers & make them use and adapt it
- A step towards a better relationship between suppliers and Russian tourists
- Raising awareness about importance of Russian tourists
- Removing prejudices & fears of Russian tourists
- Increase collaboration between client and Russian tourists
- Develop an exchange platform between suppliers about Russian tourists
- ACHIEVING MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT
4.5 Conclusion

To sum up, the main pieces of advice that is given to the client with this research project will focus on communicating the acquired knowledge from the research to the suppliers and therefore improving the relationship of ‘When In Barcelona’’s suppliers with Russian tourists in Barcelona as for now the relationship can be considered as problematic due to the fact that there is a range of factors that interfere with the proper development of a good relationship. The main pieces of advice hereby involve a web forum that the client should establish for the suppliers where important information about Russian tourists will be presented; their travel behavior, their expectations and motivations and their mentality. In addition to that they will be provided with helpful words and phrases in Russian as it was clarified that Russian tourists appreciate employees that speak Russian or that make an effort as well as it does eases up tense situations when miscommunication occurs. Furthermore will the client provide its’ suppliers with the opportunity to exchange knowledge about Russian tourists with other suppliers. All in all is the client the major recipient of the advise and the implementation of advice. The communication plan gives the client a guideline on goals and strategies.

Afterword

The idea for this thesis project derived from the personal network of the researcher in cooperation with the client ‘When In Barcelona’. Due to the future plans of the client of approaching the Russian tourist market in Barcelona and the future work cooperation with the researcher has matched the timing of all parties concerned and was used as a first introduction into the client’s company.

The researcher conducted the research on individual basis throughout the assigned period, but was constantly supported by the client as well as the first examiner and the research teacher. Seven meetings with the first examiner were held via Skype and one with the research teacher. In addition to that there was contact via e-mails in case of short questions. Those contact moments were helpful to conquer problems and misunderstandings as the teachers always provided good advice and helped with approaching further parts of the thesis. Weekly meetings with the client in the beginning of the thesis project were supportive to reassure that the project is going into the right direction. Communication with the interview respondents was firstly established via the client and further developed via the researcher. Unfortunately the wished amount of ten respondents was not reached due to timely constraints from part of the respondents, but seven respondents were enough to acquire the needed knowledge. The respondents that took part were interested in the topic and found it valuable.

As recently it was acknowledged that the Russian tourist market in Barcelona plays an important role, this project is helpful for the tourism industry, but especially for the suppliers of the client ‘When In Barcelona’ for their future cooperation. To change the mindset of people in the hospitality industry of Barcelona in regards of Russian tourists will take some time, but a first milestone was set with the suppliers of ‘When In Barcelona’. Due to the fact that ‘When In Barcelona’ will bring the suppliers a high amount of Russian tourists, the suppliers did appreciate the idea of introducing some change for better adaptation to the Russian market. The original idea of establishing a change plan was eliminated throughout the research project as it was discovered that it is more important to focus on how to communicate the acquired knowledge to the suppliers from the client. Nevertheless, the character of the research assignment depicted a main difficulty due to the fact that it appeared that the
client was not in a specific need of advice, but they rather needed information. This was especially difficult to translate within the advisory part which is why the focus in the advice lies on launching the web portal as part of the communication plan.

The topic of Russian tourists in Barcelona as well as in the world wide tourism branche is currently a popular one and newspaper articles as well as more and more online articles are being written including continuously new information. Especially now with the political riots between Russia and the Ukraine have created worries about the tourist arrivals from Russia for this year, but the statistics of the first months of this year do not show big discrepancies. This encourages for further follow-ups in the media for the next months.
References


Espasa X. (2012, October 15). We are committed to innovative promotional activities with greater added value. Retrieved April 10, 2014, from http://www20.gencat.cat/portal/site/empresaiocupacio/menuitem.32aad87fca8e050a6740d63b0c0e1a0/?vgnextoid=46d713e97d44a310VgnVCM2000009b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnextchannel=46d713e97d44a310VgnVCM2000009b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnextfmt=default&newLang=en_GB


Appendices

Appendix I: Interview Guide

1. Introduction

- Greeting of respondent and thanking for taking the time for the interview
- Introduction of yourself as well as the subject and reason for the research project
- Explication about the main aspects to be discussed during the interview
- Indication about length of interview and asking for permission to record the interview
- Kindly ask for honest opinion and assure anonymity

2. Discussion of main aspects/core concepts

2.1 Travel behavior of Russian tourists

- Have you worked with Russian tourists in your work space before?
- Can you distinguish a certain age group or and social class of Russian tourists coming to visit your work space?
- What do you consider as a 'typical' Russian tourist/customer?
  - open-minded/ narrow-minded/ world open
  - simple/ complicated
  - interested/ ignorant
  - independent/ group
  - reason for travel (education, VFR, business, leisure)
- What language do Russian tourists most of the time speak when they are in your restaurant/ hotel/apartment, etc.?
- To what extend can you compare Russian tourists with tourists from countries like the USA, Germany and England?
- Do you think Russian tourists have higher expectations than clients from other countries?
- How do they normally travel?
  - groups
  - individually
2.2 Relationship of hospitality entrepreneurs with Russian tourists in Barcelona

- Is there any kind of prejudices or fears of Russian tourists in your work field?
  - rude, new rich, arrogant, bad language skills

- How do you and your staff react when Russian tourists arrive?

- What was a positive experience with Russian tourists?

- What was a negative experience with Russian tourists?

- What would you like to know more about Russian tourists?

- What do you think is important to know about them in order to prepare better?

- Which parts of your service/ products should be/ are adapted to Russian tourists’ behaviors?
  - certain products, service (menu in Russian, Russian speaking waiters, etc.)

- How do you think do Russian tourists affect the hospitality business in Barcelona in the future? (Positively, negatively, large or small impact, etc.)

- Is it important to know the travel behaviors of different cultural groups?

- Do you have publicity in Russian? (facebook, website translation in Russian, etc.)

2.3 Change strategy

- Do you think a certain change should be introduced within your organization in order to adapt better to the Russian tourist market?

- What are the most common ways for implementing change within your work field?

  - urgency for change, guiding team, change vision, conviction/ persuasion, removing obstacles, goals/ wins, constant supervision, anchoring of change

- In what way would you consider change as realizable within your work field/ how to avoid resistance?

  - Yellow: negotiation
  
  - Blue: result–oriented working
  
  - Red: reward/ penalties
  
  - Green: changing by learning
  
  - White: Self–organization process
3. Conclusion

- summary of the interview
- thanking the respondent
- offering to send the interview transcript to the respondent

### Appendix II: Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selective Codes</th>
<th>Axial Codes</th>
<th>Open Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Profile of Russian tourists in Barcelona | Travel Stimuli | - Mouth-to-mouth marketing  
- Google  
- Airbnb  
- Promotion in magazine addressed to Russian public |
| Personal & Social determinants | - Majority is middle-aged (in their 40’s & 50’s)  
- Increasing arrivals of younger Russians (in their 20’s & 30’s)  
- Middle & upper social class  
- Middle class is careful with money, upper class is ignorant about money  
- Travel without restrictions  
- More income than Spaniards  
- Easy to identify  
- High expectations  
- Heavy energy  
- Reserved, proud  
- Skeptical  
- Want right amount of attention  
- Special customers  
- “new tourists”/ inexperienced tourists  
- Often considered as wealthy  
- Elderly Russians (40-60) are more conservative & contained & speak less English  
- Younger Russians (20’s & 30’s) are easier to assimilate with, more open and interested  
- Russians expect to get the best service |
- Friendliness decreases with amount of money
- Difficult & reserved, but not rude or loud
- Not easy-going
- Like to have power
- Avoid futile conversation
- Stay serious & strict
- Open-minded to some extent due to travelling
- Younger Russians rather stay in apartments & cheaper hotels
- Like their privacy
- Show what they have materialistically
- Money increases their feeling of predominance
- Behavior is influenced by social class
- Engage in new things with doubt
- Have more patience when they notice that people are making an effort
- Cultural differences complicate behavior
- Tend to avoid unfamiliar things (new cuisines, languages, etc.)
- Trust Russian-speaking personnel more
- Complain to Russian-speaking personnel more & can react rude or demeaning & disrespectful
- A lot of repeating guests that come for business reasons
- Youngers are more careful, avoid extra costs & troubles
- In a process of change, becoming more open-minded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Majority has bad English skills or none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Prefer languages similar to Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Miscommunication/ lack of communication stresses, frustrates them &amp; makes them feel insecure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Become rude in defense when miscommunication occurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Embarrassed &amp; bashed pride due to poor communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Comparison to other cultures | - More complicated than other tourists  
- Different kinds of expectations  
- Eastern European countries comparable, but other countries are more open-minded  
- Compared with Arabics due to demanding characteristics  
- Compared to elderly Germans who are conservative  
- Compared with the French due to the need for privacy  
- Generally other cultures are friendlier in sensitive situations |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| External Variables          | - Travel mostly during Russian national holidays & in winter to escape the cold  
- Barcelona has a good image as a tourism destination, is trendy  
- Returning guests |
| Characteristics and Features of Service Destination | - Different types of accommodations offered (apartments, different kinds of hotels)  
- Sun & Beach tourism  
- Historical sites  
- Broad range of shopping opportunities |
| Influence of Russian tourists on the hospitality industry of Barcelona | - One of the highest spending cultures in Barcelona  
- Increasing amount of Russians since the past 3 years  
- Arriving even without a lot of promotion in Russian  
- Support the city financially |
| Influence of children/Russians in their 20’s & 30’s | - Open-minded  
- Curious  
- Speak a lot better English than their parents  
- Friendlier  
- Act as messengers between parents and employees in hospitality industry  
- Push their parents to try new things  
- Slowly changing mentalities  
- Adapting more to Western European standards & mentalities |
| Reason for differences | - Used to be isolated from rest of the world  
- History & media influence behavior  
- Combination of mentality & lack of communication |

| Relationship of Suppliers withRussian Tourists in Barcelona | - Prejudices are constantly there, but mostly wrong  
- Russians appreciate when employees make an effort to facilitate the situation  
- Special patience with Russians  
- Negative associations with Russian tourists  
- Situations are often handled unprofessionally  
- Every tourist is treated the same  
- “Spanish Russians” are preferred  
- Not happy about having prejudices  
- Understanding of high expectations  
- Staff members react negatively regarding Russian tourists & do cocky remarks  
- Reserved with Spanish/ English speaking staff, open with Russian speaking staff  
- Mentality & travel behavior of Russian tourists unfamiliar for many people  
- Honest service  
- “Pan con pan”  
- Repeating Russian customers appreciate waiters that remember them, are more relaxed  
- Repeating guests adapt more and more to Western European mentality & lifestyle |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Reasons for change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|        | - Vital to adapt to Russian tourism market & prepare for future due to increase & differences  
|        | - Change is vital to communicate well  
|        | - Still relatively new market  
|        | - High potential  
|        | - Not highest percentage of visitors, but one of the biggest spenders & increasing  
|        | - Need to satisfy their expectations & |

| Communication | - Difficult to establish friendly relationship with Russians  
|              | - Miscommunication hinders establishing a relationship  
|              | - Communication with “hands and feet”  
|              | - Russian speaking colleagues are trusted more & have to deal with negative aspects like problems  
|              | - Lack of communication provides bad first impression  
|              | - Require extra explanation effort  
|              | - Blunt/ dull explanations (of dishes e.g.)  
|              | - Wrong interpretations of words & actions |

| For future relationship | - It is important to support them & make advances to them  
|                        | - Change needs to happen to provide better & adapted service  
|                        | - Win their trust  
|                        | - Understanding & tolerance of the differences  
|                        | - Stay positive  
|                        | - Put yourself into their position  
|                        | - Eliminate prejudices & understand their mentality |
| Proposed changes | - Knowledge of Russian could ease situations up  
- Crash courses  
- Menus in Russian  
- Smart phones can be used as translating tool  
- Translation of promotional & information material  
- Inform people in hospitality industry about culture, mentality & travel behavior of Russian tourists  
- Russian speaking assistants |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Way of implementing change | - Instructions via e-mail from management  
- Explanations from managers  
- Demonstration of changes  
- Told or printed information  
- Hierarchical system: management decides  
- Flat system: Involvement of employees  
- Process of change happens automatically |
| Steps currently included in change planning process | - Identification of problem  
- Necessity of change proposed by employees  
- Collection of ideas  
- Discussion of realization  
- Task division  
- Brainstorming in teams  
- Presentation of best ideas & goals  
- Trainings/ workshops  
- Supervision  
- Instructions |
| Avoiding of resistance | - Providing of workshops  
- Offering of rewards  
- Involving in decision process of the change  
- Easier & more fun to learn in groups |
Appendix III: Summary of Important Information about Russian Tourist

1. Fact and Figures about Russian Tourists in Barcelona and their travel behavior

- Increase of Russian tourists of 22.1% from 2012 to 2013 in Barcelona
- 233,823 Russian tourists that stayed in Hotels in Barcelona in 2013
- About 800,000 Russian tourists that have passed by Barcelona during their travels in Spain in 2013
- Russians have spent about 146.6 million Euros with credit cards in 2012 in Barcelona
- Sixth largest nation visiting Barcelona after France, the UK, Germany, Italy and the USA
- Considered to be the highest spending nation in Barcelona in a per day ratio
- They spend 125€ daily per person on an average, whereby 25% only spends about 59€ daily and 27% of Russian tourists 177€ daily
- They stay 8–10 nights in Barcelona
- Likely to return to Barcelona after satisfying visit
- Several reasons for increasing number of Russians: simplification of visa regulations and multi-entry visas, increase of direct flights between Russian cities and Barcelona, new direct flights are launched with countries from the former Soviet Union (up to 200 weekly flights connect Russia with Barcelona during high season)
- Increasing middle-class that is travelling to Russia
- Two main age groups travelling to Barcelona: 35–54 and younger than 35
- Elderly group mostly stays in 4 and 5 star hotels and are mainly motivated to go to Barcelona due to its’ history, shopping facilities, culture and leisure
- Younger Russian tourists mainly attracted by sun and beach holidays
- 96% of Russian tourists plan their vacation through traditional tour operators
- 60% of visitors come to Barcelona to visit the adjacent Catalan coasts while 38% are attracted by Barcelona for the history 35% choose Barcelona because they can combine a broad variety of shopping opportunities with climate

2. Mentality of Russian

- Due to the fact that Russians grew up quite isolated from the rest of the world when the Soviet Union still existed
- Difficult to define the complex mentality of Russians, but certain characteristics are common and can be ascribed to the turbulent history
- Russians appreciate the status quo and are abhorrent to change as conservatism, stability and security were always highly respected
- Foreigners perceive Russians as difficult to understand
- Russians themselves often use a saying: "Rossiya umom ne ponyat" – You cannot understand Russia with your mind
- Russians are conservative in comparison with Western European countries and very patriotic and proud
- They are often perceived as rude, very direct, aggressive, never smiling and introverted
Even though this perception might coincide, it has more to do with trust and their simple mentality, but that is more their outward appearance as they tend to be skeptical and not trusting others so quickly

- Russians are very direct and honest and people should not get offended by harsh answers as they are not meant that way
- What many people do not know is that Russians are one of the most hospitable nations
- Especially if they see appreciation and interest in their culture they are likely to open and show that the façade does not represent their real character of being humorous, hospitable and very easy-going
- Especially younger generations are in a process of change and are adapting more and more to Western European standards and mentalities
- Children are one of the most valued aspects in Russian families
- If children are happy, so are parents
- As children are the new and future generation of Russians, that is adapting more and more to Western European standards, it would be smart to make an effort to make them happy by paying special attention to their wishes and needs

3. Language Barriers & Crash Course

Language barriers are the biggest problem that leads to misunderstandings and contributes to the fact that suppliers in the hospitality industry of Barcelona cannot build a good relationship with Russian tourists. It is obvious that Russian is a difficult language and not easily learned by attending a few crash courses. Nevertheless, Russians appreciate the effort when people try to speak their language to accommodate them better and it helps to loosen up tense situations. A crash course with useful phrases adapted to the hospitality business can be found on this website and will be further elaborated and practiced with the Russian-speaking workshop leader.

http://www.russianforfree.com/phrasebook.php

With help of this website the suppliers can practice the pronunciation without constant supervision and support and can choose the phrases and expressions that are most needed for them.
The communication plan at hand is written for the client of this research project 'When In Barcelona' and is to be addressed to their suppliers. It is the form of the advice that derived from a thorough research project about Russian tourists in Barcelona and it assists in finding a solution to the management question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>The main goal of this communication plan is to communicate the information that was found in the research project from the client to their suppliers and make them acknowledge and use it within their organizations in order to adapt or change their services and products to the Russian tourist market in Barcelona. This should happen in a way that is most convenient to the client himself. The final indirect goal of the communication plan is to for the suppliers to establish a good relationship with Russian tourists in Barcelona and adapt their products and services to their wishes and needs on a collaborative basis with ‘When In Barcelona’.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Audiences</td>
<td>The communication plan is to be presented from the client ‘When In Barcelona’ and it addresses their suppliers, which are ultimately supposed to be influenced by the communication plan. The key audiences already belong to an existing network of the client and therefore they can easily be reached via their regular communicating ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Messages</td>
<td>The main message that needs to be understood by the key audience, the suppliers, involves the information about Russian tourists. Firstly the client needs to establish a sense of urgency by means of informing their suppliers about the future plan of ‘When In Barcelona’ to open the Russian market within their company as well as the problems that are currently apparent in regards of the Russian tourism market in Barcelona. The client then needs to communicate that a web based forum will be their platform for communication which will include all important information needed, like significant facts and figures about Russian tourists and the important influence they have on the hospitality industry in Barcelona will be transmitted. The client should present the advantages and remove obstacles that will derive if the suppliers do participate actively in the web portal such as receiving more Russian customers, that it is provides them with major information, gives them freedom of time as well as will keep them updated about Russian tourists in Barcelona. The main messages to communicate to the suppliers should also include the short–term wins that will be generated for the suppliers if they participate actively in the web forum such as acquiring knowledge about Russian tourists, specifically in Barcelona (their travel behavior, their mentality, Russian language basics, etc.), establishing positive relationship to Russian tourists, avoiding misunderstandings and miscommunications and removing prejudices and fears of Russian tourists. The summarized information that belongs to the main messages and should be shared with the clients can be found in appendix III. This can be flexible edited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactical Outreach Plan</td>
<td>‘When In Barcelona’ will use a web based forum as a platform for communication. This forum can be accessed by the employees of the suppliers and provides them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materials</strong></td>
<td>The main material that 'When In Barcelona' will use to communicate their messages to the audience is the web portal. However, within this web portal there are other materials, such as an option for exchanging experiences as well as quizzes and questionnaires. By means of this it will be avoided that printed materials are uselessly printed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Frame</strong></td>
<td>The client needs to work closely with their IT supporter in order to have the web portal programmed as soon as possible. Once there is a finishing date set (approximately 1 month from now) the client will contact the suppliers two weeks in advance in a round mail introducing the web based forum and informing them about the urgency to change something. Furthermore will the client set up time-frames of about 2 – 3 weeks which give the employees of the suppliers the possibility to learn about Russian tourists by researching the web portal. Quizzes or questionnaires will also be introduced about one week in advance. The client will check the forum on a daily basis to check for new entries. On a weekly basis the activity of each supplier will be measured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>The productivity of the suppliers is evaluated by means of login times, written comments and participation of quizzes and questionnaires. This will show the client how effective the communication plan is and if the suppliers do adapt the information.</td>
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</table>
Interview with Ana, owner of a restaurant (May 2, 2014)

Interviewer: K

Respondent: A

K: Well, first of all I would like to thank you for this opportunity. The interview will last about 15–30 minutes and will be recorded if you don't mind. Anonymity is reassured.

A: Sounds great!

K: So, to start with the interview I would like to introduce you to the topic briefly.

A: Ok, perfect

K: In the past few years the amount of Russian tourists coming to Barcelona and its' surrounding has been increasing rapidly.

A: Yeah

K: And even though there is such a high number of Russian tourists, the majority of employees in the hospitality industry has some sort of, well, prejudices or negative associations in regards of Russian tourists.

A: Ah, ok, I guess it's kind of true...

K: That is why my client ‘When In Barcelona’ would like to find out how the current Russian tourism market in Barcelona looks like and what the cooperating companies should or could do in order to adapt to that certain market properly.

A: Alright, well I hope I can give you some good answers.

K: I don't have any doubt about that.

A: (laughing)

K: So, as you mentioned to me on the phone, you have worked with Russian tourists in the two restaurants that you own here in Barcelona?

A: Yes, exactly...we always have Russian visitors, sometimes even daily...I don't know if it is because of our location here right next to the ‘Palau de la Musica’ or just in general, but they are always here

K: The location is definitely an advantage, but also as I said, the number of Russian tourists in Barcelona rises and rises. So you say there are a lot of Russians coming to your restaurant/bar...hm...could you distinguish a certain age group that takes up the majority?

A: Yeah, they're quite middle aged...

K: middle aged?
A: Yeah, we rarely rarely have young Russian customers...I mean young as 18 or 25….Most of them seem more like they are in their 30’s or 40’s.

K: Ok…and within that group of customers can you tell in what ‘social class’ they are?

A: I would also say middle...

K: ok, middle huh? So it’s not like a lot of people think and have prejudices about ‘filthy rich’ Russian people who travel?

A: No, not at all

K: So, what would you consider as a typical Russian tourist?

A: I don’t know, it’s quite difficult...ehm....they obviously have more income than we do...furthermore, they are very easy to spot...do you know what I mean? Just considering the outward appearance...They are huge and you can just tell by the way they dress ....well, at least I can easily see who is Russian and who isn’t as soon as they come through the door...

K: Why do you think that?

A: I think through my personal experience and I am married to a Serbian...Obviously it’s a different country, but Eastern European countries do have some similarities and I kind of figured out some differences per country by now.

K: I agree on that and I can also imagine that it’s easier for you to ‘spot’ Russians. It is for me as well...

A: Yeah, and another thing that I find typical about Russian is that they don’t speak any other languages...

K: So they only speak Russian?

A: Yeah, they only speak Russian...

K: And how do you handle that?

A: We made a menu in Russian a few weeks ago...

K: Ok, that’s helpful I guess? And do you have someone in your team that speaks Russian?

A: Well, I kind of try to deal with Russians if I am here at that moment...when I speak or try to speak Serbian to them they kind of feel more...confident? And even though we don’t understand each other, they have more patience and are more willing to try to understand...otherwise they get really stressed...stressed and even frustrated if they do not understand and cannot communicate what they want...and then they tend to become a bit rude in defense...

K: Ok, I would have never thought that....but otherwise would you describe them as open-minded or interested or rather ignorant or simple or complicated customers?

A: They are definitely more complicated...yeah, way more complicated.
K: Do you think the language barrier has a large impact on the complication?

A: Yes, I believe that it plays a very big role, but I would also say it is a cultural thing...that they are used to their thing and we to our...I had several people come here and they don't understand the concept of tapas, so they see it as a problem and don't understand why they get a small plate served with a few little things to eat and wonder where is the rest or where is my meat, my potatoes and so on...

K: Yes, it's obviously a new culinary experience which they maybe haven't expected...

A: Exactly and then it starts where you have to explain; sorry, these are tapas, which are small portions of different foods and it's not really a real full meal...

K: Of course...so since you said that you kind of can communicate with them with a mix of Serbian and Russian do your employees normally call you to take over a table?

A: No, well when I'm there at the moment then maybe, but when I'm not here they obviously have to handle it by themselves and all our staff is trained to be polite, friendly and nice and we always punctuate on having special patience and usually then I try to deal with them, but loads of them actually just leave...I don't know..

K: So they start talking and then they notice the miscommunication or rather a lack of communication...

A: Yes, yes and then they get really frustrated and just leave...I don't know, it might be some kind of insecurity...instead of a deep breath, calming down and trying to explain...nowadays everyone one has a smart phone, so you can always grab your phone, open a translator and get helped with that.

K: Of course, especially when you go to a different country it is always useful to know a few helpful words.

A: Exactly and I even get actual products from the kitchen to show to them to facilitate the communication, but they get really frustrated with that and leave...

K: What do you think is the reason for that?

A: You know, I think it's mostly embarrassment and maybe that they're pride gets offended...

K: Hm, because they don't exactly know how to react on that or how to deal with the situation where they are not understood...

A: Yes, yes, but I also think that when you travel to a different country it should be obvious that not everyone speaks your language and we really try to do our best to accommodate them as best as we can...

K: So, do you think that they have higher expectations than people from other countries when they travel to Barcelona?
A: Yes I think so, it almost seems like they expect that people over here speak Russian... Yesterday there was this Russian lady that came here and she spoke French and she kept speaking French to me and I couldn’t make her understand that... well, luckily I do understand a tiny bit of French due to Spanish, but she just didn’t understand that I don’t actually speak French... She came in with two friends and started saying “Bonjour” and I thought it’s probably a fun French lady and answered with “Bonjour” and when I came to take the orders she kept talking in French....

K: And you still couldn’t make her understand?

A: No I told her several times and asked for English or Spanish and she kept saying things like “Oui mademoiselle...”..well it was tough, but we got there in the end and they stayed and didn’t get frustrated although there was quite some miscommunication

K: So she also stayed patient and friendly?

A: Yes, she was patient and she was with a couple that didn’t speak any other language so she was a little bit in charge and it gave her an extra confidence boost that she spoke a different language even if it wasn’t the right one...

K: (laugh) well she tried at least I guess... so would you compare Russian tourists with some other cultural group of people?

A: Hm, to me kind of all Eastern European cultures are quite similar... they are all quite like, hm, this is maybe too deep, but it is very easy to “break” as soon as they...hmm... they’re pride gets harmed a bit they get really really small... so that could be one ‘box’ that I would put them in... but they are a bit harder than the usual, because French they just speak French, but they don’t have this heavy energy and they don’t leave if they don’t understand, we can have a laugh

K: Well, that was it for the questions that I had regarding Russian tourists... Now I would like to ask you a few questions about how you handle change within your restaurant...

A: Ok!

K: So, do you believe there should be a certain change introduced within your restaurant in order to adapt to the Russian tourism market?

A: I would say so... I think it would be good to know more about them to be able to lose those prejudices and understand their mentality better.

K: How do you implement changes within your work field?

A: We have a very open and friendly work atmosphere here and sometimes my employees propose a change, be it for the menu or working hours or what not... then we normally discuss it with my husband and see if the change is realizable and necessary... then we usual try to make a plan and discuss it with the employees... hereby I obviously mean bigger changes that you can’t just throw into the room and expect everyone to understand.

K: Could you give an example for a change where you would do a proper planning?
A: For example if we change the menu, we start with the idea because we either see that our customers aren’t completely satisfied and then we lead the change by brainstorming all together, presenting the best ideas and what we want to achieve and so on!

K: So you do follow certain steps in a change process or is it rather happening naturally?

A: Hm, I would say rather naturally…of course we try to do a plan when we change something, but that is more for ourselves…

K: Do you think you would appreciate a proper planning of a change process?

A: Yes, of course! I think that would be the best for a long lasting change, but we just don’t take the time to do it that way.

K: And how about resistance? Theories state that there are certain ways to avoid resistance when trying to implement change…that could be something like involving your employees for negotiation about the change, working in a result-oriented way, offering rewards or penalties, changing by learning or leaving it up to the natural process…what do you think is most realizable for change or have you used any of these before?

A: Yes, we include our employees by means of negotiation definitely, but also by learning…sometimes we do trainings or little workshops within the company to show new techniques and so on…

K: And your employees do accept it?

A: yes, as I said, we have a very friendly and open working environment and everybody supports each other!

K: Well, thank you so much for your time and your experiences! It was very helpful!

A: No problem at all!

K: If you want I can send you a transcript of the interview!

A: Sure, why not!
Interview with Sofia, Receptionist at 5* Hotel (May 2, 2014)

Interviewer: K
Respondent: S

K: Thank you so much Sofia for taking your time to do this interview with me! I’m very happy it worked out after all.

S: No problem at all! I’m happy if I can help you somehow...

K: The interview will take about 15 to 30 minutes and will be recorded if that is ok. Anonymity is reassured.

S: Ok, perfect!

K: Ok, well to give you a brief insight into the project; I am writing my bachelor thesis in cooperation with ‘When In Barcelona’ about Russian tourists in Barcelona and how they affect the hospitality industry in order to find out what entrepreneurs in the hospitality business that are working with ‘When in Barcelona’ need to know to adapt properly to this market as currently there are still a lot of prejudices and fears...

S: Oh, no doubt about that...

K: Really? What do you mean by that?

S: Well, I just think of my own experiences and those of my colleagues and I can easily say that we do have quite some prejudices… or let’s say rather negative associations with Russian tourists…sad, but true...

K: Ok, well, let’s start with this; what is a typical Russian tourist for you?

S: Hmm, a typical Russian tourist? Let me think.....from what I have experienced here a typical Russian tourist in Barcelona is someone with money, very proud and quite reserved.

K: What do you mean by a proud and quite reserved?

S: Most of the time they kind of like to show off what they have and the more they have the more they show off, so it seems....they show off and kind of communicate that they are better than you, but at
the same time you cannot talk to them as easily as you would to other people, I mean talk in a 'friendly', socializing and casual way and not having to feel like there is some kind of hierarchy…

K: Hm, do you believe they are always like that or that it is the only type of Russian tourists in Barcelona?

S: No, probably not, you can never generalize people, but that is my personal experience and thereby you have to consider that I am working in a 5-star hotel…

K: Of course…

S: …and I hope I don’t sound harsh or anything…

K:…no no, I appreciate your honest opinion very much! So, their 'social class' would be upper class then I guess?

S: Yes, I would say so!

K: What about the age? Could you distinguish one age group of Russian tourists that come to Barcelona?

S: Mostly middle-aged, I would say 35–50 years old…and a lot of times it’s couples where you can see quite an age difference between the man and the wife.

K: You mean the man being older?

S: Exactly and you can always notice that the men are most of the time the ones in charge, taking care of the finances and the women are very lady like are don’t say much…it sounds like a cliché, doesn’t it?

K: (laughs)…it does, but I guess every cliché is a bit true…so you say that the men are the ones in charge mostly. Does that also account for the communication part? Do you mostly talk to them?

S: Yes, unless the women speak better English...

K: This leads me to my next question regarding communication; how is their English?

S: Hmm, communication is always a bit of a problem because very often their English is not really good and it makes the whole situation more difficult…they get even more reserved when they cannot communicate what they need or want…

K: And how do you handle those situations?

S: I try to stay calm and patient and luckily I have several Russian speaking colleagues that I can call in situations where it is really necessary!

K: That’s quite fortunate! How do the Russian guests react or behave when they cannot communicate what they need or want?

S: Sometimes they try to explain something, but if they notice it doesn’t go anywhere they just leave it and say it doesn’t matter…and I do really always try my best to understand and help them, but
sometimes it just really doesn’t work out and I can see that they get disappointed or frustrated and we obviously don’t want that to happen..

K: Of course, it’s understandable that you want to make every guest happy… and then do you see a difference of when the guests try to talk to you and when they talk to a Russian colleague of yours?

S: Yes, a huge difference, enormous! They talk a lot and let out everything they have to comment on or have a complaint about! They can also get very rude and, hmm, what is it called?...demeaning!

K: In what sense?

S: Well, they can start to almost scream if there is something isn’t the way they want it to be and just talk in a very disrespectful way...

K: And how do your Russian speaking colleagues react when someone calls them to talk to Russian guests?

S: As sad as it is, but they are not very happy about it because normally they get to hear all the negative things that the Russians are not able to explain to Spanish speaking personnel, and then obviously have to deal with that

K: Hm, yeah that is understandable!

S: You know, I do understand that they expect a lot when they stay at a five star hotel where they spend a lot of money, but being able to compare them to guests from other countries, I can immediately say that the majority from other countries behaves completely different and is more likely to stay friendly in sensitive situations...

K: Yes, I also understand that! Nevertheless, could you compare Russian tourists to tourists from another country?

S: Hmm, I don’t know… maybe Arabic countries as guests from those countries tend to be very demanding as well, but there communication e.g. is usually no problem at all.

K: And do you think that Russians have higher expectations than other guests?

S: I wouldn’t say higher, I would say that Russians have different kinds of expectations..

K: Could you give an example?

S: Well, Russians like to have a certain kind of special attention and definitely more than tourists from other countries. It often seems like they enjoy being served to feel their 'power'

K: Ah, ok… so generally speaking, do you believe that there is some kind of prejudices or even fears of Russian tourists?

S: Yes, without a doubt! A lot of my colleagues react in a kind of negative way when they know that Russian tourists are arriving and comments like "Oh no, Russians arriving" appear.

K: Oh is that true?
S: Yes, unfortunately…but don’t get me wrong, it has nothing to do with racism or so and we still all do the same very best services for them as for others!

K: Of course, I would not doubt that at all. Could you tell me about a positive situation that you’ve had with Russian tourists?

S: Yes, we have a had a family with two kids staying here once and the children were really open-minded and asked us a lot of questions about Barcelona…by the way, they were speaking English very well and it is mostly like that; the younger they are, the better English they speak. Anyways, those children were very fun and we did a little surprise for them and brought them children’s cocktails up to their terrace. So, as the parents noticed that the staff was taking such good care of the kids, they were very thankful and left very happy!

K: That sounds great!

S: Yeah, so there are always exceptions!

K: And any negative experiences that you have in mind?

S: Yes, I remember several situations where my Russian colleague got screamed on by Russians or talked to in a very disrespectful way while five minutes earlier being very reserved talking to me or other English speaking colleagues.

K: Well I can understand the negative aspect then…Generally speaking, Sofia, can you see an increase of Russian tourists coming to stay at your hotel?

S: Yes, it became more and more throughout the years, I started working here about 4 years ago and especially in the last two years we have so many more Russian tourists arriving…we also have several repeating customers that come here for business purposes almost once a month.

K: And do you do anything specifically in your hotel to make Russian guests feel more comfortable?

S: Hm, if you mean it like that; we obviously have several employees that speak Russian and we have our welcome kit with information about the hotel and its’ facilities as well as about the city in Russian since recently.

K: Yes, that is what I meant. So how would you describe your relationship with Russian tourists?

S: Hm, that’s a tough question…I think I would describe it as difficult.

K: And why is that?

S: Well, because of the completely different mentalities for once and for the fact that the communication is very difficult

K: Ok, and what do you believe would be helpful to know about Russians to help to improve this?

S: Hm, maybe it would be useful to know important facts about their mentality, how they like to travel and how to deal with it? And maybe it would also be nice to know a few sentences or even just words in Russian because maybe that could show Russian tourists that you are interested and helps to ease
things up. I think that would make them trust us more and make them feel more comfortable around us…

K: How do you think do Russian tourists affect the hospitality industry in Barcelona at the moment and in the future?

S: Hm, I think they do have an influence, because it is becoming so much more and they are basically financially supporting Barcelona, so maybe it is important to get more interested in the Russian tourism market to be able to avoid all the prejudices

K: But in general do you believe that it is important to know the travel behaviors or cultures of different cultural groups that you get here as tourists?

S: Yes, definitely…obviously not each and every culture perfectly, but to know the most important facts about their mentalities would be helpful already to not get offended in certain situations, you know what I mean?

K: Yes! Well thank you Sofia, that was already it regarding Russian tourists and now I have only a couple of questions about change in your work field!

S: Ok!

K: Do you think it is necessary to introduce a certain change within your work field to in order to prepare for the Russian tourism market?

S: I do think it would be helpful to do something as there is more and more Russians coming here and yeah, we don’t really know much about them, which just makes it all more difficult combined with the language problem!

K: What are the most common ways to introduce or implement change within your work environment?

S: Hm, it depends! Mostly, if it’s some sort of process that needs to be changed or behavioral changes, our managers explain it to us or show us or so…

K: So most changes are initiated and implemented by the management?

S: Yes, normally!

K: Do you know anything about certain steps that are done to implement the change?

S: Not much…I think, because it is such a big hotel, they normally divide tasks for supervisors and managers and then there is supervision if the change is implemented properly, if that’s what you mean…

K: Yes, exactly…are you presented with a change vision, goals or anything like that?

S: Yes, we are always told what should be achieved by that change!
K: Ok…so there are theories that state that certain things can be done in order to avoid the resistance from employees regarding a change! What does the management in your case do to make sure that the employees are ok with the change?

S: Hmm…

K: Do they involve you by means of for example discussing or negotiating the change beforehand or do they offer rewards for good implementation of the change? Another action could be to do learning workshops to introduce the change on a common basis.

S: Yes, we definitely do workshops to learn new procedures or so in groups and we also had it that we noticed that something had to change in the front desk procedures to avoid misunderstanding and chaos and we did a brainstorming session, where everyone was able to share own opinions and ideas.

K: Ok, great! That was it already! Thank you once again so so much for this interview and your time!

S: My pleasure!

K: If you want I can send you a copy of this interview transcript.

Interview with Donald, Maitre at a restaurant (April 24, 2014)

Interviewer: K

Respondent: D

K: Well, first of all I would like to thank you for taking your time for this interview! It will take about 15–30 minutes and it will be recorded and kept anonymous!

D: Perfect! Let’s start!

K: I’ll give you a brief idea about my project. In the past couple of years the amount of Russian tourists in Barcelona has been constantly increasing, year by year, but employees in the hospitality industry do still have sorts of prejudices and even fears of Russian tourists as in them being rude, filthy rich, etc. As you know my client ‘When in Barcelona’ is thinking about expanding to the Russian tourism market in Barcelona. That is why I am investigating the current situation and what kind of relationships employees in the hospitality industry in Barcelona have with Russian tourists.

D: Ah, that sounds very interesting…

K: So, do you get a lot of Russian tourists?

D: We do! It depends on the weeks, sometimes it’s a bit more, some weeks it’s less, but we always do. Today we had a couple as well.

K: And how do they know about this restaurant? Or do they just walk in?

D: Ehm, normally they just walk in by chance, but we are also in a little guide that I forgot the name of…
K: That is in Russian?

D: Yes, Russian and English and it’s directed to the Russian public…

K: Ok

D: And we have a strong mouth-to-mouth marketing, you know when Russians come here once and they love it, they will send other people too…but that’s my guesses because we don’t really know as they are not very communicative; they come, they eat, they pay and they go, you know?

K: And how is the communication? Do they speak English or Spanish?

D: No Spanish at all, if, then just very very little, maybe one or two in a hundred speak a little bit of Spanish, but normally a bit of English, if it’s a couple normally one of them speaks English, the other one doesn’t and normally the women speak more English than the guys, normally! Yeah, but the communication is very little; they tell you “I want that” and show you what or they ask for your recommendations. And I don’t know if they really understand everything I explain or not because I don’t speak like an Indian or so, my English is very good and I speak very clearly…

K: Aha, ok

D: And sometimes you can really get that they don’t understand what I’m talking about and then you just point at the menu and say “this is fish, this is meat, entrecote good, fish is tuna filet” and so on…

K: Ok, because you only have a menu in English?

D: Yeah, English and Spanish, I don’t have anything in Russian, but with the English one you just have to and can manage it..

K: Do you feel or see a certain reaction from the Russian tourists when they don’t understand you? Insecurity or anything?

D: Sort of, I mean there is always someone who understands more than the rest, but in general they get sort of aggressive I would say and inclosed and a bit rude, yeah, and of course they don’t like to speak any other language than Russian and many times you can clearly tell that, because I ask them if they understand English or Spanish and they say “Russian” and I laugh a bit of course trying to break the ice and they just stay very serious and make you clear that they only speak Russian…

K: Are there cultures where the same happens, but that can laugh about it?

D: Yeah like the French or Italian or so, they are much more easy going…well and then you just switch back to serious mode and just try to explain the menu and point out the dishes that we really recommend…and sometimes they ask for pasta and other classic dishes, but our restaurant isn’t a classic food restaurant so often it is difficult for them to understand or to explain that we serve a fusion between different regions and have products from the Mediterranean with cheeses and all kinds of other things, so…some of them just let you do and decide for them and just let you bring whatever you recommend, some others just want an entrance and a main course, which is not our philosophy as we make everything for sharing, so it is actually difficult for some to understand, but still 80–85% of
the Russian customers leave saying thank you and seeming to have enjoyed the food experience…well they just say a few words like “very good food” and they leave…

K: Ah, alright…I have heard from another restaurant owner that Russian guests even leave when you intend them to explain the menu, but they still don’t understand it, they simply get up and leave frustrated…

D: I mean many times when you give them too many information about the menu and the menu isn’t the most simple one to understand and you show them the pictures of some ingredients, and they say “no, no, no, thank you” and what happens is that I try to rescue them because I don’t want people to leave like that and often if you can get a little bit of communication going they come back, but I also had cases where people come in and we were busy and didn’t give them the right attention in the first five minutes and they stand up leaving…it happened a couple of times with a couple where I tried to catch them at the door tell them “please stay, I will show you how good it is and when you leave you will be happy” and I understood that they were hungry and if you are hungry you get grumpy, but that happens in any culture and not because they are Russians, but because they were hungry and because they wanted attention right away..

K: But do you think they need a special kind of attention or different than others?

D: Not really, not a special attention, but they definitely are special customers…

K: So how would you describe a typical Russian customer or tourist?

D: Hm, not very communicative, they sit down, they want something right away, they don’t really communicate properly but just say “I want this and that” and that’s it…

K: Ok…

D: So when you explain or suggest something they look at you and just nod or shake with the head, so if you would ask “would you like bread con tomato?” they look at each other, they talk to each other and say something in Russian that you don’t get to understand and then it’s just “yeah” or “no”… “no bread?” – “no”, but then a second later they ask for bread and these kind of little things just put the service off and lets them wait longer than they normally would which is just a part of miscommunication because they didn’t understand that you were offering them something…I don’t know if they sometimes feel that we’re trying to oversell them something because we sell little dishes so you should get at least two dishes per person and in the meantime they think we want to take more money from them and just simply oversell stuff

K: But they just don’t really understand the tapas concept?

D: Exactly, sometimes I have to point with my hands that everything should go to the center and trying to explain them that tapas are to share and you basically eat together and enjoy...

K: Aha

D: Mostly when they are younger, they are nicer and they are more open…many times when there is a family, the parents don’t speak any English at all and there is always a little boy or a little girl that
speaks some English and then communicates to us and translates to the parents and the father just says “yes” or “no”...with the wine for example it is always in matters of “do what you want, whatever, red wine” and then I always ask, because I like wines, do you like fruity or this or that and they mostly just let me decide...there is always people that really don’t care about the price and just let me do, but there is also people that want me to point out first of all what they will drink and how much it will cost...we always try to be very honest even if we see that they are already spending a lot of money, I always choose a middle priced wine and middle priced food if they want me to decide and don’t take the most expensive ones... that’s what I don’t want to happen to me if I go to another country...

K: Of course! Do you have a certain age group or social class of Russian tourists coming here?

D: I would say from 30 on, less than 30 years is very odd to see them here or they are with their parents and normally you can see that they are, hmm I wouldn’t say wealthy, but you can see that they have...more money to spend and that they are doing a nice vacation without any restrictions in any way...you can note when they have restrictions and don’t want to spend too much, because they just get water and look at the prices, two dishes and no more, thank you and they go...

K: Hm, but that doesn’t happen too often, does it?

D: Naah, not at all.

K: Ok, and do you think the Russian tourists that you get here, do they mostly travel individually or in groups?

D: I think it’s 50/50, I get many couples and when they’re couples, mostly they are over 40 years old, then we have groups of friends or two guy friends that are out to have fun, to drink and to eat...and there you can also tell how age differs; if they’re between 20 and 30 they speak a lot more English than elder people and the younger people are friendlier...then, if they’re over 35 it is more plain, more conservative and rather strict...

K: And why do you think is that?

D: I think it’s about...ehhm...I mean they grew up in a time that where they were sort of isolated, I think, that’s at least my perception, I’ve never been there...

K: Well, they did start travelling abroad only 20–30 years ago...

D: Exactly and then you can see that these people grew up inside of Russia, never travelled and then suddenly go to a completely different country and I don’t know if they’re maybe a bit against the Western culture, you know? And from movies, for example, regarding history there would always be something said about enemies and so on, so I think that influences the mentality of especially the older generation...

K: Yeah

D: And younger people are more open in that sense, they ask questions and are more interested, for example “So where are you from?” – “Venezuela” – “Oh nice...”...So you can see they are different than the older generations...
K: So you think the older generations are more complicated and more difficult to handle and the younger ones are simpler and more open-minded?

D: Totally! They let me recommend them things and they hear what I say and yeah, they are just open to receive new culture! This is what I do when I travel, I always ask for locals’ recommendations and I want to experience the real culture and country and when I get waiters in a restaurant that are just very unfriendly and not willing to help, I don’t enjoy that and I choose myself, but if I see there is a waiter who likes to take care of their customers I prefer to ask for the recommendations and specialties of that country! So, I think the younger Russian generations are more like this and they’re trying to get culture wherever they go..

K: As authentic as possible...

D: Exactly

K: Does it happen in your work field, I mean with your colleagues that they react differently when Russians come into the restaurant?

D: A little bit of rejection I would say…there is a phrase that we sometimes use, not offensive and not bad, but here in Spain they say a lot "Pan con pan" which means..you know eating pan con pan (bread with bread) is very stupid and we use it for people who don’t really want to think, they don’t really want to do anything new, but they rather want the usual pasta with tomato

K: You mean they don’t want to learn anything?

D: No, they don’t want to learn anything, but just want to eat and don’t want to enjoy food! So these type of people are better off going to Moncho’s where they can point at everything and eat defrosted food, because here we have a great gastronomy and we like to feed people and let them enjoy the delicacies, but this is not the type of restaurant where people would want pasta or pizza! Some Russians are just really surprised about us not having pasta and I have to explain that we are not a regular restaurant! So, some of our waiters refer to those as "pan con pan" ….but then sometimes you get really nice Russian customers and then they would comment “ah, they are pan con pan, but they are very nice people”

K: Hm, ok! Do you remember a certain situation with Russian tourists that was positive?

D: Well, I have very nice customers who are repeating guests and they come to Barcelona, because I think they have business here or something, but they come very often! They speak English very well and even some Spanish and I like it because they like it very much when I remember them...

K: They appreciate it?

D: Ya, they appreciate it a lot! And now when they come here they don’t mind if they have to wait, they don’t mind if we have to change a plate or something like that…and there is one lady who is kind of a vegetarian, well she doesn’t eat pork and she likes that I remember that and we always have good small talk with these kind of people and it’s just nice to have them!

K: Why do you think are they so different?
D: I think that they are adapting more to the Spanish lifestyle or the Western European one by travelling so much! And then we also have families that are surprised by the type of food we serve, they often come with children that actually pushes the parents to try something new…

K: Oh really? Not the other way around as usual, huh?

D: No, I had a table not too long ago where the parents were about 50, very serious and not communicative, no English at all...and the kid was like 15 or 16, he didn't speak too much, but he could understand almost everything, so he was like the messenger; the father said something in Russian, the boy communicated it to me and the father would say yes or no and we chose the food for them and then they were showing me a ‘thumbs up’ and saying “very good, very good”...these kind of situations happened more and more lately!

K: Hm interesting! And what do you think is the biggest problem with the relationship with Russian tourists?

D: I think usually it’s the mentality and the communication that are connected and that make it a big problem because if you have that mentality of being enclosed in yourself, then you don’t want to communicate in another language...you know it’s like if I go to Russia and I only want to speak Spanish, then it’s kind of my own problem...

K: Of course

D: Yeah I mean I’m going to your country and it’s the same thing, I don’t make you speak Spanish or don’t expect it, because I know it is very hard, but then at least try to communicate in a positive way...maybe they have something against English in historical matters, but I don’t really know what kind of ideas they have because I don’t have any Russian friends...

K: Well, I think a big part plays the Russian pride and if they get insecure and they don’t know how to explain themselves or how to communicate something, I think this is a big problem for them...

D: Yes, but then they get a bit rude and arrogant...the other day we had a table of Russians and only one of them spoke some English, not great English, but enough to communicate and everyone was with their mobile, so quite far away from the conversation and they wanted to eat and didn’t understand the menu, so they ended up trusting and relying on me so I didn’t give them too much because they didn’t seem too hungry and in the end they were all happy, all smiling, they all left their mobiles and enjoyed the food...they didn’t really enjoy sharing, because everyone wanted something and as we serve tapas we served all the plates in the center and they kept taking a plate for themselves and I tried to explain to them several times that it is for sharing and they still kept taking the plates for themselves, so I tried joking a bit and saying “no, no, no, in the center” and they seemed to accept me making fun, but in the beginning I am always a bit...ehm...

K: Careful with making jokes?

D: Exactly! And a bit distant even though I am quite warm in my normal personal way and I always try to break the ice a bit to make them feel comfortable and try to adapt them to the tapa thing, because so many people have their own idea of a dinner with first dish, main course and dessert and you always
have to make them understand or convince them that they are in Spain and should experience something typical, but new – “sharing is living” and then they often relax a bit and that’s what this group of people did, they had two bottles of wine and said big thank you afterwards…so that was a very positive experience because in the beginning they were quite complicated and closed in and we were very busy and when someone is complicated and you are very busy and they don’t know what they want and can’t decide…

K: It’s the perfect combination!

D: Yeah…but those are the situations where you have to breath in and breath out and stay calm and still try to give the best possible service and some of my colleagues really don’t have patience for that and ask me “Donald, could you please go and take over that table with the Russians?”

K: You’re the patient one?

D: Kind of (laughs)

K: So what do you think is important to know or to understand about them to be able to communicate better or to ease up the situations?

D: I’ve learned how to say potato once in Russian ‘kartoshka’

K: hah, very good!

D: Yeah and I had a table where we trying to describe some plates and then I said ‘kartoshka’ and they laughed and ordered it and it did really help to ease up the situation..ehm…of course it would be great to learn some Russian, but honestly it’s such a difficult language, what are you going to learn? Three words even if you would need 55? And articles and pronouns and all that? I don’t know I think you just have to be really patient with those people and try to not going to get upset if they don’t understand you or if they don’t want to communicate because they are quite special people and they are proud of who they are and I think you have to understand that they don’t speak any other language than Russian and you are the one giving a service, so you have to adapt in that case…

K: Yeah, yeah…

D: But you know sometimes when they’re too hard and if I would enclose myself too, it would just not work out...

K: Yeah, it would be like ‘pan con pan’...

D: Exactly, but that’s what I say; if you get rude to them or give bad service to them, you won’t even get anything away from that apart from a bad comment and a bad review so try as best as you can or even ignore them a little bit in a friendly way, but don’t get into the same path they are doing; not communicate well, not give info – no, give them information about the food, but don’t overwhelm them with all those new things, but just try your best!

K: …and give them the same service you would give to anyone else.

D: Exactly!
K: Hm, can you compare Russian tourists with any other tourists??

D: Hm, I would say maybe Germans sometimes, quite old German couples that are conservative can be as rude or as uncommunicative as Russian tourists or Finnish, people that have a very difficult language...or I would also say that Russians – in general – can be compared to any kind of conservative elderly people, but this is exactly where you have to have to be able to be flexible when communicating with different types of people and cultures...

K: Yeah and I guess sometimes you also have to put yourself into their position to understand them...

D: Yes, you’re right!

K: Do you think it is important to know a bit about the travel behaviors of different cultures that you get here to understand the different types of customers and how they ‘function’?

D: Ehm, a little bit, but you also learn that with time, you will never learn exactly until you have travelled to those countries and got to learn about it at first hand, but right now for example, you have this drastic differences between cultures; Asians, Europeans depending on the country – more North or South, Nordics, Russians and Arabics, who can be quiet difficult as well...and then it is like “Oh they’re pan con pan” or “they’re Japanese” and you often already know how ‘to get them’ and how to ease up the situation or to make them feel more comfortable and also what type of food they will order, for example Japanese always order squid and tuna and things like that while Russians go for potatoes and meat and so on...

K: Yeah and you already know where you can joke a bit and where you shouldn’t...

D: Yeah, and once we had a big Russian group here that came here through a company and we prepared a special menu for them and translated it into Russian and I did it with Google translator by myself because I didn’t have any time to have it checked, so I had one little mistake in there and that was a thing that eased up the group because I explained to them and they laughed and thought it was funny, but also appreciated the effort for doing the translation...

K: That’s nice.....well, now you know that I speak Russian, I can help you next time!

D: Hah, perfect!

K: Do you think it would be helpful to translate the menu into Russian?

D: Yes, it would definitely make a lot of things easier, but we change our menu every four weeks and you know how much work it is to find someone...now I know I can ask you for help, but before it was to ask someone to ask someone else and so on!

K: Have you noticed an increase of Russian tourists coming here in the past years?

D: Hm, yeah we have been open for a bit more than two years now and yes, I would say yes, depending on the month, but definitely an increase and it always depends on their vacation times obviously, so when they have national holidays there is a peak season of Russians a few times per year and also during winter a lot of wealthier Russians come here to escape from the cold winters...
K: Ok, Donald and my last question is if you think that the hospitality industry in Barcelona is affected in a big way by Russian tourism?

D: Hmm, in general I would say yes, affected positively because there is so many and many more Russians coming here and when they travel, in general they do spend a lot of money, be it for accommodation, shopping or eating out! So, yes and in our restaurant I would say that about 10%, maybe a bit less, are Russian customers

K: Well, these were my questions to you regarding Russian tourists. Now I only have a few questions about how change is handled within this restaurant.

D: Ok, tell me!

K: Firstly; do you think it is necessary to change something within your work field to adapt to the Russian tourism market in Barcelona?

D: Yes, definitely! Working in a high class restaurant we focus a lot on providing our customers with great service, but unfortunately with Russian tourists I don’t think that so far we were able to provide them with good service...I mean everybody knows the problems, but nobody does anything to improve it! And considering them being a nation that is rapidly growing in the tourism of Barcelona, I think something should change for sure!

K: Aha, and how is change normally implemented in your work field?

D: Well, we do a lot of discussions and brainstorming with the top management when we think that something needs to change, we prepare a detailed plan about the change and we divide tasks.

K: Ok, so you have some sort of logical order of steps?

D: Hm, I guess so...we see a problem or something that needs to be changed, we discuss and collect ideas, we decide, we divide tasks and make a plan and then we introduce it to the rest of the team and train them if needed...

K: Does it happen that your colleagues need to be convinced first?

D: Yes, but that’s why we prepare plans in which we consider all kinds of situations and work out the advantages and disadvantages to be able to convince everyone!

K: A theory states that there are different ways for avoiding resistance when introducing change within an organization, for example negotiating with the employees about the change (what should happen if, what cannot change, etc.) or providing rewards if the change is implemented well or creating learning situations, where employees learn in a common way about the change. Would you consider anything like that for your restaurant?

D: I think the ideas about learning together or involving them in the change process from the start are great!

K: Ok, well, thank you very very much for taking your time and sharing your experiences! It was very helpful! If you want I can send you a transcript of this interview.
Interview with Alejandro, vineyard owner (May 5, 2014)

Interviewer: K

Respondent: A

K: Well, Alejandro, first of all thank you for taking your time for this interview to share your experiences with me about Russian tourists!

A: No problem!

K: The interview will take about 15–30 minutes and it will be recorded for my own use. Anonymity hereby is reassured!

A: Ok.

K: I would like to introduce you briefly to my project; as you know I am working together with Ida and Silje from When in Barcelona to investigate the Russian tourism market in Barcelona and to see how the employees in the hospitality industry can adapt better to Russian tourists as at the moment there are still too many negative impressions that tend to irritate the impression of Russian tourists and scare employees in the hospitality industry away…and due to the fact that 'When In Barcelona' is thinking about working with Russian tourists in Barcelona.

A: That is a very interesting topic I think!

K: Yes, I think so too! Well, as you have told me on the phone already, you have worked with Russian tourists here at your vineyard.

A: Yes, that's true...

K: Does it happen often that you receive Russian tourists?

A: Hm, not as often as I have Spanish or French, but I can definitely say that the amount of Russian tourists has increased in the past years...

K: And they come here to do wine tastings and tours through the vineyard?

A: That and to buy wine of course! They always say that it is not easy to find good quality wines in Russia...of course they cannot take a lot of wine back home with them, but they are always happy to do the tastings and buy some wine for their stay in Barcelona…
K: And how does it work with the communication with them?

A: hmm, well you are probably aware of the fact by now that Russians are not the best English speakers...we didn’t know that when we had our first Russian groups coming here about 2 or 3 years ago and as we speak pretty good English, I also thought that Russian tourists would and did not even think about language barriers for some reason

K: Oh, so you had Russian tourists coming and were not able to communicate with them at all?

A: Basically with hands and feet! Each time it was a terrible situation trying to tell people about wines, about the vineyard and so on! Mostly one out of, I don’t know, maybe 1 out of 5 people speaks English, that is sufficient to communicate, but that’s not always like that…

K: And how did you handle such situations?

A: To be honest, I am not sure, we somehow tried to “wing” it every time and imagine how unprofessional that can seem!

K: Yes, I can imagine very well!

A: …but about 10 months ago we have found a Russian speaking assistant who helps out when we have Russian groups coming!

K: Ok, and she is a full-time employee?

A: No, unfortunately we cannot afford it to hire more staff and we could come to an agreement so that she basically comes by whenever we need her for Russian groups…It’s not ideal, but it’s one step forward!

K: That is definitely one big step forward! Do you have assistants for other nationalities that are likely to not speak such good English or Spanish as well?

A: No, unfortunately not! I mean we are a Spanish vineyard, we cannot supply all languages in the world!

K: I can understand that by all means, but why have you decided to ‘hire’ a Russian speaking assistant?

A: On the one hand side because we have noticed an increase of Russian tourists in the past months and years and on the other hand because Russians have a very different mentality I would say…

K: What do you mean by that?

A: Well, their mentality is different by means of character, culture, behavior, attitudes and so on…they are not very communicative as it is, but then having to find a middle way and trying to become “friends” with them without coming forward to them is very difficult! Other cultures, so it seems to me, are easier to be casual around and having a warmer atmosphere than Russian tourists…unfortunately it most often seems that…

K: I’ve heard that several times by now…
A: Yes, and the thing in our little vineyard family we are always trying to let everyone feel good and welcomed and we are a very “warm family”...do you know what I mean?

K: Yes of course! So, could you compare the Russian tourists with another cultural group of tourists? Do you see any similarities?

A: Hm, I was about to say most Eastern European countries are similar, but if I think about it, I would say they are not really comparable with any other culture....other Eastern European countries are way smaller and more world-open, but Russians are different...

K: Could you describe a typical Russian tourist in Barcelona to me?

A: From my experience and opinion?

K: Exactly!

A: wealthy, what’s the word? – Somehow withdrawn and a bit skeptical, but I think they are also changing more and more into being more open-minded

K: Yes?

A: Yeah, I have been talking to our Russian ‘assistant’ and she explained to me that Russians are not the most experienced tourists yet, but that a lot of them are adapting more and more to Western European standards and mentalities and of course this takes time and that it is important to come a step forward to them as well in order to help them to not being so ‘isolated’...

K: That is true! Russians started travelling abroad only about 20 or 30 ago frequently, so they are quite new in that market...you have talked about Russian groups that come to your visit, what do you mean by that? Do they mostly travel in bigger groups or individual?

A: We’ve had several business groups here that come to Barcelona for conferences or incentives and that do a little wine tour with us, but we also have groups of friends mostly consisting of 4 – 8 people coming here...

K: Is there a difference between the groups of friends and the business people?

A: Yes, I would actually say a big difference; the business people come here for business and these kind of activities such as visiting a vineyard are mostly planned by one or two persons, so it is not of common interest...and also these people are older (mostly in their 40’s and early 50’s) and seem more conservative, strict and contained while the groups of friends, I would say they are mostly in their late 20’s and 30’s, are a lot more interested and curious and go to the vineyard because they enjoy wine and want to get to know more about it. They are also a lot more open-minded and to me it always seems to be easier to be on the same wavelength, maybe because they also tend to speak better English.

K: Hm, that’s interesting! How do you believe do they get to know about your vineyard?

A: Mostly it is mouth-to-mouth marketing I believe or they find us on Google when looking for vineyards around Barcelona.
K: Do you have any promotional material in Russian?

A: No, nothing yet, I am quite happy that we have our assistant and we are thinking about translating some informational flyers into Russian and maybe the website as well… but step by step

K: Well, it’s definitely a good first start! What kind of expectations do you think Russian tourists have when they visit your vineyard concerning service?

A: Eh, I think they expect the best service they can have for paying money… with the younger people it isn’t that noticeable, but the older they are and the more money they have, it seems like the friendliness gets less and less… so, yes, in general, I think that they do have higher expectations; they want to be treated very well and attentive… I would say that that is the main difference…

K: Ok, you’re working in quite a small group of people here in the vineyard, right?

A: Yes, we are 6 employees and our Russian occasional assistant…

K: And how does everyone react when you are expecting Russian tourists? Is there a difference between when Russian tourists are arriving compared to the tourists from other countries?

A: You mean between the staff?

K: Yes

A: Not much… we always hope for fun and curious guests and, well, yeah, I’ve heard some colleagues say comments like “let’s hope for some Spanish Russians” meaning that they hope that those certain Russian tourists have accumulated to the Spanish casual and easy-going lifestyle… but in general we are happy about every guest we get!

K: Do you remember a positive situation that you have had here with Russian tourists?

A: Yes, last year we had a relatively young Russian couple (in their 30’s) that did a tour through the vineyard with us and a wine tasting… they both spoke good enough English to communicate just fine… They were so happy with everything and thankful that they came back a few days later again with cheeses that they bought at a farmer’s market in Barcelona and some other friends that were travelling with them and we organized a private little wine–cheese–olive tasting with them! It was great and I still remember them very well!

K: Oh that sounds great!… And a negative experience that you remember?

A: Hm, negative situations are when the guests take part in a tour, but don’t really care and don’t even try to make an effort to seem interested or when they talk to you in a dismissive way and think that they are better than you… I remember that we had that several times in the business groups, where it is not even fun to show them around…

K: Yeah I can imagine… Several studies about tourists in general state that Russian tourists are some of the worst behaved tourists in the world and that they are considered to be loud, rude and difficult. Does that description fit the profile of Russian tourists that you receive?
A: Not really, I think these are more the typical stereotypes from years ago that still many people have about Russian tourists…sure, they are more difficult than other tourists, they are reserved, but not rude, nor loud…at least not the Russian tourists that I’ve had here.

K: What would you like to know more about Russian tourists or what do you think is important to know about them in order to understand them?

A: I think it would be good to know about their mentality, the reasons why they are so reserved and maybe cultural differences!

K: Why do you think that is important?

A: Well, to know how they “function” and to be able to come forward to them…if you understand them better, you can prepare better for them

K: So how do you think do Russian tourists affect the hospitality industry in Barcelona, currently and in the future?

A: I think they are quite important in matters of financial “support”…I’ve read an article in the newspaper not too long ago where it said that Russians are the biggest spenders in Barcelona, so yes, I think they are important and not just because of money, but also because of the fact that it is such an enormous country, so if Barcelona becomes “friends” with a country like Russia we can be sure, that there will be more and more guests coming from there!

K: Yes, that might be true! So, these were my questions regarding Russian tourists and now I just have a few questions about change within your organization.

A: Ok.

K: First of all, do you think something should change in your organization in order to be better prepared for the Russian tourist market in Barcelona?

A: Hm, yes and no I guess! It would be great to be able to welcome Russian tourists in a better way, communicate in a better way and to give them the best experience we can! But if we do that for Russian tourists, wouldn’t we have to do it for every nation that we receive here?

K: I don’t think so! You can specialize on different nations and if you don’t want, nobody is forced to do anything.

A: You’re right! I guess it would be good to be able to prepare better! I am always so ashamed when we have Russian guests and I cannot communicate properly with them…I am so happy that we have found our Russian speaking assistant which is a blessing to us and very very helpful!

K: I can imagine! So how do you normally introduce change within your work field?

A: Since we are such a small team we normally just discuss changes together and how to act and what needs to be done and it usually works out fine!
K: So you don’t follow a process of steps that lead to the change? Such as identifying the urgency for change, establishing a team or set of people as guides for the change, developing a change vision, convince your employees and so on?

A: Well, if I think about it, I think we go through those steps without a purpose!

K: Oh yeah, of course that is very likely! And how about avoiding of resistance from your employees/colleagues? Theories state that it there are different ways, depending on the company climate, to avoid resistance by doing certain things like negotiating the change processes with employees, setting up rewards for successful implementation of change, providing learn groups where they can learn together! Could you imagine doing something like that?

A: Yes, I think the idea about changing something by learning all together is really good! Especially in our team!

K: Ok! Well Alejandro, this was my last question! Thank you so much for your taking your time and for sharing your experiences and opinions! It was very helpful!

A: Oh my pleasure! It was fun and if you need more help, just let me know!

K: I can send you a transcript of the interview if you want!

A: No, that’s alright!

K: Thank you!

Interview with Juan–Carlos, staff at guest–services at 5* Hotel (May 16, 2014)

Interviewer: K

Respondent: J

K: Thank you so much Juan–Carlos, for taking your time for this interview!

J: Of course!

K: The interview will take about 15–30 minutes and it will be recorded for my own use and anonymity is obviously assured.

J: Ok!

K: First of all I would like to introduce you quickly to the topic of my project; I am working together with ‘When in Barcelona’ and investigating the Russian tourism market in Barcelona as they would like to expand their company to work with Russian tourists in Barcelona. However, currently there are still
a lot of prejudices about Russians and people tend to be ‘afraid’ of them as they don’t know how to handle them!

J: Hm, yeah I can imagine!

K: That is why I am investigating the current relationships of entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry in Barcelona with Russian tourists, their experiences, opinions and thoughts to see what needs to change or how those entrepreneurs can adapt to the Russian tourism market…

J: That sounds great! I think they are a very strong nation, but often misunderstood!

K: Why do you think that happens?

J: I think because they have a very different mentality than people from Western Europe or Southern Europe...

K: In what way are they different?

J: In basically everything! Their culture, their mentality…Russians are a lot more, hmm, reserved and not so easy-going compared to Spanish people for example...

K: Ok, so how would you describe a typical Russian tourist?

J: I would say they are very proud people, the wealthier the prouder…I consider them as cold people and hard to communicate with, which is probably also due to the fact that they mostly speak Russian and nothing else…But I would also say that we shouldn’t forget that they are travelling, especially to places like Barcelona which is full of culture and history, so they are maybe not the most open-minded people, but they are definitely trying

K: What do you think is the main reason of Russian tourists to come to Barcelona?

J: Well, I think a lot of them do come here for shopping, especially guests that stay in this hotel…a large part also comes here for business, as Russians are investing a lot in realty at the moment, but in general I would actually say it’s a mix of the Mediterranean weather, the culture, history and lifestyle of the city.

K: You mentioned that it is hard to communicate with Russian tourists, how do you handle that?

J: As I said they don’t speak very much English, so it is always quite difficult to develop a connection with them as we always try to with all of our guests…In a hotel with about 480 rooms, it is not that easy to know every arriving guest, so sometimes when I am at the front door welcoming the guests and you notice they are Russians and don’t understand any English or Spanish, it’s already a first negative impression and that mixed together with the tiredness from travelling results in tourists that seem to be dissatisfied, impatient and a bit arrogant or rude. Sometimes, when we are lucky we have one of our Russian speaking colleagues close that can help out quickly and from experience I can say that this is always very much appreciated and welcomed by the Russian tourists!

K: So do you believe this is the only problem with “Russian” tourists that employees in the hospitality industry of Barcelona have to face?
J: It’s not the only problem, but one big problem! Russians are an important group of tourists that support Barcelona as a tourist destination… I think a bigger problem is the impression of Russian tourists from the hospitality industry from years ago when Russians were considered as loud and rude tourists and the thing is that there are always tourists in Barcelona throughout the whole year and with the high amounts of French, German and American tourists, Barcelona’s hospitality industry doesn’t seem to care too much about the dissonances concerning Russian tourists as they and millions of other tourists still come here…

K: What do you think should happen to solve this?

J: I think first of all it should be clarified to the hospitality industry that tourists from every country are important and valuable for the city and then… I don’t know… maybe there should be crash courses on cultural differences or something like that, so that we get to know more about Russian culture and mentality?

K: How about the age of Russian tourists in Barcelona? Can you distinguish one certain age group which accounts for the majority of Russian visitors in the hotel?

J: Hm, mostly it’s couples in their 40’s I would say and the older they are the less English they speak and the more conservative they are… But we also get more and more younger people of 20 to 30 years old which are a lot more open-minded!

K: Do you notice the increase of Russian tourists in Barcelona?

J: Yes, immensely! It seems like we are getting Russian guests almost every day now!

K: Ok, in what way do you think do they affect the hospitality industry in Barcelona?

J: Russia is a whole new market and offers Barcelona a great opportunity to expand and improve. I am pretty sure that they don’t amount for the highest percentage of visitors, but they are still increasingly coming to Barcelona and they are one, if not the highest spending nation in Barcelona…so, yes, I think they do have quite a big affect on the hospitality industry… another reason for better preparation for the Russian market!

K: Good thought! Would you compare Russian tourists with tourists from a different country, like the USA, Germany, France or England for example?

J: I wouldn’t compare any tourists, each country has its own identity and of course then there are the exceptions… Since Russian people don’t speak English it just makes it harder to communicate with. But then again, how many languages do the British and the Americans generally speak? Europeans usually are less likely to get into long and personal conversations, whereas Americans will tell you their entire lives and Russians just tend to be more skeptical I guess and therefore also more reserved and careful!

K: And do you believe they have higher expectations than tourists from other countries when they are travelling here and staying in the hotel?
J: Hm, yes that I do believe…the thing that always surprises me is that they can be quite demanding and become rude when something isn’t the way they want it to be, but only to Russian speaking personnel as otherwise they can’t express what they want…I am actually quite happy sometimes that I don’t speak Russian! (laughs)

K: Ha, in that case I can imagine! Are there any kinds of prejudices or fears about Russian tourists in your work field or do your colleagues make comments when Russians are arriving?

J: Yes, definitely! The fact that it is very difficult to communicate with them, and that not only because of the language barrier, but also because of their skeptical touch, does create a certain fear and prejudices or comments? Yes…it’s shameful, but there is always someone who says something like “Oh no, some more lovely Russian guests”…

K: No need to be ashamed! That's what I am doing this interview for, to find out what should change! Generally speaking do you think that you behave or act differently with tourists from different countries?

J: No, it depends more on the personality of each tourist, some (mostly Americans) are usually very receptive and like to talk and ask, so it is normally quite easy-going with them…well, yeah I guess in general I am more easy-going when I talk to American guests than when I have to deal with Russian guests because of their rather withdrawn personality…but I always think that it is very important to read people’s body language. You see if they want to talk and you can be kind to them or when it’s better to leave them alone.

K: I understand! Do you remember a positive situation that you have had with Russian tourists?

J: Hm, nothing in specific!

K: And a negative one?

J: Well, negative in those cases where it’s impossible to give the guests a warm welcome because of language barriers…it’s not great having to welcome people when they are tired and exhausted after a flight and have some requests or something and all you can do to help them is make them wait for your Russian speaking colleague!

K: Of course! So what do you think is important to know about Russian tourists in order to cope with them, to be prepared for them and to make them happy?

J: Maybe it would be good to know a few sentences or words that could ease up the stiffness when they arrive and to show them that you care and that you try! Don’t you think it might show them that you are willing to do something to make them feel good?

K: I think it would!

J: …and as I mentioned before, some sort of crash courses or something like that regarding cultural differences!
K: So that was already it regarding questions about Russian tourists! Now I have a few questions about change within your work field.

J: Ok

K: First of all do you think it is necessary to introduce a certain change within your company to adapt better to the Russian tourist market in Barcelona?

J: I wouldn’t say it is completely necessary, but I do think that it would be very helpful if we want to provide them with a better service…as I said I think they are an important part of Barcelona’s tourism and why not make an effort to give them something back?

K: And what are the most common ways of change implementation in your work environment?

J: Hm, mostly we get instructions via e-mail or our manager explains to us at our daily briefing. Sometimes if it something more important that involves money, we are shown and trained…

K: Ok, and are you aware of certain steps that are being followed by the top management when introducing change?

J: Hm, not really…do you mean how they plan the change?

K: Exactly…do they involve other employees in the planning? Do they have one team that distributes the information about change? Are goals presented and is there long-term supervision of the change process?

J: Yes, sometimes they involve managers or supervisors from different departments and they are then the messengers to “lower” employees…and then of course there is supervision once in a while to see if the change is being maintained…

K: Ok, and is there anything done to avoid resistance from employees/colleagues? Theories about change state that it is useful to do certain things in order to avoid resistance like involving employees in the planning of change and let them negotiate, working on a strict result-oriented manner, provide rewards for those who implement the change successfully or provide learning groups where employees can learn and adapt the change together…

J: Well, we do have rewards sometimes, that’s true and the learning groups are done as well sometimes…once we were supposed to change certain things of being a concierge and we did a 2–hour workshop about that in groups…

K: Was that helpful?

J: Yes and it’s so much easier to learn in a group…easier and more fun!

K: I totally agree with you! Well, thank you Juan–Carlos for your time! I appreciate that a lot and you were very helpful! If you want I can send you a transcript of the interview!

J: Ok, great!
Interview with Bianca, owner of several holiday apartments (April 30, 2014)

Interviewer: K
Respondent: B

K: Well, first of all thank you for taking your time to do this interview, Bianca!

B: Oh of course! I hope I can be of help!

K: I’m sure you are! The interview takes about 15–30 minutes and will be recorded for my own use and the anonymity is assured!

B: Alright!

K: I would like to introduce you to my topic and explain to you the purpose of and reason for this interview…As you already know I am working with ‘When in Barcelona’ because they would like to start working with the Russian tourism market in Barcelona.

B: That is definitely a smart move!

K: Yes, with the research I have done so far I can surely say that there is big potential in that market…nevertheless, there are still a lot of prejudices about Russian tourists…that is why I am researching the current relationship of employees in the hospitality industry in Barcelona with Russian tourists, their experiences and opinions in order to see how they can prepare and adapt to that market…

B: Great!

K: So, do you work a lot with Russian tourists?

B: Hm, It has been becoming a lot more in the past two or three years I would say…we are getting booking requests from Russian tourists all the time now!

K: How many apartments do you own and rent?

B: We have 5 in total all over Barcelona.

K: And how do Russian tourists find you?

B: We have listings on websites like Airbnb.com and others…I think that’s the one that brings us most Russian guests.

K: So you don’t have specific listings in Russian or on Russian-only websites?
B: No, not yet…we are thinking about doing that because we can see how much that market is increasing, but so far we didn’t have to do anything in addition to receive Russian tourists, so it might be extra unnecessary work…

K: Ok, so how would you describe a typical Russian tourist in Barcelona?

B: Well, that’s a difficult question…obviously each Russian is different, but I guess the one thing that seems to be similar all the time to me is that it’s hard to get to a certain casual or friendly point with…

K: What do you mean by that?

B: They are so different from us regarding their nature…they tend to be quite cautious and contained and it is very hard to tell if they are happy or angry with something because communication isn’t always the best as often they speak very bad English…but I also have to say that the communication in general is getting better and better and a lot of younger Russian tourists, they do speak better English…so, once again; a typical Russian tourist for me is contained, but in a process of change, from what I have observed, to become more communicative and open–minded…

K: So at the moment they are not open-minded?

B: I guess they are to some extent, also just considering that they are actually travelling abroad, but for example French or Italians they always ask a lot and are interested in getting to know one and talk a lot more in general, so it is a lot easier to be on the same level with them…with Russians not so much…I always wonder if it is because of the language barrier or is it just their mentality?

K: I would say it is a mixture of both…while working on this research project I got to see how people think about Russian people, but from my own experience I would rather say that they are very warm people, who need a little bit of time to “warm” up and become loose as they tend to be a bit skeptical…

B: Hmm, yeah I can really imagine that, but unfortunately I haven’t had that kind of experience yet!

K: Is there a positive experience that you remember with Russian tourists?

B: Well, I remember this one family that stayed in one of the apartments with their two kids and the kids were just so open and fun and interested in Barcelona…I actually organized a Russian speaking help for this one particular check-in and it turned out that I didn’t even need it at all even though the parents weren’t really speaking English very well, the kids made up for it and had enough vocabulary to communicate on a simple basis with me! I think I have spent a bit more than an hour with them for the check-in, when it normally only takes about 15 minutes…

K: Ah, that sounds lovely!

B: …and of course when the kids are happy, the parents are happy!

K: And a negative experience that you remember with Russian tourists?

B: No, nothing in specific, I just really don’t like the situations where I cannot understand my guests especially if there is something they need or something they aren’t satisfied with, but nothing too remarkable apart from that!
K: Could you distinguish one certain age group of Russian tourists that stay at your apartments?

B: Mostly it’s younger people between 25 and 35 I would say, but we also get some families with kids once in a while! I think the older generations tend to stay in hotels.

K: And how do these people travel? Do the younger ones travel individual or groups?

B: Never individually, most of the time it’s a group of friends that travel together and stay in one apartment.

K: What “social class” do you think they belong to?

B: Hm, I guess middle class or lower middle class…It’s pretty clear that they are careful with their money; when the apartments are cleaned you can see that they buy groceries and cook in the apartment, which is a sign for travelling on a low budget…and also the fact that they are staying in an apartment and not a hotel shows that...

K: Ok

B: Yeah, they are definitely not the type of Russians people from here think of right away, the ‘Pg. de Gracia shopping fans kind of Russians’ (street with fancy expensive clothing stores)...

K: So do you think that people have a lot of prejudices towards Russian tourists here?

B: Yes, for some reason they do! I am often asked about my Russian guests in a way like “Oh, god, you had a group of Russians staying in your apartment? How did that go?”

K: Hm… I believe that the image about Russian tourists has accumulated itself in the minds of people and was spread around from years ago because of their prior image of bad behaved mass tourists...

B: Yeah, that must have something to do with it...

K: What do you think are the major motives of Russian tourists to come here?

B: My guests are mostly here for simple vacation, they go to the beach and enjoy the Spanish lifestyle…they obviously do some sightseeing, but that isn’t the main reason…I think Barcelona is very trendy right now in Russia!

K: Could you compare Russian tourists with tourists from another country like France, Italy or USA for example?

B: Not really, I think they are very different from any other culture…well maybe a bit like the French, because they are also not the most open people…but Italians and Americans are very open-minded and chatty…When I have Russian guests checking in, they want to do everything fast so they can be left alone as quickly as possible, they don’t ask much, they don’t tell much!

K: And what kind of expectations do you think Russian tourists have?
B: I think nothing crazy! They want to be on vacation and they prefer to be left alone, but apart from that I would not say that they expect super high luxury service….otherwise they would be staying in a 5* hotel probably!

K: So, the ‘old’ prejudices about Russian tourists being loud and bad-behaved, rude and messy do not coincide with your experience?

B: No, I don’t think so at all! I honestly have never had any big problems with Russian tourists…There are always different kinds of people! Sometimes a group of Italians leaves a totally messy apartment behind with broken furniture etc. …Russians tend to be more careful actually and avoid any additional costs that can appear.

K: It seems like you do have a pretty good at dealing with Russian tourists?

B: Yes, I would say so! I simply respect their culture and mentality…they must have their reasons for being a bit reserved, but I am sure we seem different to them as well when we go to Russia! I can’t change it and I don’t see why I should!

K: Do you think it would be helpful to know more about them, maybe about their culture or mentality or maybe certain Russian expressions?

B: Hm, yes it would be definitely helpful to know more about them in order to understand them better and maybe to know how one can break the ice! I can actually say a few things in Russian, nothing big, but some simple words like ‘privet’, ‘kak dela?’, ‘dobro poshalevat’ and I think they always like that and it makes the atmosphere a bit loose.

K: I can surely imagine that! Well, and we are already at the last question! How do you think do Russian tourists affect the hospitality industry in Barcelona?

B: I would say that they are affecting the industry more and more because they are one of the cultures that are increasingly coming to Barcelona! And I also think that in general we need to pay more attention to them in terms of service to satisfy their wishes and needs if we want to establish a good relationship to them!

K: Thank you so much Bianca for your time and for sharing your opinions!

B: oh of course, I have it was helpful!

(No questions about change due to the fact that she mostly works alone)
K: First of all, thank you so much for taking your time for doing this interview!

M: Sure!

K: The interview is about your experience with Russian tourists in Barcelona as I am writing my thesis project in cooperation with 'When in Barcelona' in which I am investigating the current Russian tourist market in Barcelona and the relationship with employees from the hospitality industry in Barcelona to see what should be changed for a good future collaboration as until now people still have prejudices and kind of fears about Russian tourists….The interview lasts about 15–30 minutes and will be recorded.

M: Ok!

K: So, as you have mentioned on the phone; you have worked with Russian tourists before?

M: Yes, quite a bit! The hotel I work at always has Russian tourists that stay here on their vacation.

K: Do you get a lot of Russian tourists?

M: Hm, I would say so…I would say they belong to one of the groups that come here most!

K: Has that always been like that?

M: No no, I guess it increased in the past…maybe 3 years?

K: And who are the other groups that come here often?

M: French and Italians and Germans too.

K: Could you describe a typical Russian tourist in Barcelona?

M: Hmm, I guess I would say that they are quite demanding and they have high expectations when they travel.

K: What do you mean by that?

M: Well, how to explain?... I think that they think that when they spend money on something they have the power to expect a lot for it…my guess is that they think that that is how they have to behave kind of...

K: Ok, so do you only have Russian tourists that are "rich" in the hotel?

M: No, I wouldn’t say so…I think oftentimes they come here when they have money saved up and then they want to get a lot for their money and are kind of pretentious…but I would say most of our guests are from the middle-class.

K: And can you distinguish one certain age group that comes here often?

M: I think Russians of 40 plus come here most…well no, it used to be like that that most of the Russians would be 40 to 50 years old, but I think there are more and more younger people coming here!
K: Ok, how about the communication? Do you have any problems there?

M: Oh, yes the communication includes a lot of gestures and ‘ehs’ and ‘ohs’ because their English isn’t the very best…although that is also changing, I think. The younger Russians tend to speak better English and the older ones less. But I can tell you without a doubt that we speak a lot more with other guests than with Russians.

K: Because of the language barrier?

M: I guess so, because they also avoid talking to us as much as they can, they don’t ask a lot of questions or advice, just the most necessary information and that’s it.

K: So would you actually say that the prejudices about Russian tourists are true? Of them being rude and loud and filthy rich?

M: No, I don’t think so! I mean…of course they are not very open people, but generally speaking they are quite simple if you come make advances to them and show them that you care about them as your guests…but then if you get difficult Russians, they are very difficult…so it’s kind of two extremes of Russian tourists… I also think it is very much a cultural thing where we interpret things in a different way, things or ways of talking that are normal to them might seem rude to us in some way.

K: Ok

M: Of course it is always a special effort that we have to do when we have Russian guests because we want to make them as happy as all of our guests, but that’s what you have to deal with when you work in hospitality! Everyone is different and you are the one having to adapt and to give them the best service you can. And in addition, a lot of them have lived through difficult times of Glasnost and Perestrojka, so maybe they are trying to compensate their time now and enjoy to the fullest.

K: I agree with you! So, what do you think would be important to change or to adapt in order to improve the facilitation with Russian tourists?

M: Hm, I don’t know! Maybe the whole mindsets of people here about Russian tourists, but how would you do that?

K: Try to educate them about Russian tourists maybe?

M: Yes, I guess something like that, maybe inform people in the hospitality industry about Russian tourists, their culture and so on…Because I still think that the set of problems is very much on social…ehm, no…cultural level! They are so different to our culture and a lot of people simply don’t understand that…so, maybe some cultural education…well and a crash course in Russian! (laughs out loud)

K: That would definitely be useful! Do you have any promotion in Russian?

M: No, nothing yet, but we probably should change that considering the increase of Russians.

K: And what would you change?
M: Translate the hotel website to Russian and maybe info material about the city and what we offer.

K: Ok. How do you and your colleagues react when you are expecting Russian guests?

M: Hm, it does happen that someone makes a cocky remark, but nothing too bad!

K: So, some of them aren’t too happy about Russian guests?

M: Well, because it takes up more time and effort to explain things and then they are not really open or friendly people which makes it hard wanting to make an effort...do you know what I mean?

K: Yes, I understand! Can you think of a positive situation with Russian tourists?

M: I consider those situations as positive when the guests are very interested and open and it’s nice to talk to them...that happened a few times, but not very often!

K: And a negative one?

M: Yeah, we had one Russian couple arriving once and it was a disaster! It started from the check-in where they wanted a Russian-speaking employee, which we didn’t have at that time, so that was bad! Then they checked in into their room and they complained about not having enough flowers and a bad view from their window...it was very hard to understand what they didn’t like, because of the language, and that made them even more frustrated or angry and they wanted to check-out and let them find a new hotel...

K: Oh, how did you handle that situation?

M: We did an upgrade to where they had a nicer view and organized a bouquet of flowers as fast as we could...we just want all our guests to be happy, but they are staying in a 3-star hotel and not the Mandarin Oriental! Those are situations where you have to stay calm!

K: I can imagine that...How do you think do Russian tourists affect the hospitality industry in Barcelona?

M: I think they play a quite important role in the mean time! They are increasingly coming here and I think they are spending a lot of money when they come here, so yes, quite positively!

K: Can you see a difference of your own behavior with Russian tourists and other tourists?

M: I think I am a bit shyer with Russian tourists, because they make me feel a bit inferior, but I try to cover that up and pretend to be as confident as usual!

K: Ok, and one last question about Russian tourists; would you compare Russian tourists with any other culture?

M: Hmm, no I don’t think so...

K: Ok, well, that were my questions regarding Russian tourists...now I would like to ask you a few questions about how change is handled in your work space...
M: Ok!

K: For yourself, do you believe that there should be some sort of change introduced within your work field in order to adapt to the Russian tourist market better?

M: Yes, I could imagine that it would be helpful to inform everyone in some way about Russian tourists by means of…their culture maybe and the way they travel…

K: Ok and what is the most common way for implementing change here?

M: Normally, if there is something new, we are told and that’s it…sometimes when is something more important, then we get sort of a printed plan with instructions that we need to follow!

K: What kind of change would that be?

M: Hm, something like an ordering process for rental cars or flowers for our guests! And then if there is something new regarding the system that we use, or when it is about technological stuff, we are shown by someone…

K: Ok, can you follow a certain change process though that goes out from the top management?

M: What do you mean?

K: Well experts say that there is a process that should be followed led by the top management in order to implement a change in the most successful way. That would include steps like determining the urgency for change, developing a guiding team, establishing a change vision, persuading the employees about the needed change, removing obstacles and so on…

M: Well, I am not sure how exactly it works, but I would assume that they have certain steps that they adhere to…the persuasion part does not happen often, because it is more hierarchal here I think, so if they have decided for something, they don’t ask or try to convince us, but just decide!

K: Ok, and how about a supervision of the changes during the process of changing?

M: Yes, they definitely check once in a while, especially technical things, if we do them the right away…I guess because it has a lot of money involved and they don’t want to do anything wrong.

K: Of course, I can imagine! There are theories about implementing change in a company by applying assumptions meaning that people or an organization will change if you do certain things such as negotiating with them, working on a result–oriented basis, convincing them with rewards or penalties, offering study groups or let the change be implemented by self–organization. Have you had any experience with that?

M: Yes, we had situations where they introduced new processes in the booking system in learning groups and maybe the reward part can count as well, because we get rewards when we do an upselling for guests.

K: Ok, rewards by means of money?

M: Exactly!
K: Ok, that was it already! Thank you so much for your time and for sharing your thoughts and experiences with me! If you want, I can send you a copy of the interview transcript?

M: No, no that isn’t necessary! I hope I was useful!

K: Yes, very helpful! Thank you!