



# **Components of a successful strategy execution process in an adventure tourism destination**

*A comparative case study of the adventure tourism  
destinations Voss and Queenstown*

Dissertation submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

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Declaration: I, *Therese Lundqvist*, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School's academic honesty policy.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date: August 22, 2016

## **Abstract**

**This dissertation investigates the components of a successful strategy process, with focus on execution and implementation in the adventure tourism destinations of Voss in Norway and Queenstown in New Zealand. It provides insights into challenges and success factors of strategic planning, the importance of a local tourism network and how strategy monitoring can provide motivation and engagement from stakeholders. The research is drawn from current the strategy documents and from primary research done by interviewing a small sample of core stakeholders, the tourism operators, in each destination. The findings are then supported with existing tourism literature, and as well business literature to be able to reflect on similar challenges from another perspective.**

**The research adopts a qualitative framework, where in-depth semi-structured interviews are used to gain understanding of the relationship between stakeholders and strategy.**

**It is hoped that the insights can be used for similar destinations undergoing a strategic development and as well as a base for further study on the challenges the complexity of a tourism destination development presents.**

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## **Chapter One: Introduction to the research**

### ***1.1 Overview of the tourism industry in a global perspective***

With more than one billion tourists travelling to an international destination every year, tourism has become a leading economic sector, contributing 10% of global GDP and 6% of the world's total exports. (World tourism organisation, 2016). World travel and tourism council reports similar figures in their latest annual research, where result showed that tourism contribution to world GDP grew for the sixth consecutive year in 2015, rising to a total of 9.8% of world GDP US\$7.2 trillion. (World Travel & Tourism Council 2016). According to the report, the sector now supports 284 million people in employment – that's 1 in 11 jobs on the planet. The sector is set to face macroeconomic conditions and other challenges in 2016, but nevertheless expected to perform at a solid growth rate and outperform global economic growth once again. Travel & Tourism forecasts over the next ten years also look extremely favourable with predicted growth rates of 4% annually.

An increasing number of destinations worldwide have invested in tourism, since the industry is becoming a key driver of socio-economic progress through the creation of jobs, enterprises, export revenues, and infrastructure development. (World Tourism Organisation, 2016) Despite the occasional economic downturn, tourism has consistently shown steady growth. According to James (2007), tourism is set to replace oil as the most important global industry as countries capitalise on the high returns it offers. However, rapid growth, increased competition and shifting consumer trends make tourism a demanding industry to navigate. The emerging growth of competing destinations, the expansion of convention facilities worldwide, funding accountability and security presents challenges and opportunities for destinations and businesses. (PwC, 2016)

### ***1.2 Trends – adventure tourism***

Adventure tourism is one of its fastest growing categories in tourism worldwide according to UNWTO and ATTAs report "Global report on Adventure tourism" (2014) Countries in all stages of economic development are increasingly prioritising adventure tourism for market

growth, because they recognize its ecological, cultural, and economic value. Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) defines adventure tourism as a trip that includes at least two of the following three elements: physical activity, natural environment, and cultural immersion. Another definition of adventure tourists are people who engage commercial operators to take them on a guided adventure tour, typically in an outdoor setting, where some physical activity, and often specialised equipment, will be required (Buckley, 2006 cited by McKay, 2012). Adventure tourists are willing to pay a premium for exciting and authentic experiences. Adventure operators have reported an average of USD 3,000 spent person, with an average trip length of eight days. Trip costs vary based on length, luxury and activity levels, destinations, and distance from a traveller's starting point to the trip destination. (UNWTO, 2014)

McKay (2012) mentions Costa Rica as an example of adventure tourism destinations with attractions such as bird watching, or nature watching, visits to volcanoes, canopy tours and fishing. UNWTO (2014, p 12) mentions two main categories of adventure activities, hard adventure or soft adventure in their report. The easiest way to identify an adventure trip as hard or soft adventure is by its primary activity. Both hard and soft adventures are highly lucrative segments of the adventure tourism sector. The cost of just the permit to summit Mt. Everest, a hard adventure activity, is estimated to be USD 11,000 per person for 2015.

Destinations around the world are focusing on adventure as a key niche segment, because of its economic and sustainability benefits. Increasingly, destinations are recognizing that travellers are seeking more authentic products. Public and private sector stakeholders often understand that adventure tourism is linked with human and nature capital. This sector must seek to protect these valuable assets. (UNWTO, 2014)

### ***1.3 Challenges with tourism destination management and strategy***

These adventure tourism destinations have created strategies to be able to capitalise on the growing number of travellers, but still protect the human and nature capital. In a business context, several scholars have concluded that execution is the most crucial step for strategy success (Daniell, 2004; Hbreniak, 2005; Johnson et al, 2010; Kachaner, Kermit and Stewart, 2016; Sull, Homkes and Sull, 2015). Sull, Homkes and Sull (2015) discuss strategy execution in the Harvard Business Review, concluding that the execution of strategies is the

most difficult step. Studies have found that two-thirds to three-quarters of large organizations struggle to implement their strategies. The article presents their own study with more than 40 experiments and surveys administered to 8000 managers. Since tourism destinations often consist of complex networks of stakeholders, it is arguable that strategy would be even more complex to implement and execute. The tourism industry is a complex system with different collaborating industries, small businesses and only a few large businesses. The industry is also linked to both government and public structures, which creates a constructive collaboration that depends on strategy implementation success. (Strategi2020.se, 2010; Tribe 2010, James 2007). Tourism strategy requires the combined efforts of public and private players, with the role of DMO<sup>1</sup> as particular importance (Blain, Levy and Ritchie, 2005). The formulation and implementation of a deliberate destination strategy appears to be difficult to achieve, above all in view of the complex and multi-sector form taken. For a destination executing a new strategy in regards to adventure tourism, there are several challenges on the road to destination success. Discussing these challenges of strategic planning and execution will be further developed in the literature review in Chapter Two.

#### ***1.4 Successful adventure tourism destinations***

To be able to address the challenges in road to success, this dissertation examines two destinations with a well defined adventure tourism profile. The primary research will be limited to the core stakeholders, primarily conducting in-depth interviews with the tourism operators to understand their relationship to the strategy and execution.

##### *1.4.1 Queenstown, New Zealand*

Queenstown has successfully positioned them as the “adventure capital of the world”. Several international newspaper have mentioned the destination with the title, such as Condé Nast Traveler, (2015); Mail Online (2016); Cbsnews.com (2016), The Huffington Post (2016). According to Queenstown.co.nz, (2016) Queenstown’s journey to becoming an internationally acclaimed four-season resort began as a popular summer holiday destination. The region has always been a magnet for adventurers and entrepreneurs and these pioneers became the mainstay of Queenstown's adventure tourism industry. World-first innovations such as commercial jet boating and bungee jumping have forged Queenstown’s enduring reputation as the ‘Adventure Capital of the World. As Queenstown's popularity has increased, so too has its accessibility. Regular direct flights now run from major New Zealand centres

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<sup>1</sup> Destination Management Organisation

and East Coast Australia, making it easier than ever before to visit. The growth during 2015 was strong and the destination now have 2,9 million visitors annually according to the annual report. (Destination Queenstown Incorporated, 2015)

#### *1.4.2 Voss, Norway*

Another adventure tourism destination is Voss, situated in Norway in northern Europe. The destination has not gotten the international status as Queenstown have, yet, but is an emerging adventure tourism destination. It is mentioned in some media en regards to adventure and extreme sport tourism destination, such as Big Adventure On A Budget (2014), Dailypioneer.com, (2016), Page, Mukhamodeev and Voss, (2016)

According to visitvoss.no (2016) Voss is located in the heart of Fjord Norway and is a mecca for outdoor adventures all year round. Visitors have travelled to Voss to enjoy the beautiful scenery and enjoy the nature for almost 200 years. The nature resources created a foundation for different extreme sports and sports clubs were established. Together, they formed "Extreme sport veko" which has helped Voss position themselves as adventure capital through attention in media. According to Stiftinga Extreme Voss (2016), extremesportveko is the largest sport and music festival of its kind, and is hosted every year in Voss. The competitions hosted are within kayaking, rafting, mtb-bmx, skateboarding, skydiving, paragliding, hang-gliding, multisport, free ride, big air, climbing, BASE and long boarding.

#### *1.5 Aim of research*

The examinations of the challenges of executed strategies in successful destinations with an adventure tourism approach will be conducted in regards of following research question:

***"What are the success factors and challenges in the execution phase of a strategy for a adventure tourism destination and its impact on destination development?"***

The aim of the insights gained from primary and secondary research is to get a better understanding of the strategy process, the execution phase and its challenges within a successful tourism destination and what factors and conditions that made tourism strategy successful and its impact on destination development.

Final result will be beneficial for tourism destinations that are about to execute strategy and

require some ideas and examples of successful destinations. As an example, the author is engaged in tourism development in Sweden where the national strategy contains objectives to develop “export mature” destinations with an outdoor theme, because of Sweden’s nature resources. This and further research in the topic might be of interest to national, regional and local tourism organisations.

### ***1.6 Personal interest in the topic***

The author personally works in the destination of Lysekil, which is a part of Bohuslän one of the export mature targeted areas in the Swedish national tourism strategy. The destination has a ambition to implement their own strategy. In Sweden, the tourism industry has potential to grow. According to the National tourism strategy (2010), the tourism industry in Sweden generated € 29 billion in 2014 and employed 160,000 persons. The Swedish national strategy was created in 2010 with the aim of increasing international visitors. According to the national tourism organisation, Visit Sweden, international tourists accounted for 24 % of all overnight stays in Sweden during 2014 and generated €11 billion.

The goal of the Swedish national strategy is to develop 35 export ready destinations by 2020. One of these destinations is Bohuslän on the west coast of Sweden. The destination has been profiled as a “soft adventure-destination” due to the broad range of activities offered such as climbing, sailing, hiking, bicycling, kayaking and diving. The regional tourism organisation West Sweden Tourism Board has a tourism development strategy for this area, which is connected to the national strategy. (Turistrådet Västsverige, 2015) Bohuslän consists of 12 minor destinations/municipalities which all have their own tourism infrastructure and policy. In the municipality of Lysekil, where the author currently work, the profile and target group follow the national strategy and the strategy set out for Bohuslän. The execution of the strategy and its adaptation is a slow and difficult process due to the many stakeholders. As stated in the national tourism strategy, (2010) there is a major need for a closer collaboration between the stakeholders and those in charge to successfully implement the strategy.

## **Chapter two: Literary review**

### ***2.1 Introduction***

To be able to answer the research question, a comprehensive study and interpretation of literature that relates to the topic is needed. Aveyard (2010, cited by Bell and Waters 2014) defines the literature review as identifying a research question, then seek to answer the question by searching for and analysing relevant literature using a systematic approach. The review will then lead to new insights. A part of researching the question "***What are the success factors and challenges in the execution phase of a strategy for a adventure tourism destination and its impact on destination development?***" is reading and analysing literature within the topics of strategy process, strategic implementation and execution, tourism management, tourism strategy and information published around strategies in successful adventure tourism destinations.

### ***2.2 The strategy process in a business context***

According to Tribe (2010) and Johnson et al (2011), strategy is the long-term direction of an organisation and the planning of a desirable future and the design and testing of suitable ways of bringing it about. Mintzberg (2007) describes strategy as a pattern in a stream of decisions. Tribe mentions the origins of the word "Strategy", which is Greek (strategos) and this term was used to designate a military commander in chief. The context of war offers a understanding of strategy as a masterplan for acheiveing victory. Strategy is now key focus of business schools and used widely in the tourism sector. (Tribe, 2010)

Johnson et al (2011) presents their exploring strategy model which includes understanding the strategic position of an organisation (context), assessing strategic choices for the future (content) and managing strategy in action (process). The authors argue that this is the logical sequence, but Mintzberg (2007) recognises that in practice the elements of strategy do not always follow this linear sequence. Choices often have to be made before the position is fully understood. Sometimes too a proper understanding of the strategic position can only be built from the experience of trying out a strategy in action. Sometimes the feedback that comes from the real world is far better than remote analysis of the strategic position than remote analysis carried out in a strategic planning department at head office.

Johnson et al (2010) draws an distinction between intended and emergent strategy. They

argue that organisations have multiple processes and thereby is strategy development not mutually exclusive. Intended strategy is the strategy deliberately formulated or planned by senior executives, and may be expressed as a formal document and be accompanied by mechanisms designed to implement the intentions – project plans, or objectives or targets. Emergent strategy, however, is a strategy emerged on a basis of a series of decisions, a pattern that becomes clear over time.

According to Kachner, King and Stewart (2016) the strategic planning process is one of the least loved organisational processes due to its overly bureaucratic, insufficiently insightful and ill suited for today's rapidly changing markets. Some executives even argue that the process is a part of the past and that organisations should instead invest in market intelligence and agility. The authors examine this prescription as wrong, and believe that companies more than ever needs to devote time to strategy. Nearly one-tenth of public companies disappear each year. Agility is great, but its more powerful when paired with preparedness. The problem isn't the strategic planning, it's that most companies lack an effective strategic planning process. The authors argue that there is no one-size fits all approach to strategic planning, but they have found that the companies that get the most benefit from their strategic-planning activities have four things in common. They explore strategy at distinct time horizons, with different goals and require different approaches, different frequency and involvement of different people. Successful companies also constantly reinvent and stimulate the strategic dialogue where they engage the broad organisation and they invest in execution and monitoring. (Kachner, King and Stewart, 2016)

### ***2.3 Strategic implementation and execution in a business context***

Despite its importance, execution is often handled poorly by many organisations. This is due to the difficult and complex nature of execution, and there are many challenges in the way. Mark Daniell (2004) describes the problem that many businesses face today when the world become more and more crowded, more complex and competitive than ever before. With the globalisation of economies and rapid changes in the environment, and an increasing pressure on corporate and individual capabilities the demands placed on strategy now require far greater flexibility at all stages of the strategy process.. Koch (2000) also writes about the strategic shifts in the twenty-first century that impact strategy success. The dynamics of competition have become richer due to changes in the economy. He mentions the number and diversity of competitive segments is increasing, and competitive advantage in each segment and each layer used to be desirable, now it is essential. The price of extra ordinary returns is eternal innovation. The most innovative competitor, who can set the standard, and the one after that, will be able to maintain competitive advantage. The winners will be them with the best products, the best services, the greatest appeal to customers and the best strategies.

According to Randall et al (2014) increasingly amount of companies are looking to design and develop new products and services as a crucial source of competitive advantage. As this pressure of innovation increases, the tension between short –term exploitative development and long term exploratory innovation activities. Daniell (2004) states that the rapidly changing environment also requires flexibility and room for creative evolution and adjustment in the strategy to have enough clear space in your approach to respond to unexpected external and internal events and actions. Inspirational leadership and creative encouragement should be a part of the strategic implementation for maximum advantage. The vision needs to be set and maintained but there should be a space for adaptation, evaluation and a constant rejuvenation. Strategy process and content should be integrated to create a better approach to strategy and managers could overcome many limitations of the past. Motivation is the necessary human dimension to strategy. Hbreniak (2005) also mentions that strategy execution processes should support organisational change and adaptation. Main strategy work requires feedback about organisational performance to be able to fine-tune strategy, objectives and the execution process itself. There is an emergent aspect of strategy and execution, as organisations learn and adapt to environmental changes. Understanding

how to manage feedback, strategy reviews and change is vital to the success of strategy execution. These are the issues that impact the success or failure of strategy execution efforts. This, and the previous mentioned issues longer time frames, involvement of many people present obstacles to successful execution if not handled properly.

Having a great strategic planning process is only half the challenge. The other half – translating the strategy into results can be even harder, particularly when the new strategy involves moves outside the core to gain competitive advantage. Investments in following areas will make this part of the process more successful according to Kachaner, Kermit and Stewart. (2016). Clear and engaging communication throughout the organisation to foster alignment, high profile strategic initiatives to build traction where each initiative needs to be properly chartered, staffed and resourced and given a clear timeline. Another powerful way to encourage the organisation to embrace the new strategy is to identify quantitative metrics and goals that can measure progress. However, Martin (2010) argues that the accepted view on strategic planning is that senior managers, who often have help from consultants, formulate strategy and the execution falls on the organisation. Strategy is choosing and execution is doing. Martin explains in a bank example, how senior managers sets a strategy and expects employees to execute. Even if the employees have great idea how to improve the daily business, they have the impression that their ideas are not welcome or listen to at top management. To fix this problem, Martin (2010) suggests another viewpoint on strategy. The top of the company should make the broader, more abstract choices involving larger, long-term investment and the employees towards the bottom should make more concrete, day –to-day decisions that directly influence customer service and satisfaction. The “choice-cascade model” isn’t nearly as pervasive as the strategy-execution model, but it is used in some of the most successful companies n the world, as the four season hotels. The challenge is to get employees at every level to make choices that realised this desired outcome.

At the contrary, Roger L. Martin (2010) discuss in his article in Harvard Business review the idea that execution is distinct from strategy. He discuss the common view that a mediocre strategy well executed is better than a great strategy poorly executed, but that could be a result of trying to understand why strategies are failing. Especially when consulting firms are involved. This approach works in the consulting firms favour when they can blame their clients for any mistakes they might make. They could also easily sell services such as change management as an add on.

According to Daniell (2004), to successfully create advantage and reward in every market requires a well-executed strategy. Many times strategic thinking have slowed down the pace of change and thereby left behind many failed plans and out dated ideas. However, Hrebina (2005) also mentions that the execution often takes longer time than the formulation of strategy. The longer the time frame, the harder it gets to monitor and control the execution process. Long term needs should be translated into short-term objectives. Hrebina (2005) suggest that controls must be set up to provide feed back and keep management ahead of changes in external environment. The longer the time for execution, the likelihood of additional unforeseen problems or challenges cropping up.

Hrebina (2005) mentions benefits of effective execution include competitive advantage and higher returns to shareholders. Some C-levels and other top-level managers actually believe that strategy execution or implementation should be left for the lower-levels employees. Planning and execution are also highly interdependent, planning affects execution. The execution, in turn, affects changes to strategy and planning over time. Hrebina states that successful strategic outcomes are best achieved when those responsible for execution are also part of the planning process.

According to Amit Kumar Srivastava and Sushil (2014), many scholars have pointed out that there is lack of strategy execution framework, and more specifically in the case of adapt in strategy execution. Hrebina (2005) suggest in his book that management should create a road map, a model for the execution. A good overview provides a big picture that enables managers to see and anticipate execution problems. These problems are typically handled in an ad-hoc fashion, supported by a few anecdotes or case studies. A roadmap is needed to be able to guide managers through the minefields of bad executions decisions and actions. Kaplan and Norton, (2004) discuss the Balanced Scorecard in their book Strategy Maps. In 1990 Kaplan and Norton created the balanced scorecard as a measurement for strategy. But the executive wanted to apply the system to solve the more important problem they faced – how to implement new strategies. For not only was the nature of their internal value creation process shifting from tangible to intangible assets, the competition in the external market was shifting as well. Companies and public- sector and non profit organizations generally responded to the challenge by formulating new strategies and rededicating themselves, by

creating customer value through inspirational new mission and vision statement. The problem that all organisations encountered was their inability to execute successfully on their new strategies. Kaplan and Norton saw the executives that implemented the balanced scorecard intuitively and understood that a strategy based measurement system could solve the problem of how to communicate and implement strategy. A balanced score card functions as a strategy map provides the missing link between strategy formulation and strategy execution. The strategy map template, customized to the organisations particular strategy, describes how intangible assets drive performance enhancements to the organisations internal processes that have the maximum leverage for delivering value to customers, shareholders and communities.

## ***2.4 Tourism management***

### *2.4.1 Tourism networks*

According to Fyall, Fletcher and Spyradis (2010), its widely acknowledge that the destination "lies in the very heart of the travel and tourism system, representing as it does an amalgam of products that collectively provide a tourism experience to consumers. (Fyall, Garrod and Tosun, 2006 p.75, cited by Fyall Fletcher and Spyradis, 2010) Destinations comprise so many products, stakeholders and complex management and political relationships, contribute to them being regarded as one of the most difficult "products" to manage and market. (Buhalis, 2000). To best manage the complexity within destinations is therefore accepted that destinations need to bring together all parties to collaborate rather than compete, and to pool resources towards developing an integrated management and delivery system. (Buhalis & Cooper, 1998; Fyall &Garrod, 2005; Prideaux & Cooper, 2002; Telfer, 2001 cited cited by Fyall Fletcher and Spyradis, 2010.

King (2002) refers to the network economy, and recommends destinations to enter strategic relationships with partners who can collectively deliver a seamless visitor experience to customers. King (2002, p.108) argues that the "relevance of the experience they offer the customer, rather than the destination they promote, which will be the key ingredient for success in the future.

The importance of networks and their role in the development of sustainable management strategies for tourism destinations has also recently been studied. (Pechlaner, Abfalter and Raich, 2002). In a research study, Morrison et al (2004) identified financial, human and physical resources as critical success factors for a network. When working in a network, the various actors in the supply chain can potentially collaborate on any activity and thereby increasing the overall competitiveness of their operations. Such cooperation can even support the development of sustainable and competitive tourism strategies.

#### *2.4.2 Destination management*

Depending on the history of the destination, the level of development, and the types of products offered, the structure of the government organization that promotes and/or regulates tourism differs around the world. In some countries, tourism is the responsibility of the Ministry of Trade, in others it's the Ministry of Environment, and still others have a dedicated Ministry of Tourism. The government entity is often responsible for destination development, regulation, ensuring sustainability, and quality control. In addition to the government structure, most countries have some sort of destination marketing entity that is responsible for the promotion of the destination. Most Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) are non-profit structures, and they often partner with the private sector to increase the impact of their activities. (World tourism organisation, 2014)

According to Kozak, Gnoth and Andreu, (2010) a number of forces and issues are at play in the wider environment that is driving change in the management of destinations. These include the necessity to adapt to needs, wants and expectations of more mature and knowledgeable customers, the requirement for more accurate and contemporary information to base decisions on, the recognition of intermediary pressures and the imbalance of channel power in destinations, the exponential growth of discount airlines and surplus of destinations in the marketplace; and the continued and long-standing division between the public and private sector management (Bennett, 1999, cited by Kozak Gnoth and Andreu)

According to Sainaghi (2006), a DMO's tasks may be divided into primary and supporting management tasks. The primary tasks include strategic or operative ones. Operative tasks deal with the management of tourist infrastructure, whereas strategic ones involve the

development of new tourist products, which in the end means a configuration of resources and are backed up by supportive jobs. This class of tasks first and foremost includes the destination management's coordinating function, which helps the service providers to act in a concerted manner. This happens in a twofold way (Sainaghi, 2006).

Buhalis (2000) argues that since the management of tourism destinations are becoming more and more complex, such greater professionalism is needed. Kozak, Gnoth and Andreu, (2010) argues that Many local authorities have a strong history of managing destinations well, to be able to be successful in the future a more dynamic and innovative structure and approach are required that incorporate the views of all stakeholder groups that will advance destinations in a more holistic manner and facilitate the delivery of a "seamless" visitor experience. In order to accommodate industry and market changes, therefore, far more proactive and "light-footed" destination management organisations are required to keep abreast of developments. Tourism requires some form of local control but alongside of this, there is the need for far greater innovation and creativity. A more collaborative and holistic approach to the management of destinations will involve probably less resources from local authorities. In the future, many DMOs are predicted to operate outside local authority control and represent public-private sector partnerships that are inclusive of the trade and stakeholder groups with a mandate to develop the destination in its entirety. If this is to be the way forward, some benefits and drawbacks are anticipated. Benefits would be a shared ownership for the management of tourism, more responsiveness to the changing needs of the market, free of political bias and offer greater opportunities to engage and sustain the support of all stakeholders. On the contrary, this approach could result in reduced contribution of local authority in form of lower interest and commitment to tourism.

## ***2.5 Tourism strategy***

Tourism strategy requires the combines efforts of public and private players, with the role of DMO as particular importance (Blain, Levy and Ritchie, 2005). According to Tribe (2010), there are four key elements of tourism strategy: Strategic purpose, Strategic analysis, strategic choice and strategic implementation. Strategic purpose considers what the organisation is trying to achieve, its purpose or aim and where its trying to head for the medium and long term. Tribe also discuss stakeholders to the strategy, and stresses about the fact that tourism strategies often have different organisations with different objectives

involved in the strategy process. Strategic analysis involves the major influences upon the entity's success in terms of the environment it operates in, its use of resources and products and services offered. The strategic choice concerns the generation of strategic options, identifying strategic direction and methods and evaluating strategic options. Strategic implementation is concerned with issues of operationalizing a strategy, particularly in organising and resourcing, managing and monitoring and strategy articulation.

In difference to Kachner, King and Stewart (2016) and their article about strategy planning and execution, Tribe puts resource planning and designing an organisational structure in the implementation process. Resource planning emphasis is on identification of resources needed to support a strategy, issues of resource fit, and formulation of a coordinating plan. Second aspect of strategic implementation involves designing a organisational structure that includes types, structural elements and issues in organisational design. (Tribe, 2010)

Strategic change will generally require adjustments in physical resources at the level of plant and machinery or consumables. For example, tour operators will similarly choose hotels to fit particular marketing strategies. Human resources will also be affected by strategic change. Strategic plans will need to determine both the quality and the quantity of the future workforce, and often is the size of the workforce a key issue. Tribe mentions Failte Ireland as an example where they devote a section in their 2005 tourism strategy for a human resource strategy to be able to compete by diversity. (Tribe, 2010 p.193) Information and technology resources are also very important aspect in the tourism industry since it improve products and services, reduce costs, improve competitive positioning and create barriers against competitors imitations of selling points. Hall and Williams (2008) argues that the market characteristics of the tourism sector, with a high degree of competitiveness oblige firms to innovate as a condition to stay on top of the competition. However, Margarida, L; Carvalho, C and Sarkar S, (2014) argues that tourism firms have a greater difficulty in protecting innovation and its easier to imitate new practices for the competitors. According to Porter (2008) and his competitive forces, this triggers a challenge to innovate and to hold on to a competitive advantage. Porter argues that understanding the competitive forces, defending against and shaping them in company's favor are crucial to strategy. Margarida, L; Carvalho, C and Sarkar S, (2014) continues with the argument that tourism firms who invest in quality and product diversification are generally more competitive.

### *2.5.1 Implementation of tourism strategies*

According to Tribe, (2010) a well-advised strategic plan is essential for all businesses, none more so than those in the tourism industry. Without strategy, organizations are susceptible to strategic drift - a consequence of failure to monitor and respond to the changing external environment. Implementation is in many ways more of a challenge than design of strategy. This is because design of strategy is largely an abstract, theoretical exercise involving a sound approach, good data collection and analytical skills and effective evaluation of alternatives. On the other hand, implementation is a practical exercise. It is something that has to be put into place and involves change. Effective implementation is pitted against the sometimes deeply embedded traditions of existing culture, structures and people. (Tribe, 2010, pp) As James, (2007) states, it is relatively easy for public sector management to formulate policies, strategies and plans for tourism, but difficult to implement them. Implementation requires a variety of resources, including commitment from political leaders and managers, personnel, finance, leadership, power, knowledge, skill and experiences.

As Nordin and Svensson, (2007) discuss in their article the tourism industry is in many respects a highly political body with clear interdependencies between the industry and the political arena. Governments often concern tourism as a key generator of local growth and employment while tourism-based businesses, on the other hand, depend on governments setting favourable framework conditions. In addition, the industry often depends on resources that are under government control. If governments and firms have a common interest in a certain development, recognize their resource dependencies and realize that their goals cannot be achieved single-handedly, the link between local governments and the tourism industry becomes of particular interest. In the strategic document of Swedens tourism development until 2020, (Svensk turism, 2016) its stated that better collaborations are needed between different stakeholders to guarantee destination development success. To reach the objective of creating more export mature destinations in Sweden, its vital to collect and share good examples of destination development to be able to identify success criteria's. Formulation of a coordinating plan is key to strategic implementation according to Tribe (2010) .

### *2.5.2 Managing and monitoring*

Tribe (2010) mentions managing and monitoring as the second step of strategy

implementation. Management of change is the process by which strategic change is identified and implemented as a specific objective. A challenge for many tourist entities is that their structures were generally designed to solve yesterday's problems. In other words, organisational structure and culture tend to evolve reactively. So an audit of the organisational structure may result in the findings of a structure to deal with challenges faced five years ago, but not equipped to deal with the future. To compound this problem organisations may become "frozen" in a particular state. Effective communication is at heart of successful strategic implementation. Even organisations which engage in a systematic process of strategic planning may overlook this vital aspect. (Tribe, 2010)

## ***2.6 Adventure tourism and successful adventure tourism destinations***

### *2.6.1 Queenstown, New Zealand*

According to Queenstown.co.nz, (2016) Queenstown's journey to becoming an international acclaimed four-season resort began as a popular summer holiday destination. The destination became a picturesque overnight stop for the couch tours, and when the ski resort opened at 1947 it became a thriving winter ski resort. The region has always been a magnet for adventurers and entrepreneurs and these pioneers became the mainstay of Queenstown's adventure tourism industry. World-first innovations such as commercial jet boating and bungy jumping have forged Queenstown's enduring reputation as the 'Adventure Capital of the World'. As Queenstown's popularity has increased, so too has its accessibility. Regular direct flights now run from major New Zealand centres and East Coast Australia, making it easier than ever before to visit. The annual report of the local Destination Management Organisation (DMO) contains figures over the Destinations strong growth during 2015, with a 2,9 million visitors annually. The main drivers mentioned as the reason for such strong growth are the quality of activities, attractions and experiences. In March 2015, the total expenditure in Queenstown grew to nearly \$ 1,7 billion NZD (MBIE Regional Tourism Estimates, cited by Destination Queenstown 2015). This number is an increase on prior year. Of the 2,9 million visitors annually to the destination, 67% from international markets and

33% from domestic. Growth out of China has been extensive in this financial year becoming the destination largest long haul market. The number of visitors from US and Australia is also growing. (Destination Queenstown Incorporated, 2015).

#### 2.6.1.1 Structure

A marketing body, now known as Destination Queenstown (DQ), was formed in 1985 to collectively promote Queenstown to the world. Commercial ratepayers via an annual levy collected by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) fund the regional tourism organisation. Funding for the organisation is provided through a levy on the commercial and accommodation rate, which is collected by the Queenstown Lakes District Council and remitted to DQ. Members of DQ are those businesses, which contribute to the commercial/accommodation rates of QLDC. Membership of DQ is also available for some through payment of a subscription fee for those businesses, which may not contribute to the commercial rates but still wish to have access to the benefits of membership. (Destination Queenstown, 2016)

#### 2.6.1.2 Destination management

The role of the Destination Management Organisation, Destination Queenstown is to market Queenstown, both domestically and internationally, on behalf of our local business community with the vision of positioning Queenstown as the Southern Hemisphere's premier four season lake and alpine resort. Driving visitor value over volume remains a key focus for Destination Queenstown, as well as continuing to influence community sentiment toward visitors and maintaining the social licence to operate for the tourism industry. Financial year of 16-17 is the second year of Destination Queenstown's FY15-18 three year plan and the focus will continue to be on the eight core priority areas for FY15-18. The new destination brand and positioning delivered in 2015 will underpin everything the organisation does in order to achieve the overall destination outcomes. Looking ahead to FY16-17, DQ has three central strategies; Improve shoulder season demand, targeting May/June and September to help facilitate year round, sustainable visitor growth; Drive growth in value i.e. visitor expenditure over volume; Execute our activity under the new brand identity with the objective of driving the dreaming and inspiring phase of visitor consideration. (Destination Queenstown, 2015)

Destination Queenstown will continue to align with and leverage Tourism New Zealand activity where appropriate, according to the business plan. Tourism New Zealand is firmly focused on promoting shoulder season travel, with 80% of resources committed to that area. They also have a significant focus on the premium market. (Tourism Industry Association New Zealand, 2014). The Tourism 2025 national framework includes developing market insights, growing sustainable air connections, targeting for value, focus on productivity and enhancing visitor experience. DQ's strategies and activity outlined in this plan demonstrate how DQ is aligned with the industry's framework. The overall goal for the organisation in FY16-17 is to achieve 6% increase in annual visitor expenditure and 4% growth in the number of visitor guest nights. Input to the strategy process has come from stakeholders, including external stakeholders, sector representatives, DQ member groups and across DQ's catchment area of Arrowtown, Gibbston, Glenorchy, Kingston and the surrounding environs.

#### 2.6.1.3 Stakeholder engagement

In the business plan for 2016/17; stakeholder engagement is priority 6 in the business plan with the objective to enhance resident community engagement on key visitor issues, impacts and sentiment (nationally recognised under the theme of Social Licence to Operate), continue to build a positive Queenstown brand image through effective destination reputation management and provide effective DQ member, stakeholder, news media and industry communications. The objectives is connected to an activity schedule with projects, activity, delivered by and outcomes and measured by Key Performance Indicators. (Destination Queenstown, 2016)

#### 2.6.1.4 Execution and monitoring

As an incorporated society, DQ is governed by an annually- elected sector represented Board of Directors. The DQ Board meets regularly to ensure the objectives and strategic goals are being achieved by the executive staff of DQ. The Strategic Review Board, which encompasses sector representatives from across all Queenstown business sectors, meets at least once a year to review the DQ Business Plan in order to ensure DQ maintains a broad market and community focus. (Destination Queenstown, 2016; Harnell, 2016)

## 2.6.2 Norway – Voss

According to [visitvoss.no](http://visitvoss.no) (2016) Voss is located in the heart of Fjord Norway and is a mecca for outdoor adventures all year round. Visitors have travelled to Voss to enjoy the beautiful scenery and enjoy the nature for almost 200 years. As the largest ski destination in Western Norway it has something to offer everybody in winter, it being alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, learning to ski, shred powder off-piste or backcountry skiing from cabin to cabin.

Gyimothy and Mykletun (2010) describes Voss as a destination as located ten miles east of Bergen, in a back country constituted of deep valleys, highlands and mountains rising to 1,600 metres above sea level. In like most of the inner country, Voss is struggling with depopulation and bleak community budgets, but is currently undergoing an economic transition and gradually becoming a star of the Norwegian experience economy, hosting international cultural and sports event. In Norway, Voss has a strong market position both as a summer and winter destination, with nature based and winter.

### 2.6.2.1 Structure

Tourism development in Voss is impacted by several strategies involving tourism. The business development unit in the local government have focus on tourism, as well as the local DMO which has the mission of marketing the destination. In the strategy for business development unit in the local government, tourism is mentioned as a resource for value adding to the community and as a source for job creation. There are also collaboration projects that have been successful and impacted the tourism development in a positive manner. Collaboration between the different ski centres was the primary reason for the project. The objective was to be better at product development, logistical solutions, marketing and sales solutions for winter experience, hiking tours and other outdoor products. Through this project the result has been that collaboration, and collect the tourism actors locally has been a success criteria to be able to reach out on a national and international level. The report have an activity consists of marketing activities and product development activities. It also consists reports of networks meeting and activities that have been done together. The current strategy, is the “Reiselivsstrategi“, which was formed in 2009 and stretches to 2017. (Voss kommune, 2008) A report on the progress was published by Destinasjon Voss in 2011.

#### 2.6.2.2 Stakeholder engagement

To be able to develop Voss, a tight collaboration is suggested between the businesses and important development actors. There should be a focus on the offers of culture and leisure, and the local government should be an active supporter to the organisations creating events in the area. (Voss kommune, 2009)

#### 2.6.2.3 Execution and monitoring

The strategy also has activity plan, where 27 activities are listed as priorities with connected responsible unit. There is no KPI represented or how it will be measured. 8 of these 27 activities are directly connected to tourism development and have Destinasjon Voss as the main responsible unit. Examples are development of «Arrangørbygda Voss» is Destinasjon Voss responsibility. Also the product development of nature and culture based attractions and experiences are Destinasjon Voss responsibility. To develop "warm beds" lays on the local businesses in collaboration with Destinasjon Voss. Destinasjon Voss also stand as responsible for doing tours for bikes and hiking, including marking the trails and production of maps. It also includes doing analysis for capacity development of accommodation. (Voss kommune, 2009)

## **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

### ***3.1 Introduction***

This chapter presents the activities that have been undertaken to answer the research question. It contains description and explanations of the methods applied by the researcher in addressing the research question outlined in chapter one, which is:

***"What are the success factors and challenges in the execution phase of a strategy for a adventure tourism destination and its impact on destination development?"***

By gaining understanding of the strategy process and its challenges of implementation in the adventure tourism destinations, two destinations have been identified as subject of interest in regards to primary research. Queenstown in New Zealand and Voss in Norway are both seen as “adventure capitals” in their countries. The destinations have both rich nature resources and conditions for adventure tourism development. Both destinations have a positive tourism development and executed strategies successfully. The research methodology for primary and secondary research is structured with the research onion in consideration, presented by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012). See appendix 1.

### ***3.2 Research Design***

#### ***3.2.1 Research Philosophy***

The research philosophy is connected to your own assumptions on how you view the world. To be mindful of our philosophical position is important, since it influences the way we conduct research. (Saunders and Lewis, 2012 p.104) From the main strands of research philosophies of positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism, the philosophy chosen for this research study is the interpretivism philosophy. Positivism, where emphasis lays on the law of cause and effect, and testing theories (Saunders and Lewis, 2012 p.104) would not be as suitable since the data collected then might be in regards to the theories, not dealing with the actual situation. Realism relates to positivism as in scientific inquiry, and stresses that objects exist independently of our knowledge of their existence. (Saunders and Lewis, 2012 p.104) The philosophy is used when understanding of deeper structure and relations that are not directly observable but lie beneath the

surface of social reality. For this particular research question, it could be another point of view of the research question to go underneath and analyse the deeper structure of the tourism destination. Though, this would be very complex research for such the complex network that tourism destination is as well take more time than allocated for this research. Saunders and Lewis, (2012 p.107) discuss the choice of research methods, that it should be seen as a shopping list since in practice, research are more likely to be guided by what is possible. The pragmatic philosophy outlines this, which suggest that the most important determinants of the research philosophy you adopt are your research questions and objectives and argue that the different philosophies might be mixed depending on the study.

Interpretivism is a research philosophy, which advocates the necessity to understand differences between humans in their role as social actors. (Saunders and Lewis, 2012 p.106). Understanding the social world of our research subjects from their point of view is key in this philosophy. Due to the qualitative primary research conducted in this dissertation, the research philosophy chosen is interpretivism. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), interpretivism emphasise the difference between conducting research among people rather than objects such as trucks and computers. The researcher has to adopt an empathetic stance by understanding the research subjects from their point of view. The authors also argue that this perspective is appropriate in the case of business and management research since business situations are complex and unique.

### *3.2.2 Research Approach*

Saunders and Lewis (2012, p. 107) mention the research approach to be the next step in the research onion, see appendix 1. The approaches to the theory are presented as deduction and induction. The theory is broadly defined as an explanation of the relationship between two or more concepts or variables. Using deduction as a research approach involves testing of a theoretical proposition by using a research strategy. The key characteristics are to explain casual relationships between variables, operationalise the relevant concepts and then collect and analyse data to answer the research questions. The induction approach has a more bottom-up approach to theory development. Inductive reasoning starts with specific observations and measures begin to observe patterns and repeated occurrences of phenomena and formulate some speculative hypothesis, which can be investigated. The aim of this approach is to develop some general conclusions or theories. With induction, the emphasis is on close understanding of the research

context. Induction possesses a more flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as the research progresses. The aim with the conducted research in this dissertation will be a better understanding of the strategy implementation process of a tourism strategy and formulate a theory; therefore research approach will preferably be inductive in the data collection and interview process since the different stakeholders might have different point of views and experiences. Some elements of the deductive approach have been used for literature review and to base the questions/topics for interview, with the aim to better understand the context of the research. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) argues that researchers with an inductive approach are more likely to work with qualitative data and to use a variety of methods to collect these data in order to establish different views of phenomena.

### 3.2.3 Research Strategy

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) argues that the research questions and objectives, the extent of existing knowledge, the amount of time and other resources you have available as well as your own philosophical underpinnings should guide the choice of research strategy. There are several strategies mentioned by Saunders and Lewis (2010); *experiment* where a research strategy involves the definition of a theoretical hypothesis, *survey* where a structured collection of data is collected from a sizeable population, *case study* where a particular contemporary topic within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence. *Action research* is concerned with the management of a change and involving close collaboration between practitioners and researchers. (Saunders and Lewis, 2010 p.117) *Grounded theory* is a research strategy in which theory is developed from data generated by series of observations or interviews involving an inductive approach. The data will be collected first in order to create new theory. Since the research question is about identifying success factors and challenges for strategy implementation, this approach would be considered useful for this type of research. Though, the research question is narrowed down to adventure tourism destinations and two destinations are chosen for research, which is the reason why case study approach is chosen in this research.

Robson (2002, cited by Saunders and Lewis, 2010) defines case study as “a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence. The case study strategy is of particular interest to you if you wish to gain a rich context of the research and the process being

enacted. It also gives answers to questions like “why”, “what” and “how”. Bell and Waters (2014) and Denscombe (2007 p 36) mentions case study as a appropriate research strategy for individual researchers because it provides an opportunity study a problem in depth. Denscombe further argues that the prospects of getting some valuable and unique insight depends on being able to investigate things in a way that is different from other approaches. What a case study can do that a survey normally cannot is to study things in detail.

Though, it could be difficult to easily define terms of beginning and end point of the case. The more a study contains specific propositions, the more it will stay within reasonable limits (Yin, 1994 cited by Bell and Waters, 2014) With a case study, researchers identify an instance, which could be the introduction of a new way of working, the way an organisation adapts to a new role, or any innovation or stage of development in an institution. In this research, the case will be the strategy process and execution phase of adventure tourism strategies, and how it impacts the local tourist operators. Evidence has to be collected systematically, the relationship between variables studied (a variable being a characteristic or attribute) and the investigation methodically planned. Though observation and interviews are most frequently used, no method is excluded. (Bell & Waters, 2014)

Bell and Waters (2014) further argues that all organisations and individuals have their common and their unique features, and case study research aim to identify such features. To identify or attempt to identify the various interactive processes at work, to show how they affect the implementation of systems and influence the way an organisation functions. There are criticisms of the case study approach. Some question the value of the study of single events and point out that it is difficult for researchers to cross check information. Others express concern about selective reporting, the danger of distortion and challenges regarding validity (Williamson, 2002) Generalisation is not always possible, which Bell and Waters (2014) experience as a major concern. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010) mentions that the complexity of a case can make analysis difficult, because of the holistic nature of the case study. The researcher might experience that everything appears relevant, so its important to show connections bit not lose sight of the whole. However, Denscombe (2007) argues that the extent to which findings from the case study can be generalised to other examples in the class depends on how far the case study examples are similar to others of its type. Addressing this challenge, the choice of having primary research done on two destinations is to be able to identify significant features on which

comparison can be made. Bassey (1981 cited by Bell and Waters, 2014) discusses generalising versus reliability and argues that reliability of a case study is more important than its generalisability.

#### *3.2.4 Sampling - Selecting Respondents*

According to Denscombe, (2007 p. 40) all case studies need to be chosen based on their relevance to the practical problems or theoretical issues being reached. He presents four ways of which the case will be chosen; Typical instance, Extreme instance, Test-site for theory and Least likely instance. For this research, the cases have been selected by the grounds that, far from being typical, it provides something of a contrast to the norm in the sense of being so successful with their adventure tourism strategy. Thereby the extreme instance is the chosen way of identifying cases, in a sense that a specified factor is seen in relief – highlighted in its effect. Denscombe (2007) also stresses the factor of convenience. However, since new technology such as Skype makes the access to the interviewees easier, the matter of lack of time in regards to travel is demolished. To be able to answer my research question about the strategy process, the key stakeholders in the process is targeted as interviewees, mostly operators in different segments such as accommodation and activity companies.

#### *3.2.5 Time horizon*

The time horizon in this research will be cross-sectional, since the research process is time constrained due to the academic course. The cross-sectional study is often used for case studies where interviews are conducted under a short period of time.

### ***3.3 Data Collection Instruments***

In regards to the purpose of research, the interviews have been conducted in a semi-structured format. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) and Williamson, (2002), the semi-structured in-depth interview is recommended when its necessary to understand the reasons for decisions that your research participants have taken, or to understand their attitudes and opinions. Williamson (2002) argues that interviews can provide much richer data than self-administered questionnaires. Since the research contains researching stakeholders relationship to strategy, it might require a variation of questions depending on the answers given. In a semi-structured interview, there are topics that will be covered and the researcher will vary the order of the questions depending on the responses from the participants. The semi-structured interview also

allows asking additional questions to find out further details if appropriate. Please see appendix 2 for interview guide.

Constraints with the data collection will be influenced by the amount of time. As mentioned by Saunders and Lewis, (2012) short –term researchers is to be limited to single methods studies. You just do the best you can in the available time. A major advantage of interviews is the adaptability nature of it. A skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which a questionnaire can never do. There are problems identified though, since interviews are time consuming and in a short-time research project you will be able to interview only a relatively small amount of people. It's a highly subjective technique and therefore there is always the danger of bias. When analysing responses, it can present problems and wording the question is almost as demanding for interviews as it is for questionnaires. (Saunders and Lewis, 2012) Danger and limitation of doing research alone, is the danger of bias. When a group of interviewers conduct the research the bias might show up in the data analysis, but if one researcher conducts a series of interviews the bias may be consistent and therefore go unnoticed. Dictionary defines bias generally centre of notion of distortion of judgement, prejudice outlook and unfair influence. Many factors can result in bias, and especially if you conduct the research yourself, particularly those who have strong views about the topic they are researching. It can occur in many ways, deliberately and unwittingly. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill

### ***3.4 Data Analysis Procedures***

Analysis is about the search for explanation and understanding, in the course of which concepts and theories will likely be advanced, considered and developed, is meant to be a rigorous process using data that have been carefully produced and managed. (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010) The process of analysis, whether its qualitative data or quantitative data, are at a generic level similar. The strategies that underlie these processes are different, depending upon the view you take on how knowledge is generated. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010) argues that the most common distinction made here is that between those researchers who take a positivist or post-positivist approach and those who adopt an interpretivist, critical or even postmodern stance. The former are likely to start their research with an idea, or hypothesis, and then collect data in order to explore or test this, which is the classic example of scientific method. By contrast, the latter are more likely to start from an interest in a particular topic, and gather data to see what light it sheds on the topic. The inductive strategy is practised by researchers who apply the precepts of

grounded theory or other forms of thematic analysis. The former strategy may be seen as starting from a theory, the latter will, hopefully lead to the development of a theory.

In this research project, the inductive approach forms the analysis of the data collected from semi-structured interviews. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), non-standardised interviews will be transcribed after execution and they describe this task of transcribing audio-recorded interviews as time consuming. The participants' non-verbal communications need to be taken in consideration as well as the contextual information that locates the interview.

Using the inductive approach, the primary data has been collected by executing semi-structured interviews primary over telephone. The interviews have been recorded and later written down as transcripts. There are tools available for making this process easier, but when tried they did not work out as well as expected. Instead, playing the recordings in a slower pace has made the transcripts. This method took a certain amount of time, but it also made the data more known to the author which made the analysis part much easier. To aid the analysis, reflections and ideas that have occurred during the research process have been noted in a researchers diary.

The interview analysis process will consist of a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to aid the inductive approach by forming theories and hypothesis. This process contains the process of familiarisation of the data by transcribing and reading it, and thereby noting initial ideas. Through the transcripts, common themes have been identified and each interview have been summarised around these. The data have been managed by the technique of summary where the process, rather than choose one or more examples from a larger body of data, you opt to produce a reduced version précis or synopsis of the whole data set. (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010) This with the aim to retain something of the variability of the original data, since the interviewees are set in different context, but aswell saying something about generality and typical cases. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) argue that these themes or categories emerge from the theory in a deductive approach, compared to the inductive where the categories emerge from the data. Similarities and dissimilarities have been identified.

### ***3.5 Data Access and Research Ethics***

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) access and ethics are critical aspects for the success of any research project. The considerations are important whether you are using secondary data or collecting primary data. Without paying attention to the access of data you require and acting ethically, what seem like good ideas for research may prove impractical or problematic once you undertake them. Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2012) argues that ethical concerns are greatest where research involves human participants, which most business and management research almost inevitably contains. Code of ethics is intended to avoid poor practice, malpractice and harm. To avoid or minimise harm, it is necessary to evaluate risk in each research situation. The primary research undertaken in this research project has been conducted in regards to integrity and objectivity of the researcher in a sense of acting openly, being truthful and promoting accuracy. Respect for others have been the base for development of trust and respect. The interviews have been conducted with the principle of privacy, ensuring confidentiality and maintaining anonymity. Sufficient information have been provided to the participants in regards to understanding the implication of taking part and a freely given decision to do so. Think and act ethically in every stage of the research have been sought after to anticipate concern at each stage.

The access of primary data in this particular research is what Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012, p.210) names as traditional access. The traditional access involves phone conversations, as used in this research in form of interviews. Level of access varies depending on the nature and depth of the access that you achieve. First level of access is physical access (Gummesson, 2000 cited by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012 p. 210), and even though Internet has made access to secondary data easier, access can be difficult. Organisations and individuals might not be prepared to engage in additional, voluntary activities because of the time and resources required. The request for access and cooperation may fail to interest the gatekeeper who receives it and find lack of perceived value in relation to the work of the organisation, group and the individual. When you are unable to gain this type of access, you will need to find another organisation or group, or to modify your research question and objectives. Second step is the cognitive access where the intended participants share with you the data that you need. In this particular research project, the Destination management organisations were contacted in a early stage of the research. However, the engagement was limited by time and resources due to peak season. This was also the case at many of the stakeholders intended as respondents.

### ***3.6 Limitations of Methodology***

As previously discussed, case study analysis is limited in its setting of researching a particular phenomenon in a certain time. The data collected from the in-depth interviews will reflect the participant's current views and behaviour towards the strategy, which might change due to factors such as strategic changes or time. To be able to gain deeper understanding and to create even better reliability and generalisability, the research might be of a continuous type (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012) where the data collection is done at several points of time.

Another limitation aspect of the chosen research methodology is the access of data since the time allocated for data collection is during peak season for the interview respondents. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thorn (2012) most management and organisational researchers suggest that you are more likely to gain access where you are able to use existing contacts (Buchanan et al. 1988; Easterby-Smith et al. 2008; Johnson 1975, cited by Saunders, Lewis and Thorn, 2012). Use of known contacts will depend on the choice of research, and its likely to be easier using a case study when you undertake a in-depth study that focus on a small, purposively selected sample. In this research, this method has been used in some extent. The Destination management organisation and participating operators have been asked for suggestions of interview participants who they assume would be the best respondent due to research question and accessibility.

The small sample of respondents could also be argued as a limiting factor. This research aim for this study is to answer the research question with the business stakeholders' point of view of the process. If the time horizon would be for a longer period of time it would be possible to gain even deeper understanding of the research question and the factors behind successful strategy execution. This by interviewing other stakeholder groups such as supporting operators, such as cafés and restaurants, or the major investors in tourism development projects. To use additional data collection methods such as surveys might help to gain additional data for a deeper analysis of the issue.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

### ***4.1 Introduction***

This chapter contains summaries of the interviews conducted. Full transcripts of the interviews could be seen in appendices 3-10. The data have been managed by the technique of summary where the process, rather than choose one or more examples from a larger body of data, you opt to produce a reduced version précis or synopsis of the whole data set. (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010) This with the aim to retain something of the variability of the original data, since the interviewees are set in different context, but as well saying something about generality and typical cases. A deeper analysis and discussion of the findings could be found in the next discussion chapter. Since the induction approach have a more bottom-up approach to theory development, the findings will be analysed by specific observations and measures with observing patterns and repeated occurrences of phenomena and formulate some speculative hypothesis, which can be investigated. All this with a view to develop some general conclusions or theories.

### ***4.2 Context of the findings***

The sample of businesses represents activity companies and accommodations. The tourism office and the Destination Management Organisation are also questioned. Most of the businesses interviewed are small, family owned businesses. They are all in some sort of an entrepreneurial management of the business where one or a few people do most tasks. The interviewees have been in manager or owner positions. The questions surround their relationship with the tourism strategy in place, and their view on future challenges both for the company and the destination.

### ***4.3 Interview 1: Business 1 Queenstown (appendix 3)***

#### ***Context:***

The business is a family owned business located in central Queenstown. By finding a gap within the offerings of local tourist attractions, they have created a successful business idea of an interactive Haunted House, inspired of those in North America. They have a steady pace of visitors coming through, with a slightly drop in visitors number during the shoulder season of the months of May and November. The business started three years ago and have 14 members of staff including the family.

### *Success factors*

Asked why they think Queenstown is so successful adventure tourism destination, the interviewee explains that the stunning location and long history as a destination plays a huge role. The interviewee compares Queenstown to the Alps in Europe where people would come mostly for the scenery. She also mentions the background support with cafés and hotel, and as well as the fact that Queenstown has more than one season.

### *Relationship to local strategy*

Asked about the local tourism strategy, she is aware of the target groups and the focus on the Chinese market. The interviewee feels that they had to reach out to the DMO in regards to communication, and she experience them as not so pro-active. The local strategy has impacted them by having to adjust their guest information to Chinese. They have not advertised off shore yet, but are thinking about joining Destination Queenstown on tradeshows. In regards to participation in the local tourism strategy, she feels that they operate independently and don't necessary go for the strategy for the whole Queenstown. She feels that they are not approached in a inclusive, "jump on board" kind of way. She is not willing to compromise, since they have a very clear vision of where the business is going. They are not interested of collaborations, for example duo tickets.

The dialogue with the strategy owners is pretty limited according to the interviewee. She explains that they do get regular updates such as emails with information of larger group arrivals but she feels that they are more directed to hoteliers and restaurants. She doesn't feel that they have purpose for promoting the business individually. Asked about motivation and participation, the interviewee talks about the monthly emails and meetings that the DMO arrange. But she experience that they are not a particularly driving force since they are not regularly visiting them and encourage them.

### *Business challenges*

She feels that the biggest challenge they have faced is getting their concept out to the general public. They have been relying on their own creativity and used concepts such as *famil*, where front office staff of other businesses is invited to participate in the tourism activities and then spread the words to their own guests.

### *Tourism network*

She experiences the tourism network as very independent operators. They meet but they run the businesses separately so there is not much cross over or joint efforts. She doesn't see any benefits from the network since they are operating by themselves.

### *Future challenges in regards to strategy*

Future challenges would be housing for seasonal workers because of the house shortage and also the traffic problem.

## **4.4 Interview 2: Business 2 Queenstown (appendix 4)**

### *Context:*

The interviewee works as a marketing and business developer at a family owned company in Queenstown, which has been in operation the last 25 years. They operate quad bikes, dirt bikes, four wheels drives and boogie tours. The business operates all year round and has a busy winter and summer season. They have 15 employees during the winter season.

### *Success factors*

On the question why Queenstown is so successful, he mentions the landscape which is very stunning and is tailor made for the adventure activities such as skydive, river rafting, quad biking, hiking and skiing.

### *Relationship to local strategy*

He tries to keep up with what Destination Queenstown is doing, but he doesn't have the time to go to the meetings due to lack of time. The meetings are arranged around the quarterly updates. He understands the difficult job with the stakeholders they are trying to meet the needs of, and trying to tailor it to everybody. The interviewee mentions that the numbers have increased year after year so he believes they are doing a good job making Queenstown appealing.

The strategy has been communicated through email with monthly updates. Gary experiences the newsletters as useful, with the information about what's coming up and overview from the manager of Destination Queenstown. This kind of communication is quite useful for people who are busy and don't have time to attend regular meetings. He believes that the

recent strategic change towards a more “soft adventure” tourism destination is worrying, and he believes they need to be more careful so they don’t lose what Queenstown originally is known as. He can also see this change in the customers in his business.

In regards to monitoring of the strategy, the interviewee experiences that the strategy owners don’t really ask for feedback, he thinks that they might collect this during the meetings, which not everyone attends. He acknowledges that they have to be political in many ways and tailor it to many people’s needs which doesn’t line up with what every individual company would prefer them to be doing. He thinks the dialog is good with the strategy owners, but when you don’t see direct results from their work to the business it’s difficult to analyse how much impact you have.. Since they are obviously doing their job since the numbers to Queenstown are increasing, he says that no one is complaining. He experiences that motivation and participation are encouraged by the meetings, but as he said you can talk to them and update them but it does not result in actions direct to your business. The benefits gained from the strategy are the increased numbers to Queenstown.

#### *Business challenges*

In regards to challenges in developing his own business, he mentions the health and safety and the increasing legislation. Accommodating new markets, for example the Chinese market, is a challenge since they are very difficult to deal with in terms of language barriers and safety aspects.

#### *Tourism networks*

He describes the culture among the operators as quite friendly for a place that is so hugely competitive. Marketing people would regularly meet up just to discuss what’s happening around Queenstown. There is also collaboration such as combination activities and referring activities. The interviewee describes the atmosphere as good considering the competitive environment.

#### *Future challenges in regards to strategy*

In regards to challenges, he mentions the Chinese market and how it will affect traditional markets and the capacity in Queenstown at certain times, such as peak seasons. The shoulder seasons is also a challenge when numbers drop. The challenge is to attract the right type of

visitors with the significant money to spend on activities since Queenstown is not a cheap destination. He also mentions the challenge of keeping the market diverse, cause it's a huge increase in the Chinese tourists arriving and that's great for the accommodation providers because it doesn't make a difference to them who fills the bed, but for activity providers it's a huge cultural challenge, since many Chinese can not swim and are keen on adventurous activities like quad biking. When this target group fills up the beds, the regular adventure tourists don't have any place to stay. Queenstown could be full, but some business would actually be down in numbers.

#### ***4.5 Interview 3: Business 3 Queenstown (appendix 5)***

##### *Context*

The interviewee is the assistant manager at a boutique hotel in Queenstown. The hotel is a small property with only 19 rooms and 9 staff. The hotel is about 8 years old. They are open all year round, though they got a shoulder season and days in May, September and October.

##### *Success factors*

Answering the question in regards to Queenstown and the reason why it has become so successful, he mentions that it has officially been voted the number one destination in the country on Trip Advisor. Queenstown have a lot to offer to everyone; beautiful scenery, outdoors, beautiful vineyards and crazy activities for those who want.

##### *Relationship to local strategy*

His knowledge of the local strategy comes from the meetings that Destination Queenstown arrange every 3-4 months. All businesses then assess what is happening in Queenstown based on arrivals, where they come from, how long they are staying for. There are meetings where the CEO explains verbally what's going on and provides copies of the details. Afterwards the different accommodation organisations meet and discuss what's happening and share experiences. Sometimes its formal, and sometimes its just over a beer.

Keeping the operators up to date encourages motivation and participation, having the meetings every 3-6 months, by listening and witnessing the progress is encouraging enough. When they come across difficult times or barriers they can share experiences and see how other businesses successfully overcome that. The strategy has impacted the hotel in short term, by rates and price since the rates are quite dynamic and change dependant on what's

going on in Queenstown. Long-term impacts would be increase of new rooms by building new rooms. The interviewee often contact Destination Queenstown and have a discussion round what they need in form of material and as well present discounts and promotions so that they could sell the hotel even better. He absolutely feels that he benefits from the local strategy.

#### *Business challenges*

The challenges that they have are the competition. The challenge is to keep everyone occupied. Challenge for further development would be the budgets and the money, since they are such a small business. He describes it hard to compete with bigger hotels of like 200 rooms who can sell rooms for a crazy cheap deal.

#### *Tourism networks*

The interviewee experiences the hospitality industry in Queenstown as very competitive. The network is friendly and aggressive because they want to sell. He describes the operators as quite honest and working with a lot of transparency.

#### *Future challenges in regards to strategy*

Challenges for future strategic decisions would be having rooms available, since Queenstown has become such a popular destination. Another challenge is to deliver service when staffing is really hard because people in Queenstown come and go all the time. He also speaks of languages barriers between staff and guests, and that he would prefer to have more languages spoken within the business to make the guests feel more welcome.

He mentions that Queenstown is targeted certain times of year when they should concentrate more on the shoulder seasons which would cover May, June September and October. He has discussed this uneven tourism flow with Destination Queenstown, which he feels listen to him and the other operators. At the meetings, there is an extra half an hour for questions and that's where the operators bring to the table what the challenges are and how that is impacted on.

#### *Governmental support*

Asked about the local governments support he speaks about facilitation of Visa applications, liquor licence and legislation and also by increasing the number of opening hours for some

bars and restaurants. He felt that the government have helped quite a lot and that tourism is prioritised.

#### ***4.6 Interview 4: Business 1, Tourism office Voss (appendix 6)***

##### *Context*

The tourist information office in Voss was established in 2004 and was managed by the interviewee until the destination management organisation Destination Voss took over. The interviewee was involved in the process of producing the local tourism strategy for the years of 2009-2017. A part of the strategy was to establish Destination Voss and with that process.

##### *Success factors*

The interviewee mentions the luck of finding valuable resources. Its alive and cultural landscape makes it perfect for adventure activities. She believes that Voss had everything it took to become a popular destination without doing a thing, which has created a difficult cooperation culture. Hotels were competing and activity companies were not good at giving each other customers. It was always competition and every man his island. The success of the destination is not something people have done together, its just the strength of the place itself, it's a magnet.

##### *Relationship to the local strategy*

The strategy for the tourism office at the time was non-existent, mostly as a result of a restricted budget. If they wanted to do something, she needed to collect money from the different operators. Her involvement in the strategy process was bringing the facts to the report. The finished strategy document impacted the office in that sense that it was re-staffed and had a new budget. She believes that with the new budget the office is operating better.

##### *Local governments role*

Questions regarding the government and its role in the destination development, she tells me that tourism and agriculture have extra focus and special attention. Tourism brings a lot of work. The government pays for a lot of the tourism growth, one amount for running the tourism office and one for marketing purposes. She finishes of the interview by saying that she thinks the strategy is not really implemented.

### *Tourism network*

In regards to the tourism network and the culture, she experience Voss as a destination very much as a “every man for themselves” kind of culture where cooperation is not necessary. Many of the organisations have enough customers already and are irritated when the DMO are promoting a new hotel to be built, because it creates more competition. Challenges for further development would be this satisfaction with the number of visitors during peak season. The interviewee would like to see more activities developed outside the main season, for spring and autumn for example. Even if this is mentioned in the strategy to develop such products, the interviewee feel that the document is not accepted since its “written by the people at the top”. On the question what should be done differently, she mentions a local company who has understand the concept of cooperation and are not afraid of recommending other companies in Voss. She says that she wish the company culture would spread to the rest of Voss.

### ***4.7 Interview 5: Business 2 Voss, (appendix 7)***

#### *Context*

The interviewee is an entrepreneur just starting his own outdoor company in Voss. The company is offering guided tours in the summer and rent out gear for different activities such as kayaking and mountain biking. The interviewee have been working within the tourism industry in Voss for 6 years, and have 15 years of experience in the tourism industry.

#### *Success factors*

He believes that the success as a destination comes from the extreme sport and the exposure in the media. The ski resorts nearby creates good package for both summer and winter. The clubs are able to offers a wide range of activities to the visitors to Voss, and not only to professionals. He also mentions the ski destination.

#### *Relationship to local strategy*

He is not so familiar with the strategy. The DMO have been in contact with him and he is now advertising his products with them. As a result of a late start, he missed some marketing opportunities. He experience that people are curious about his performance and how it goes. The challenges he mentions for his business are getting people to know about your products

before they come to Norway, and connecting to people internationally. He hasn't had the time to evaluate the different strategies in place. He would like to see more investments in the summer activities, and as well give the locals support and work better together.

#### *Tourism network*

In regards to the tourism network, he mentions some cooperation with a few of the other tourism operators in regards to logistics and equipment. He mentions that there are a lot of possibilities in regards to better collaboration within sales, for example a shared booking system. He experiences the corporation culture as very weak between the different operators, and he believe they don't want to sell others products. At the moment, he explains there are meetings but no official collaboration between the operators.

#### *Local governments role*

In regards to support from the government, he explains that he applied for funds for starting up his business, but he only got the 15 % for the amount applied for his project. He believes that the government need to support the start up companies more, and also focus more on strategy for making tourist spend more money when they are in place.

#### *Future challenges in regards to strategy*

The challenges for further development would be accommodation, that it's not enough for the tourist demand. Mr Franco also emphasis the corporation part, that they should sell each others activities. Even just talk about it so the word is spreading through the clients when they are travelling around. He believes that the start-ups should be better integrated.

### **4.8 Interview 6: Business no 3 Voss (appendix 8)**

#### *Context*

The interviewee owns a boat that he rents out for tours on the nearby lake. The business is family owned and its not his main income. He has another job and is also a local politician. The tourists use the boat for swimming, tubing, fishing, cruising and party. The business operates season wise during summer.

### *Success factors*

The nature give room for a lot of different kind of outdoor activities. It is an all year destination with as many people here in winter as in summer. The combination of extreme sport and marketing, both inside and outside of Norway is the reason why the destination has been so successful in attracting visitors. The long history as a tourism destination also plays a huge part. He believes that the key for successful strategy is to make sure that everyone is participating financially, but according to their own income. Don't exclude anybody and make sure that everyone wants to be a part of it.

### *Relationship to local strategy*

The interviewee is not so involved or very well aware of the local tourism strategy. He has not been involved in working out the strategy, but as a politician he has discussed it and put money in different activities that they have done. The strategy has been communicated through monthly meetings. He experiences that Destinasjon Voss have a good connection with all the companies. The dialogue with Destination Voss is mainly through email, and they contact him with requests with renting the boat. He believes that the meetings are good but he don't know if many people go there because lack of time. But he says they are invited and well informed about the meetings before hand. Benefits that he has gained from the strategies are the information material that you can do when you are in Voss online, where his and other tourism companies are presented. He also talks about the opportunities for people to put packages together, not that he has been involved in that.

### *Business challenges*

He has a neighbour that caused a lot of problem regarding the operation of the boat. The county solved the issue by its rules and regulations. The resources that are most important for him is marketing resources. Since he is blind, it's hard for him to use the different social media and putting pictures on the web. Challenges for further development are to get more people to use the boat. He mentions that he wants to have more activities for the people that come, to make them stay longer and spend more money. The hotels and campgrounds would benefit from this as well.

### *Governments role*

He speak of the local government and the projects that they are putting a lot of money into. There is a Gondola from downtown Voss and u on one of the mountains around town, and the other one is that they are building a new waterpark.

### *Tourism network*

In regards to local network and collaborations, he mentions that he could be a bit more active himself since most of the hotels in his area is situated near his business. He says he could have market his boat with these hotels, and especially in the summer. But it's a matter of time and prioritising. Collaboration overall in Voss has come a far way with Destinasjon Voss help. They are trying to bring everyone together; small or big companies into the same fold and don't try to favour any particular company more than the other.

### *Future challenges in regards to strategy*

The cost issue, since some of these activities are very, very costly. Also environmental issues, such as air travel and travel in general. He believes the biggest challenge is to create a sustainable destination with visitors coming all year round. In the summer, he believes that the challenge is to make the tourist stay longer, making collaboration packages between accommodation and activity companies. The interviewee believes that Destinasjon Voss could be the force behind such collaborations, offering the region as a total package.

Another challenge that he mentions is the recruitment and retaining of seasonal staff. As a tourist community, it would be better to be able to cooperate with another destination and then the workers can migrate from one place back to another.

## ***4.9 Interview 7: Business no 4 Voss (appendix 9)***

### *Context*

The interviewee was a part of the start up of a new ski area with cabins and hotel in 2004. When ended his involvement in the business in 2012, it employed 150 people. They, together with the rest of the travel businesses in the Voss area found out that they needed a strategy that they could all work together on and decided to put together a group and hired a consultancy group that helped them organise everything.

### *Success factors*

The interviewee mentions a little bit of luck. The location in the middle of infrastructure to Bergen and Oslo, and as well by the two largest fjords in Norway, Voss becomes a natural base for exploring the fjord landscape or just make a stop at while travelling. They have their own amateur airport so they don't have to worry about commercial flights. The interviewee also speaks about the scenery, which invited people who had extreme sport as a hobby. These people later formed "Extreme sport week" which is very important for Voss tourism development because of its publicity.

### *Relationship to local strategy*

It all started with all the companies in the industry sat down and said they needed a new strategy. The group that was put together included operators that were not the most devoted. Doing so, they kind of got stuck with the project and could not criticise it too much just standing outside. Everyone was kind of invited to join the project group with suggestions, and it was an open process. He says that they had to have someone in the project group that would have the time to spend to finalise it in some way. He experiences that the challenge when you make plans like this, is who is going to pay for all the activities. The bigger the plan, the more players and shareholders there are and the worse it gets usually, he argues. One of the points of the strategy was to coordinate some of the activities and investments that many of the companies already had a plan of doing, as well as prioritise the actions. He states that you have to broaden your horizon a little bit more than some other companies do and spend money far away from your business. That's why it was really important for the group to keep the festivals going, even if some of them were on the brink of going bankrupt. He even stress that without the extreme sport week festival, Voss wouldn't be known for anything actually.

Asked about the challenges in implementing the finished strategy, he mentions that one member of the DMO didn't want to be a member anymore and they didn't understand the reason why or what the problem was. Apart from this, he says that the strategy made them think a little bit more in the same direction, and see the small steps that brought them forward. Example of such small steps would be supporting festivals and extreme sport week, market smaller companies together with the bigger companies in packages for example.

The strategy was communicated through meetings during the process, and people within the group were responsible for communicate it out to others. The interviewee stresses that its important that this kind of strategy projects aren't kept a secret until its finished. Having an open process and making people aware and let them have a chance to say their opinion is important.

In regards on how the strategy was monitored, he talks about that its difficult on a general strategy likes this. The most important thing was to make all the players think the same and understand the importance of doing things together. Even the local government needs to participate, the kommune, because he experiences that they are not always thinking like a business. He says that it's maybe not always necessary to give money to businesses for him its more understanding the importance of doing all the paperwork as fast as possible.

The strategy was hard to monitor in regards on giving feedback on the action plan. He mentions that the project leader was the one who could "arrest them" if they didn't follow the strategy. He speaks about giving good criticism to those who do the right thing and then the others would follow. He stresses the importance of having people implement the strategy in their own company plans and is a doer in the project. He would not recommend a situation where people just talk how it should be and the key players are not involved or interested in it.

#### *Tourism networks*

The culture within the group is quite good because the process made them understand the challenges for the rest of the group. The most important benefit from the network was to get the message through of the importance of the festivals. Also, other players outside the travel industry came aware of the necessity of doing things together. To summarise, he says that cooperation is definitely a success factor when implementing a tourism strategy. He argues that there should be an atmosphere if being happy for each other success and be generous toward each other.

#### *Future challenges in regards to strategy*

A challenge would be if climate change would decrease the amount of snow. But the major challenge, he says, is to make all the big investments that needs to be done in Voss since

there are a lack of financial strength locally. They are very dependant on long-term investments from somebody outside who are not in need of a fast financial ROI.

The biggest challenge is getting too many visitors. An interesting problem, he argues, because its not the amount of people that are important, its more important that those who come here are taken care of and that they spend the amount of money that is needed to keep things going. This is also part of a sustainable development, because you can make much better and real experiences if you give good quality instead of just quantity.

#### **4.10 Additional data collected from with Destination Queenstown (appendix 10)**

##### *Context*

Destination Queenstown is the Destination Management Organisation in Queenstown. Since the marketing manager did not have time for a telephone interview, she instead answered some questions through email.

##### *Success factors*

The interviewee argues that the reason why Queenstown has become so successful is because of an uniquely structured RTO which has enabled the effective, strategic and natural (not favouring any business over another) marketing over the last 30 years. Great quality product against a backdrop of outstanding natural landscapes and a warm, welcoming culture.

##### *Strategy process*

They invite all the members to provide input to the strategy planning process and business plan. They have a strategic review board, which sits above the board of directors, which is made up of 25 sector representatives and meets annually to give input to the final plan. The core stakeholders are members, local community, council, chamber of commerce, Queenstown Airport, Police, TNZ, TIA, national tourism bodies. There are regular schedule of communication, both formal and informal. There are quarterly update meetings for the members, board meetings monthly, annual input to business plan, annual general meeting to elect board members. There is a annual member communication survey and annual member satisfaction survey. The strategy focuses on promoting the shoulder seasons periods and maintaining our peaks and growing value over volume. The challenge lays in encouraging the visitors to understand the four season proposition of Queenstown (four unique and equally attractive seasons), and act on that by booking outside peak seasons. The resources most

important are the human resources. The strategy has been communicated via the business plan and at member and industry presentations. They also communicate each of our major campaigns and projects to their members too. The strategy is monitored by the different campaigns with key metrics such as digitally or media reach.

#### *Tourism network*

Describing the culture among the industry, she says that Queenstown has a really positive overall culture, its renowned for having a co-operative approach between members for the greater good of the industry. This has been built over many years as the town has grown with tourism as the biggest economic driver.

#### *Future challenges in regards to strategy*

Infrastructure development and keeping up with demands in growth. Strategic change are handled internally to continue aspire to position Queenstown as the southern hemisphere's leading lake and alpine resort. Externally they engage deeply with other local agencies to understand their strategic focus.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

### ***5.1 Introduction***

The chosen methodology of inductive approach in the research process will end up as theories and concepts. Therefore, this chapter has the ambition to present the themes and concepts found in the in-depth interviews and discuss the synthesis in regards to findings in literature. The conclusions presented are related to research question and objectives and draws from analysis. This chapter also discusses limitations in the research conducted. Next chapter will provide conclusions and reasoned recommendations supported by concept.

### ***5.2 Parameters of destination success***

The interviewees in both Voss and Queenstown mention the natural resources and the “tailor-made” conditions for the different adventure activities as the factor of becoming so successful. They also argue that the long history of both Voss and Queenstown as an attraction and tourism magnet is part of the success. Business no 3 in Queenstown talks about that the destination has a lot to offer to everyone; beautiful scenery outdoors, beautiful vineyards and crazy activities for those who want. As both destinations have ski areas, as well beautiful scenery during summer, the seasonality is also mentioned as a success factor.

Interestingly enough, either business mentions the strategy or the local DMO as a factor of success. In Voss, Business no 2 and 3 mentions that extreme sport have given Voss a lot of attention in media, especially “extreme sport veko” which he credits for the destination success. It seems as the businesses experiences that the tourists will arrive anyway and that it's just luck that brings them to the destination. Especially the former tourism office manager in Voss who speaks of Voss a destination who had everything it took to become a successful destination without doing a thing, and she even argues that this has created a difficult cooperation culture. She argues that the success of the destination is not something people have done together; it's just the strength of the place itself. In the contrary, the marketing manager at Destination Queenstown argues that the reason why Queenstown is so successful is because of the structure of the Regional Tourism Organisation which enables effective, strategic and natural (not favouring any business over another) marketing over the last 30

years. Most of the businesses and the local DMO report that strategy and destination success is measured by number of visitors arriving. As business number 2 in Queenstown argues, “even if we are not happy with the strategy, no one complains since the numbers to Queenstown are increasing”. But still, the strategy might be attracting the “wrong” visitors as a few of the business in both Voss and Queenstown argues. A few businesses discuss that they need to be better at taking care of those who already there and prioritise quality over quantity to create a more sustainable development.

### ***5.3 Communication key in successful strategic planning and implementation***

#### ***5.3.1 Queenstown***

Destination Queenstown mentions the open process of the strategy planning process both in their business plan and annual plan (Destination Queenstown Incorporated, 2016) as well as in the interview. They invite all members to provide input to the strategy process and business plan. The data reports extensive communication with core stakeholders and as well the members by quarterly update meetings and annual board and input to business plan. Its also a annual member communication survey and annual member satisfaction survey. The major campaigns are also communicated to the members, according to marketing manager at Destination Queenstown. The strategy is then monitored by the different campaigns with key metrics such as digitally and media reach.

The asked businesses in Queenstown are all aware of the local tourism strategy and its marketing campaigns, which could be seen as an evidence of successful implementation of the strategy. However, business no 1 in Queenstown feel that they need to reach out to the DMO for communication and experience them as not so proactive. The communication is limited to just emails with updates and invites to meetings, but she feels that they are more for the bigger hotels and restaurants. She feels that they don’t have the purpose of promoting the business individually. Business no 2 tries to keep up but talks about having no time to go to meetings. He feels that the emails are very useful, with the information about what is coming up and a overview from the manager. However, he has confidence in the strategy because the numbers to Queenstown is increasing. He understands that it is a difficult task with all the stakeholders and tailoring a strategy to all the needs. Business no 3 in Queenstown attend the meetings that are arranged every 3-4 months. He is pleased with the strategy and the frequent updates. He feels that he benefits from the strategy and he base his

marketing plan from the data that he gets on the meetings. He also meets with the other accommodation providers during the meetings and share important experiences. Business no 1 in Queenstown experiences that they are operating independently and don't necessarily go for the strategy as a whole for Queenstown, because they are not approached in a inclusive "jump on board" kind of way. Though, she also say that she is not willing to compromise since they have a clear vision of where the business is going and is not interested in collaborations like duo tickets.

However, communication is a two way process. Johnson et al (2011) mentions that effective communication needs to involve both advocacy of a strategy by senior management and inquiry about the concerns of influential internal and external stakeholders. In this case, its equals the DMO listening to the business own challenges as individual operators. Both business 1 and 2 had been impacted by the strategy of targeting the Chinese market and had to adjust to this. This strategic decision is not only seen as a positive change for the individual business or the destination. Business number 2 mentions how it impacted his activity business negatively because of the cultural difference and different customer demand. As he explains it, for the hotels it doesn't matter who fills the beds but for the activity companies it must be a certain type of customer who can and will do the activities.

In Queenstown, the strategy seems to be executed and implemented into the businesses operations in regards to information, communication and seeing results such as targeted visitor groups. The communication with the stakeholders is vast and invites to participation. As Hrebiniak (2005) states in a business context, successful strategic outcomes are best achieved when those responsible for execution are also part of the planning process. Though, the challenge seems to be to reach some of the independent operating businesses and create motivation and participation in the meetings and in forming and executing new strategic changes. Business literature stresses that benefits of effective execution include competitive advantage. Planning and execution are also highly interdependent, planning affects execution. The execution, in turn, affects changes to strategy and planning over time. (Hbreniak, 2005)

### 5.3.2 *Voss*

In Voss, the businesses who are operating today is not really familiar with the strategy, which could be explained by business no 3 having the business as a part time job and business no 2

is a start-up business, even though he have several years experience of the tourism industry in Voss. Business no 4 participated in the strategy process. They are aware of its existence and development through meetings and emails, but they do not have time to engage due to other obligations. They are mostly interested in the marketing benefits that the DMO offers, such as publicity on the website. They have all been in contact with the strategy owners, but in various depths. It seems that communication through email is preferable due to lack of time.

However, business no 4 mentions a open process that formed the strategy, that businesses where invited to join the project with suggestions. The group consisted of the most dedicated and the least dedicated, which created a situation where motivation where encouraged. The strategy was communicated through meetings during the process, and people within the group was responsible for communicate it out to others. He stresses that the strategy needs to be well informed and not act as a surprise for the others and kept a secret until finished. Having previous discussions in the process of starting the DMO prevented a lot of conflicts. This situation created a good foundation and participation for the strategy process. At the time, he experience that most of the people wanted to have a good corporation in the travel industry in Voss.

In Voss case, the data shows similar traits to Queenstown in regards to how the strategy was founded with an open process where participation was encouraged. Similarities regarding lack of time and engagement in the communication seems to be a common challenge. The strategy structure is very different from Destination Queenstown, who have a three year strategic plan with a two year business plan connected to it whereas Voss have a strategy from the local government which operates for eight years. Both strategies might be argued as starting as an emergent strategy, since both strategies emerge on the basis of series of decisions that formed a pattern (Johnson et al 2010), i.e focus on adventure tourism after experience the demand. Though, both strategies tend towards tbe intended strategy since they are deliberately formulated or planned by “senior management” and accompanied by mechanisms designed to implement the intentions. In a business perspective, the literature mentions the challenges with strategic planning as overly bureaucratic, insufficiently insightful and ill suited for today’s rapidly changing market. Some executives argues that the process is a part of the past and that organisations should instead invest in market intelligence and agility. (Kachner, King, Stewart, 2016). It would be arguable that these opinions would be transferrable to a tourism context, where governmental processes are seen as slow and

rigorous. However, governmental involvement is essential as Nordin and Svensson (2007) states, the tourism industry is in many aspects a highly political body with clear independencies between the industry and the political arena in a sense of generating growth and employment and financial resources. Especially in adventure tourism, where new businesses might need supply of capital (for example, funds to purchase boats, ropes and other equipment) and to cover their overhead expenses such as rent, in particular salaries and insurance. (Rodenburg 1980; Wanhill 2000; Marques & Cunha 2010, cited by McKay 2012)

#### ***5.4 Strategic monitoring as a foundation for motivation and participation***

Destination Queenstown monitor their strategy by reporting results of the activity plan in the annual report. They are also reporting their progress during the quarterly meeting where the operators are invited to participate. (Destination Queenstown Incorporated, 2015; 2016)

Destinasjon Voss have a larger timespan on their strategy compared to Queenstown, which is also the case for the reporting, which reports on the progress of the strategy after 4 years of operating. (Destinasjon Voss, 2011). Business literature supports a clear communication of results, since it foster alignment. Kacharner, Kermit and Stewart (2016) mention identifying quantitative metrics and goal that can measure progress as a powerful way to encourage an organisation to embrace the strategy.

In regards of monitoring the strategy, the primary data shows that business number 2 in Queenstown feels that the strategy owners don't ask for feedback. He says that he feels that he don't have any impact on the strategy since destination Queenstown have to be political in many ways and tailor it to many people needs. However, both business number 2 and 3 experiences that the report of the progress on the quarterly meetings encourage motivation and participation.

In Voss, business number 4 who participated in the strategy process mentions the difficulty of monitoring a general strategy like this with many participants. As he states, "No one could fire you for not reaching the goals". He said that the main purpose of the strategy was to make all the players think the same and understanding the importance of doing things together. He says that they tried to give good feedback to those who did the right thing in

regards to the strategy and then others will follow. Daniell (2005) and Johnson et al (2010) argues that inspirational leadership and creative encouragement should be a part of the strategic implementation for maximum advantage. Though, it seems that Voss have challenges in this matter, since different stakeholders form the strategy with different interests. The project leader is no longer working with the strategy and the DMO have also had some organisational changes since the beginning of the strategy process.

As stated earlier, the challenge for the organisation is to create engagement and motivation so the companies will attend the meetings. Daniell (2004) mentions motivation is the necessary human dimension to strategy. Fyall, Fletcher and Spyriadis (2010) argues that stakeholders should engage in forming the strategy since it create foundations for a holistic manner which literature states is crucial to deliver a “seamless” visitor experience. To be able to be successful in the future a more dynamic and innovative structure and approach are required that incorporate the views of all stakeholder groups that will advance destinations. Daniell (2004) states that the rapidly changing environment also requires flexibility and room for creative evolution and adjustment. A strategy formed with a shorter timespan and monitoring enables this, whereas emergent strategies also can be included towards the realised startegy (Johnson et al, 2010) Mintzberg (2007) recognises that in practice the elements of strategy do not always follow this linear sequence. Choices often have to be made before the position is fully understood. Sometimes too a proper understanding of the strategic position can only be built from the experience of trying out a strategy in action. Sometimes the feedback that comes from the real world is far better than remote analysis of the strategic position than remote analysis carried out in a strategic planning department at head office.

### ***5.5 Tourism network as a structure for success***

Business no 1 in Queenstown describes the network consisting of very independent operators, and their business do not see any benefits from the network since there are no cross over or joint efforts. Business no 2 in Queenstown describe the culture among the operators as quite friendly, but hugely competitive. Marketing people would regularly meet up just to discuss what’s happening in Queenstown. Collaborations in regards to activities and referring activities are in place. Business number 3 also mentions the competitiveness of the local hospitality in Queenstown. He describes the operators as quite honest and working with a lot

of transparency, which he appreciates in regards to the prices.

In Voss, you will find the same kind of experiences. Business no 1 experiences the network as a “every man for themselves” culture where cooperation is not necessary because of a saturation of customers. She mentions one company that understand corporation, and that she wish its culture should spread. Business no 2 in Voss mentions possibilities in collaboration within sales. The operators could sell each others products through a shared booking system. Business no 3 believe that the collaborations have come a far way with the establishment of Destination Voss. The organisation tries to bring everyone together, small or big companies into the same fold and don't try to favour any particular company more than the other. They all contribute compared to their revenue. Business no 4 stresses that during the strategy planning process the culture within the group is quite good, because the process made them understand the challenges for the rest of the group. The most important benefit from the network was to get the message through of the importance of the festivals. He says that cooperation is definitely a success factor when implementing a tourism strategy, and creating an atmosphere where you are happy for others success. Business number 2 in Voss mentions the key for strategy success he believes is to make everyone is participating financially, but according to their own income. Making sure that everyone is a part of it and take the economic burden of it.

It seems that operators in both destinations understands the value of cooperation, but as independent operators with own competitive agenda it seems to be a challenge. Literature support the discussion of collaborations impact on destination success. Several authors mentions tourist destinations as complex service networks (Dredge, 2006; Pforr, 2006; Shian Long; 2012; Tinsley & Lynch, 2001, cited by Pechlaner et al, 2013). Due to the fragmented nature of tourism supply, cooperation in destinations is needed for success.

Destinations comprise so many products, stakeholders and complex management and political relationships, contribute to them being regarded as one of the most difficult “products” to manage and market. (Buhalis, 2000). To best manage the complexity within destinations is therefore accepted that destinations need to bring together all parties to collaborate rather than compete, and to pool resources towards developing an integrated management and delivery system. (Buhalis & Cooper, 1998; Fyall & Garrod, 2005; Prideaux & Cooper, 2002; Telfer, 2001 cited by Kozak, Gnoth and Andreu, 2010). Morrison et al (2004) identified financial, human and physical resources as critical success factors for a

network. When working in a network, the various actors in the supply chain can potentially collaborate on any activity and thereby increasing the overall competitiveness of their operations. Such cooperation can even support the development of sustainable and competitive tourism strategies.

In both destinations it seems to be the destination management (DMO) who is the reason for a functional tourism network. Tourism strategy requires the combines efforts of public and private players, with the role of DMO as particular importance (Blain, Levy and Ritchie, 2005; Bieger, 1997; Dredge, 2006 cited by ) . The formulation and implementation of a deliberate destination strategy (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985) appears to be difficult to achieve, above all in view of the complex and multi sector form taken.

### ***5.6 Future challenges for adventure tourism destinations***

In Queenstown, the businesses mentions housing for seasonal workers, and the traffic problem and new target market such as the Chinese market and how it will affect traditional markets and the capacity in Queenstown at certain times, such as peak seasons. When this type of target group fills the beds, the regular adventure tourists don't have any place to stay. Queenstown could be full, but some business would actually be down in numbers. Shoulder-seasons is also a challenge that the businesses have to work with when the numbers drop. The businesses also talks about attracting the right type of visitors with the significant money to spend in Queenstown, since it is not a cheap destination.

In Voss, the businesses talks about the further development of accommodation and as well as cooperation part, that there is a demand of selling each others products a bit better. The start-ups should also be better integrated. They also mention the cost issues since some of the activities in Voss are very costly. Business no 3 also talks about the environmental issues, such as air travel and travel in general. In regards to strategic change, he says it very much depends on what the change is and if it just centralise around a few operators, then people would be sceptic. A hypothesis he base on the current two investments done by the local government, which he experiences will benefit only a few operators. Business number 4 identifies challenges with the investments, finding long term investors because of the lack of financial strength locally, and as well long paperwork processes. The businesses in Voss also mentions the sustainability problem with having tourists arriving all year round. In the

summer, they need to make the tourists stay longer which is a cheaper way of marketing and better for the economy. As business no 4 in Voss argues, its not the amount of people that is important, its the more important that the people who come here are taken care of and spend the money that is necessary to keep things going. Business no 3 believe that Destinasjon Voss could be the force behind such collaboration, offering the region as a total package. The recruitment and retaining of seasonal staff is also mentioned, and business no 3 suggest a solution with collaboration with another destination where the workers can migrate from one destination to another depending on the demand.

The data from both destinations show similarities in regards to future challenges in regards to retaining staff, housing for staff, targeting shoulder seasons, attracting the “right” customers that can afford the activities offered and creating more collaborations to extend visitor stay. A majority of these challenges is mentioned and addressed in Destination Queenstowns strategic documents, and have already given results. In Voss strategy documents its mentioned the targeting of shoulder seasons by creating events, and as well as aim for more collaborations. For the future and need to take these in consideration in regards to strategic planning, but not forgetting changes in the external environment that can impact the strategic positioning or set the destination in a strategic drift (Johnson et al, 2010)

### ***5.7 Limitation of research***

The access of data have been limited due to factors such as the time-horizon, peak season, summer holidays. The interviews required participation and time from entrepreneurs in their peak seasons, both in Queenstown and Voss, the access to managers were therefore limited. To be able to access data from a broader sample of stakeholders might create a holistic viewpoint, and give even more deeper understanding of the strategy process and perspectives on the strategies implemented. To even broaden the perspective it would have been interesting to interview secondary stakeholders, such as investors.

Though, the author believes that the businesses selected provide a representative sample of the tourism businesses in both destinations and gives a overview over the strategy process and destination development.

In a generalisation point of view, the geographical focus of the study could be a limiting factor since the findings might not be representative for other areas. Even if the study is

comparison of two adventure tourism destinations, it might require even further similar studies in other geographical areas that might lend weight to the research in terms of consistency.

Another limitation of the study is the strategies examined. They are current strategies and plans, and the data collected from the business are their current experience on the situation in each destination. Since the strategies or challenges might change rapidly due to shifts in customer demand or other concurrencies in the external environment, a similar research in another specific time might give other results.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations**

Based on the interpretation of the primary data, both Voss and Queenstown has become successful destinations because of the natural resources and the “tailor-made” conditions for the different adventure activities. From being natural tourism magnets, emergent strategies have facilitated the tourism development until more intended strategies have been put in place. (Johnson et al, 2010) The structure of the strategies is different in the time perspective, where Voss strategy stretches for eight years. Hrebiniak (2005) mentions that the execution often takes longer time than the formulation of strategy. The longer the time frame, the harder it gets to monitor and control the execution process. Long-term needs should be translated into short-term objectives. Queenstown’s structure is preferable in this matter, where a three-year strategy plan follows of 2 years business plan and annual reports.

The current strategies studied in this research have been successful in terms of visitor arrivals, but primary research show that businesses identifies challenges with attracting quantity before quality. Interviewees on both destinations mention a parameter of visitor spending as another important factor of destination success, since adventure tourism activities are seen as expensive. The businesses also mention better collaborating to be able to offer packages for longer visitor stay to facilitate visitor spending.

Both primary and secondary data shows that success follows good communication in strategic planning and implementation. Both destinations have a open planning process, which is also mentioned in a business context as a success criteria (Hbreniak, 2005, Johnson et al, 2010). In both destinations the primary research shows that companies are aware of the strategy and the local tourism development, but don’t have time for any extensive communication with the strategy owners. The preferred communication would be email and newsletters with updates. In regards to the communication between the DMO and the stakeholders, Hbreniak (2005) argues that the understanding how to manage feedback, strategy reviews and change is vital to the success of strategy execution. These are the issues that impact the success or failure of strategy execution efforts.

In regards of monitoring the strategy, success criteria seems to be to have a well-detailed action plan with quantitative metrics and goals. A challenge for more general tourism strategies seems to be leadership and management, who responsible for everyone meeting the goals? The monitoring process seems to function as a foundation for motivation and participation, if reported frequently to the stakeholders. However, the challenge with finding time to attend the meetings is mentioned in the primary research.

The interpretation of the primary and secondary data also shows that forming a tourism network is a success factor. Both destinations have a network in place where the DMO functions as the main force. The primary data show that businesses in both destinations understands the value of collaboration, but as competitive independent operators it seems to be a challenge to get all parties to collaborate rather than to compete. As literature states, when working in a network the various actors in the supply chain can collaboratively increase overall competitiveness, and support development of sustainable and competitive tourism strategies.

In regards to future development, it seems that both destinations have identified the challenges that the industry and the businesses are facing and included them in the strategies. As Kozak, Knoth and Andreu (2010) discuss, there are a number of forces and issues at play in the wider environment that is driving change in the management of destinations. These include the necessity to adapt to needs, wants and expectations of more mature and knowledgeable customers. Though, it should be said that the external environment is changing fast and need to be taken in consideration to avoid strategic drift (Johnson et al, 2010, Tribe, 2010). The structure of the strategy could arguably have an impact, whereas Voss longer period of strategy operation would minimise the opportunity to act fast on impacting factors.

Recommendations for destinations with similar aspirations of becoming an adventure tourism destination, such as destinations in Sweden, would be to include the operators in the strategic planning process. Further on, this research show that retaining a good communication throughout the process of strategy execution and monitoring is key. The communication should be well advised and be on the stakeholders premises, since a majority seems to be family owned businesses where lack of time is common problem. It seems that both

destinations in this conducted research have an interesting problem with the tourism numbers, and are facing the difficulty of attracting “the right” visitor who have a certain disposable income to spend on the adventure tourism activities which are rather expensive due to the costs of insurances etc. The marketing plan and target group would preferably mirror this desire and there should be a parameter of this in measuring the strategy success, in addition to tourism arrivals. A solution would be if DMO focused on the marketing issues to get the visitors numbers and the companies could focus on making attractive collaborations to make the visitors stay even longer.

Further research on how strategy process could be executed more effectively with all the stakeholders interests and processes would be interesting. As discussed in previous chapters, governmental processes are often long and time bound, both in regards of strategic planning aswell as making the required investments. Contrary, businesses want to act much more quicker on customer demand and changing environment. Strategic change is also a point of further research. In regards to the rapidly changing environment, changing customer demand and travel patterns how can the strategy be more flexible and still be successful? Especially in regards to government bound strategy such as Voss, where the timeframe of the strategic document might be too long and the strategic planning too time consuming for the fast changing environment. As Kozak, Gnoth and Andreu (2010) discuss, far more proactive and ”light-footed” destination management organisations are required to keep to accommodate industry and market changes. They predict that in the future, many DMOs will operate outside local authority control and represent public-private sector partnerships that are inclusive of the trade and stakeholder groups with a mandate to develop the destination in its entirety. If this is to be the way forward, some benefits and drawbacks are anticipated.

## **Chapter Seven: Reflections on Learning**

### ***Introduction***

According to Cottrell, (2015) success begins with knowing and managing your self. It is easier to cope with change and new context if you have a deep understanding of yourself and profound insights that comes from self-reflection, self-questioning and challenge. In my previous module Management simulation and personal development, I have done a few self-appraisal test which I have gained knowledge about how I function in different situations, and what I prefer in a learning situation. With that gained information, I have had a base for analysing my behaviour and learning process during my dissertation process.

### ***Self-Appraisal***

Before engaging in this research topic, I had no previous experience of independent research in this scale. I found the research topic a bit difficult and very theoretical. I tried to study the literature on research methods and found the modules Research Methods I & II very resourceful. Even though the subject was one of the more difficult for me since it was new to my knowledge and some language barriers occurred due to not having English as my native language. However, I managed to pass to the dissertation stage.

In previous module of Management Simulation and personal development, I had to do some assessment in regards of learning styles to better understand the learning experience. The main course literature by Whetten and Cameron (2012) identifies 4 distinct learning styles; Activists, Theorists, Pragmatists and Reflectors. The authors also present a self-appraisal test connected to these learning styles. The result showed that I had a tendency of watching, and I had the same score on thinking and feeling. These scores show that I have a combination of reflecting and philosophy as preferred learning styles. I recognise myself in both styles, especially the reflecting style. I love brainstorming, thinking and view situations from many perspectives. Innovative and imaginative approaches attract my imagination and creative side. Though, I can sense some of the traits of the philosophy learning style, such as using

models, theories and case studies to understand and explain. I also like to sort my thoughts by using step-by-step manner, and integrate them in the context from details to big picture. As stated, its good to have a mix of all four styles to learn at your best, so I my challenge was to be more doing and be more practical about things, and not analyse too much. After the process of conducting my dissertation, I experience the overthinking and over analysis as an obstacle for progress at times. The supervisor is an excellent support in these kind of situations.

Blaxter et al (2010) mentions a very good saying in their book which concludes my experience of the dissertation process: “All at sea but learning to swim”. They argue that surviving and feeling that you are thriving across the period of your study is an important goal, as this will enable you to maintain motivation when things get tough. As a person involved in learning, surviving as a research student is about accumulating knowledge and extending skills, not stay in familiar seas. With all this in mind, I felt that it was hard to put theory into practice. As the process started, I was very ambitious and interested in the topic since I have encountered the issues my self. I wanted to do an extensive research and was too ambitious with what I wanted to accomplish. With this, I also put to much pressure on myself in a sense of what I could accomplish during this timeframe and not bearing in mind that this was my first research project. Afterwards, I feel I should have prioritised more time with my lecturer discussing my topic in an earlier stage.

One thing I have struggled with is accepting that my research is enough. As Blaxter et al (2010) mentions in their book, there is never enough time to do all the work that appears to be essential to do a thorough job. One of the most common reasons for falling behind is that reading and associated research takes longer than anticipated. At some stage, a decision has to be made to stop reading and researching and start writing. Forcing yourself to move on is a discipline that has to be learnt, a discipline I am had to master and work on during my dissertation process. We have to do the best we can in the time available, and not use more reading needed as an excuse for not actually getting down to writing and everything else that needs to be done in the progress of research!

### **Problem –solving**

During my data collection, I struggled with booking my interviews. Several interview prospects did not have time for an in-depth interview by phone, due to lack of time during the peak seasons. At first, I felt like a failure and thought I should have predicted this. But I just had to keep my head down and fiercely trying to contact people for several weeks. In the end I got the interviews that I needed, but not the interviews with a more vast range of stakeholders that I wished for in the beginning. This connects back to being a first time researcher, and having no experience in conducting primary research and its challenges of collecting data. Afterwards, I realise I should have been even more engaged in the Research methods modules by discussing and questioning the methodology and scope with the teachers available to feel more confident in the process.

While analysing the data and writing up my conclusion and recommendations, I found myself in the self-critical mode which Blaxter et al (2010) discuss as very common among new researchers. I was unsure if the data and the writings were good enough. In this phase, the supervisors feedback and as well talking to fellow students made me feel a bit more at ease.

### ***Summary of Added Value***

The skills learned, such as gaining knowledge about different scientific research techniques working according to a certain methodology as well as critically analyse secondary literature will be skills learnt that I will be able to apply in further roles of management and consultancy. I feel more confident in making calls and interviewing in English. I also feel more confident in the researchers role and know that I can handle set backs.

### ***Sustaining the learning & Action Plan***

I believe that the knowledge I have gained throughout the dissertation process will be beneficial in my future roles as consultant or manager. To stay on top in the business world you have to stay up to date with the changing environment and be critical and analytical of all the information that you obtain on a daily basis. To continue to read journals and use my new skill set of research, I can further develop my knowledge about current business related issues and be even more attractive in a business sense. My research done in this dissertation have helped me gain new self confidence in the researcher role, important contacts and knowledge about the challenges faced in the strategy process in a tourism industry, a challenge that I will encounter and hopefully be a resource in the future.

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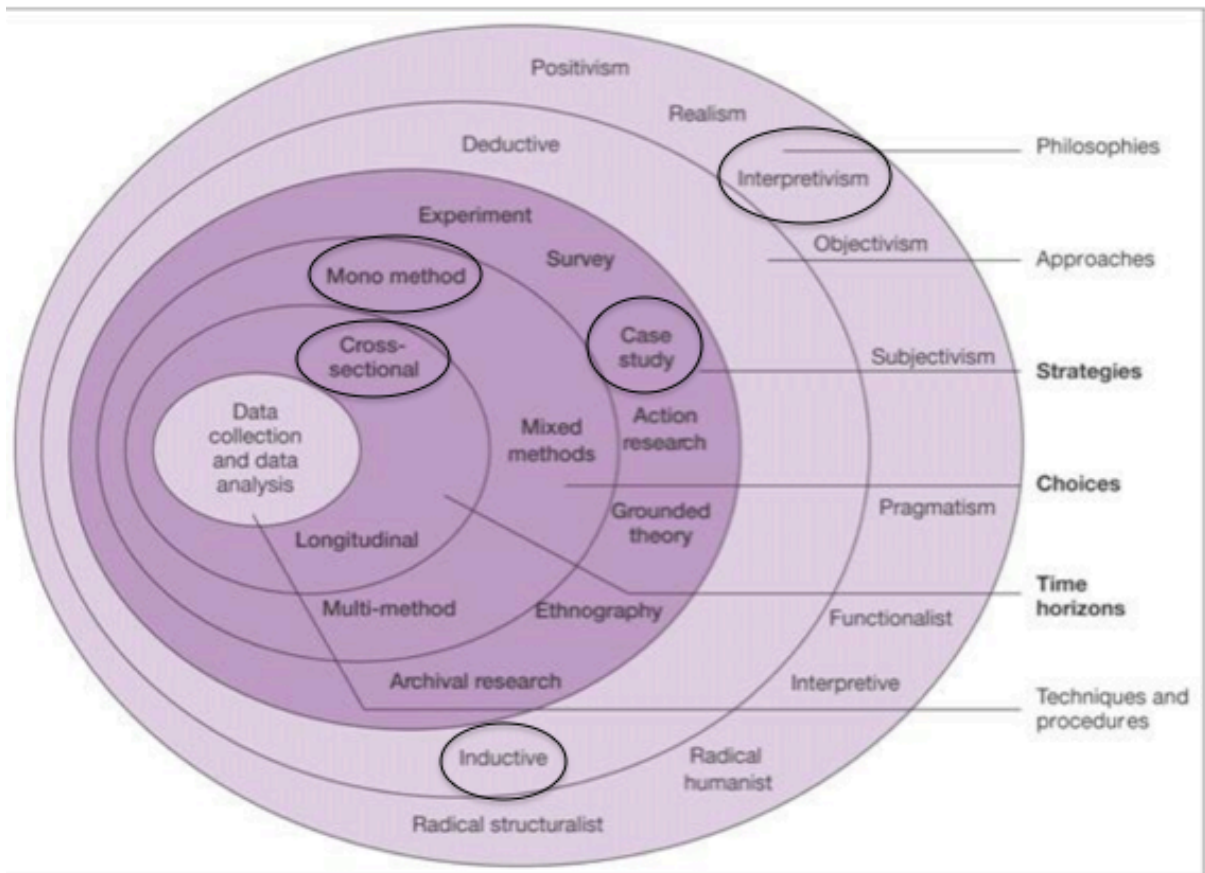
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# Appendix 1



The chosen research methodology according to the research onion.

Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012)

## Appendix 2

### Interview guide

#### *Research question:*

*"What are the success factors and challenges in the execution phase of a strategy for a adventure tourism destination and its impact on destination development?"*

#### **Who am I interviewing?**

The stakeholders to the strategies, as the tourism operators .

#### **Questions for businesses affected by the strategy:**

Business structure:

1. What is your business idea?
2. Are you operating season-wise or all year round?
3. How many employees?
4. How many years have you been in business?

Relationship to strategy:

Why do you think the destination has become such a successful adventure tourism destination?

What is your knowledge of the local tourism strategy?

How is the involvement in the strategy process of the local tourism strategy?

How has it affected your business?

What challenges have you faced implementing it in your business?

How has the strategy been communicated?

How is the strategy monitored?

What conditions was created for successful strategy implementation?

How is your dialog with the strategy owners?

How is motivation and participation encouraged?

What benefits have you gained from the strategy?

What benefits do you get from the tourism network?

How would you describe its culture?

What challenges do you see for future strategic directions?

What are the challenges for further development of your business? /for the destination?

## Appendix 3

### Interview transcript - Business number one in Queenstown

**Interviewer:** Student Therese (T)

**Interviewee:** Owner of activity company in Queenstown

Interview via telephone 20<sup>th</sup> of July.

Duration: 28 minutes and 3 seconds

#### **Context:**

The business is a family owned business located in the centre of Queenstown.

(Start of interview)

**Interviewer (T):** Ok, so lets start the interview! So, (name) of the (company) in Queenstown, maybe you can start introduce yourself and the business and the role that you have?

Interviewee (I): Sure, ok Therese, my name is as you say (...), I am one of the owners of (...) . (...) is a live interactive haunted house and its unique in the southern hemisphere. We have been in operation now for a little bit over three years. We are delighted with the responses we have had to our business idea and the strategies that we have implemented. Little bit background about me. My background is teaching, from young children right through to adults. I'm originally, as you can probably tell, from the UK in a place called Reading in Berkshire and our family emigrated to New Zealand about 13 years ago now and we have a few friends whom has always lived in Queenstown. Anthony and I actually emigrated originally to a place called Nelson which is in the top of South Island. And I was teaching there and everything going fine but our family was separated, and seem a real shame that we were in Nelson and the boys where here in Queenstown. And so for years we spoken about, trying coming up with an business idea we could all be together in the same place, and working actually together. And our youngest son (name), went to North America and he basically had this idea that, uhm very much Queenstown then had no inside attraction, no wet weather attractions, everything was throw yourself of a bridge with a bungy or dropping out of a plane sort of activities and in the evenings, particularly there was nothing apart from eat or drink. So he came up with this idea to run a haunted house. And initially we had problem

with having our business idea funded from the banks. But one bank here in Queenstown was willing to take a risk on us, we put together a business plan had it solidly checked with accounts. Cause we were risking everything, totally all our family behind it and we were risking all our things, our property, everything we had. I am very pleased to say that within of two days of opening we had long queue to the door, so.

**T: Wow**

I: Yeah, which is beautiful. And its gone the same way since! I mean, its going up and down, slightly our numbers going through depending on the season, there are shoulder seasons here in Queenstown, so its called when numbers drop. And we don't get so many tourist in May or in November, but right now with a peak, one of our peak tourist times because of the school holidays Aussies coming over for two weeks, Kiwis, we got a lot of local support places Dunedin, Invercargill, Christchurch and the whole South Island in fact so. So that vast, really!

**T: Sorry, could you repeat how many years you have been in business in Queenstown?**

I: 3 years.

**T: How many employees do you have?**

I: Oh sure, ok, we started off originally with 17 running on split shift, but we consolidated now on to around 13 or 14 members of staff including our family. So we are very much hands on in business all four of us. We are all taking an active role. We running at the moment on 14. We may take on an extra person sometimes because its been such a busy season.

**T: Great! I think that was a really good presentation of your business. And such a nice to hear that it runs so well. And very creative idea.**

I: Thank you.

T: Yeah. Lets move forward to the business strategy.

I: Yeah sure

**T: So lets move on to the tourism strategy. First of all I would like to ask you, why do you think that Destination Queenstown has become such a successful adventure tourism destination?**

I: I think that's because stunning location. I mean, where I am right now, I'm looking out of my home office surrounded by mountains and lakes. I honestly think that the history of Queenstown way, way back right in to the 1940-1950s really opened up as a destination to ski, during winter like now or for it to be a summer destination by rail or by boats. A little bit like the Alps in Europe where people would come mostly for the scenery. Then businesses started to cash in on that attraction, natural attraction in terms of offering tours and taking people out on the lake, like the lake here, lake Wakatipu. We got a steam boat that still goes up and down, and was actually built the same year as Titanic. Luckily its still afloat unlike the Titanic itself. Anyway, people started to recognize that all this natural beauty needed a infrastructure, so you got café and hotels and all of that kind of background support, scaffolding if you like. Another fact would be, its definitely got more than one season. We have been looking to expand here in New Zealand and realised tourists from the North Island generally come in the summer, and they got no kind of carrot to come in the winter, there is no ski season there so we are very fortunate to have two definite tourist seasons. More and more people now are coming particularly in the autumn for the walking and, like trekking and that kind of thing. So that makes the difference in the number of seasons that can support tourist. So it's a definite demarcation between the groups who comes now in the winter and the groups that comes in the summer time. We see more and more of our staff stay on working visas from winter to summer, than when they start with us in the summer its rare that they stay throughout the winter. Queenstown is a affluent area, to be honest, with the background of the gold mining era.

**T: Hello? (phone breaks)**

I: Hello? Im so apologetic, I think I was saying to you how Queenstown benefited so much from the gold mining era?

T: Yes

I: Are you recording?

T: Yes , I am I just started it again

I: Okey. So yeah. Thanks to this, Queenstown had a very auspicious beginning its gold mining really put it in the public eye. People still come, we live in an place called Arrowtown, its just outside of Queenstown, its just 15 minutes drive away. People come and still have a ago at panning for gold in the Arrow river. So I am convinced, in a tourism point of view, that the history of this area brought a lot of people aswell. Cause the buildings that they aquenche (?) are still reminisce from this area, even in the centre of Queenstown. From a tourist point of view that would up the profile of the town.

**T: What is your knowledge of the local tourism strategy? The one that Destination Queenstown have?**

I: Ok, their basic focus, I guess is mostly domestic market but they are more and more going into Chinese market, that is probably one of our main feeds in to the area. Because domestic tourism, they are so many people who come once, or possible twice to Queenstown if they actually dont live here but there are millions of international visitors particularly from Asia, we do have a lot of visitors from Europe and North America too.

**T: How has the strategy been communicated to you?**

I: When we opened, we actually made the running if you see what I mean, we were very kind of ok, we are totally new to the concept, how can we find local support, we went online and find out which organisation could really help us, to spread the word of what we do. To be brutally honest Therese, Destination Queenstown will help if you ask them to, but they are not, what my personal opinion not very pro active. Other businesses in the area say exactly the same. You know, they basic wanted but all comes back to your hard work and diligence to get the message out there. We are listed with them, but its very rare that people comes by the tourist attraction saying “Oh yes, Destination Queenstown recommended you”. There are

really, we get a lot, our two main ways how people find us is word of mouth, which is the best advertisement you can possibly ask for, second would be basically people walking past to see us. We started, its funny, have you heard of Pokemon Go?

T: Yes, I have!

I: We are not a Poke-stop, because I joined up in the game last week thinking are we because that would be amazing, cause people would come. But we have a lots of those characters within Pokemon outside our doors so people come along on their way to the next pokestop, and they are catching various creatues, im not terrible familiar with the game but that's one synergie with people staying outside the fearfactory.

T: That's such an interesting phenomenon, the pokemon go!

I: It really is! Very interesting. So, I think it will just grow and grow and become bigger.

**T: Back to the interview. What would you say, how strategy affected your business, for example focus on Chinese guests, have you had to adjust?**

I: Yes, we took the decision to have a sandwich board outside in Chinese writing. We have also got, when we give a briefing to the guests how fear factory actually work we have a Chinese translation book that we ourselves put together with a help of a friend that speaks Chinese, so that we can communicate to people who speak that language as to what would happen inside the fear factory so that they understand the safety rules and that they are familiar with the product. So it helps them reach a decision if they want to purchase tickets or if they want to keep us as a point and go to the guideline works for entry (?).

Though, we haven't advertised off shore although we are planning next year to attend uhm, like there is trade shows in Asia and America, sorry not America for trade shows, we are visiting America this year to go to haunted kind of attractions that have popped up. North America tend to not have haunted houses that are there all year, it tend to run early October to late November, where we on the other hand are open 364 days a year, we are only closed one day which is Christmas day. We are certainly go to trade shows in Australia, I don't know if we go to China, but that is something that Destination Queenstown do offer, that you can put together a team and travel together with them. And take various advertising, like, what's the

word, products and you can pitch to particular markets. I don't know how much Chinese visitors buy we need a week to find a bit more, Certainly In Europe and North America it very, very big deal. Haunted Houses are very, very popular if you go into websites of various cities, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, all of those border states main centres you will find a haunted house.

**T: That's very interesting. I was just wondering, what challenges have you faced implementing the strategy in the business? In these three years, have you found any challenges or something that you couldn't buy into something that you felt?**

I: To start with, to get the concept of what we were doing to the general public was an enormous challenge. So we were relied on our creativity to help us to overcome that. Because there had never been a haunted house in New Zealand like ours, it is more like interactive theatre which is very different, so one little thing that we have done is to, are you familiar with the word FAMIL?

T: Ehm... No?

I: Do you have that in Ireland? So a FAMIL is when you invite front office staff to experience your products. So then people have an working idea of how, they can then pass on content to their people, you know, that comes to them to do what they are doing. AJ Hackett, as you might have heard of is the bungy people here in New Zealand. They quite often asked out at the bungy site what else can I do in Queenstown, so we provided their staff with FAMILS so that they could then recommend us, hopefully, to their clients coming through. So it's kind of a mutual cooperation between different companies. The only problem we have found s years has gone and it's a challenge for us, is that sometimes we find that people who are coming weren't necessary working for the company, and I'm not meaning the HJ Hackett in particular, it's a general concept. So we always now ask for proof of employment and a letter signed of by their manager that they are actually front line staff rather a friend of a friend that thought they could get a free bee. (laughs)

T: Who wouldn't... (Laughs)

I: For the front line staff that that are working in the tourism industry, we offer, we have implemented a small charge so that they are genuinely interested in our product and not only in a staff party.

**T: That's great. I was just a little bit curious about if you faced any more challenges with implementing the local marketing or the development tourism strategy that Destination Queenstown have?**

I: General whole within in Queenstown... Uhm... I guess because we are pretty independent people, we don't necessarily go by the strategy as a whole for Queenstown. We do our own thing within Queenstown, if you see what I mean. No one has never come up to us and said "Hey guys, we got this idea, do you want to jump onboard?" Do you know what I mean?

T: It's more that you have to...

I: Yes. In our experience, what happens is you kind of end up compromising, and we have got very clear vision, where we want the business to go, how we wanted to operate, people have said oh a strategy from other companies, and actually from Destination Queenstown did suggest themselves, what you could do is to say, right ok, you do a duo ticket so its you and shot over jet or its you and another indoor attraction that s now come up because they basically thought your idea was a great idea and now they produce some indoors as well. But we've never done it Therese because we feel that we stand up full on our own.

**T: How is your dialogue with Destination Queenstown?**

I: Its pretty limited, we do get regular updates, emails from them, but we don't get huge amount input from them, they send us emails saying that we have this conference group coming and that conference group coming, but again they generally more towards hoteliers, and the restaurant providers, so they will put forward if you are a member of buying in their organisation they will put you forward automatically. But I'm never convinced, I think what they do is they send out a blanket email and they, if asked for, they will provide our advertising material, so they would provide our brochures but beyond that I never get the feel that they have purpose for me setting out to promote us individually.

**T: Are you a member of the organisation?**

I: Yeah we are a member of the Chamber of commerce, we are a member of the Austrilation? and New Zealand tourist association, we have something called Qualmark which is a, there sis something in England and Ireland that are similar, where you are independently investigated by this big overall tourist organisation for your health and safety and how you operate and we got very high marking in that. So yes we are definitely signed up in these organisations.

**T: Are you a member of Destination Queenstown?**

I: Oh yes.

**T: How is motivation and participation encouraged from Destination Queenstown?**

I: To actually join them ?

**T: No, they have this extensive strategy for developing high quality products and marketing Queenstown tourism operators abroad, how are they motivating for you to preform your best and be a part of the marketing campaign?**

I: Uhm... my basic answer to that is that I'm not so aware, the only communication we get Therese, is the monthly emails saying that we put you forward automatically as a tourist attractions, but a part from that, I don't know. They do meetings here in Queenstown at various hotels and we do tag along to those, but we never felt that we received any particular motivation or encouragement from them. I think there is no strong... They are not a particularly driving force, do you get what I mean? There is nothing... You asked me a question, and I'm like "oh, ok" no, we don't, they are certainly not hand on regularly visiting us and encouraging us.

I just need to let you know that I probably only have 2 more minutes, sorry

**T: Ok, otherwise the tourism network in Queenstown, how would the culture the different tourism operators. How would you describe the culture?**

I: We are all, compared to other countries very much independent operators. So there is not, all though we meet and see each other, we all run our businesses separately so there is not much cross over in terms of like, oh ok, this is going to be a joint effort between these particular organisations.

**T: What benefits do you get from the network or the other tour operators?**

I: No, no, we just run ourselves independently.

**T: What would you say is the future challenges for future strategic direction for Queenstown? In regards to changing environment and different travel patterns?**

I: We got huge issues here around workers, being able to actually house them. There is enormous housing shortage here in Queenstown of reasonable priced property and even more expensive property over a million dollars is very hard to acquire. And we also got big traffic problem because so many people are coming, which is a wonderful problem to have, don't get me wrong. Its not like that we wish that we don't have these problems.

**T: Hmm... ok. What more success factors do you see for executing a tourism strategy in Queenstown?**

I: What was that sorry?

**T: Sorry, what kind of... ehm... As Queenstown has become such a successful destination in executing strategies. What would you say is the success criteria for the strategy?**

I: Okey, can we make this the final question?

T: Yes, it is my finally question, yes.

I: Basically my answer to that would be flexibility, willing to change and very willing to reflect on where you are and where you are going. So your business plan and your operation is absolutely integral. The people you have on your staff is beyond important because your business is your people. So the staff that I was talking to you about before is very important so we have to choose our workforce very, very carefully. Okey.

T: Interesting. Thank you so much for your time.

I: Delighted to have another call with you, but I wouldn't have the time to do it until Monday or Tuesday.

T: Its ok I think I got a lot of useful information from you, so its perfect. Thank you so much for your time and have a great day.

I: Wonderful to speak to you. Good luck with your dissertation.

T: Thank you. Ok bye

I: Ok bye.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Interview transcript – business number 2 Queenstown**

**Interviewer:** Student Therese (T)

**Interviewee:** Marketing manager and business developer at an activity company in Queenstown.

Interview via telephone 21<sup>th</sup> of July 2016.

Duration: 18 minutes and 34 seconds

(Interview starts)

**T: Lets start the interview with you introducing your self and the business and your position in (name of business).**

I: Yes, (name of business) is a locally, family owned company. It started about 25 years ago, and we do everything with engine and wheels so we operate quad bikes, dirt bike, four wheel drives and boogie tours. I'm marketing and business development manager here for the last five years.

**T: Great. So are you operating season wise or all year round?**

I: All year round, yeah, and we have a busy winter season on the go at the minute because of a lot of Australians that comes visit for skiing and snowboarding loves to do activities while they are not up in the mountain and that busy for us because they like the buggies and four wheels drive. And then obviously we have the busy summer season in December and January, but all year round we are operating yeah.

**T: How many employees do you have?**

I: In the winter about 15.

**T: And, sorry, how many years have you been in business?**

I: 25 years. 27 years at the minute, actually, yeah.

**T: On to the strategy questions. My first question is: why do you think the destination have become such a successful adventure tourism destination?**

I: Just the landscape, it is obviously very stunning to look at but it also works well for all types of adventures to be built in around us. Beautiful to sky dive over, great to raft down the rivers, great to quad bike over, it really just tailor made and because it's a year round destination so the ski and snowboarding brings people during the winter and during the summer we get a more varied market here for the hotter weather and hiking and all the summer activities.

**T: What is your knowledge of the local tourism strategy and the local marketing strategy?**

I: I keep up to date and check in with what Destination Queenstown is doing, but I would go regularly to meetings and stuff like that.

T: Why is that?

I: Why wouldn't I?

T: (Laughs) Yeah, Is it a particular reason why you don't go there?

I: Its just time I don't have. I don't have available time.

**T: So how often are there offered meetings for you?**

I: Normally it's the Quarterly update and... I think they have a very difficult job because there are so many stakeholders that they are trying to meet the needs of. My, our needs, as a adventure activity provider might not be the same as other. Its very difficult to tailor it to everybody.

T: Of course.

I: But the numbers have increased year after year I have been here, so, uhm, I think they are doing a good job obviously making Queenstown appealing. I think the challenges for us are obviously, Queenstown is getting busier and busier is to attracting the right type of people. And that means people that have significant money to spend on activities, because Queenstown is not a cheap destination. Everyone visiting here you know, really have to have a discretionary income to spend on a lot of activities. And the other challenge is keeping ehm... the market diverse, cause there is a huge increase in the Chinese tourists arriving and that's great for say the accommodation providers because it doesn't make a difference to them they fill the beds, that could be anybody and they still get their income. But for activities providers, many Chinese can't swim so that means that they are not able to do some activities, rafting or canyoning, they are not very keen on various adventurous activities like quad biking so when they take over beds, then the regular people that would be a big market for us, like Australians don't have anywhere to sleep so even though Queenstown could say its full, some businesses would actually be down on numbers. So it's a big challenge cause obviously it is a growing market. But it's trying to keep traditional market and accommodate growing market.

**T: How is the strategy been communicated to you?**

I: Well, mainly through email, They send monthly updates, newsletters that are quite useful with a overview of what team members are doing in Destination Queenstown and whats coming up and some kind of overview from the Destination Queenstown manager there. They are quite useful for people like me in Queenstown who are too busy and don't have time to attend regular meetings, so that works well.

**T: So, how has the strategy affected your business? You mentioned for example that the Chinese market is targeted and when they arrive they might not be your targeted market. How else have the strategy affected your business? Have you had to change anything?**

I: Yeah.. uhm.. one key that I have brought up with them when we were in the meeting is that Queenstown has always been known as the adventure capital of the world and since I

have been here they have really tried to kind of change the brand name to more all year round, soft adventure destination, you know pushing wine tourism and golf tourism and that's great. You know it brings a more diverse market, but I think they have to be more careful that we don't lose what Queenstown was originally known as. That's one issue that we kind of bring up with them.

T: Yeah.

I: In other branding they use more soft images of Queenstown. You know hiking and four wheel driving, and stuff. So we do four wheel drive tours as well, and that side of our business compared to the more adventurous tours we do, like quad bike and dirt bike, that side have continuously grown and that's just a reflection of the people now coming to Queenstown. You know just a scenic tour is more open and appealing to the market here and maybe 15-20 years ago people would have been more driven to quad biking and stuff like that. Just a reflection of what the, how the market have changing.

**T: How is the strategy monitored? Are you giving them data or how are they collecting data from you as a tourism operator?**

I: They don't really ask for our feedback on that. I think they gather that from meetings, but as I said, not everyone attends the meetings so. They have specific, I think it was a year ago they had a activities only meeting which was useful, but that was not really followed up on. But I think it's like anything there. They have to be political in many ways and tailor it to many people needs which doesn't line up with what every individual company would prefer them to be doing.

**T: How is your dialog with the strategy owners, with Destination Queenstown? Do you think you have a good dialog with them?**

I: Uhm... you know, they are sending email and newsletters and we ... if I arrange a catch up I can arrange a catch up and update the team, you know they are there but it's difficult cause we maybe don't see the direct result from their work to our business per se. They are obviously doing their job since the numbers to Queenstown are increasing. So again, it's difficult really to analyse that.

**T: How is motivation and participation encouraged?**

I: Well, obviously through the meetings that are arranged but its difficult, cause as I said, you could attend the meetings, you can talk to them and update them, but it doesn't result in actions direct to your business. They still have to think of the overall Queenstown strategy, which can be different, so. I don't think it would have great affect if I was more active in communication with them, I don't think it would have a huge difference on how they run their operation. And as I said, number wise they have been successful so no one can complain too much.

**T: What benefit have you gained from the strategy?**

I: Obviously increased numbers to Queenstown, which obviously means more people joining tours, which helps business growth.

**T: Are you a member of Destination Queenstown?**

I: Everybody is a member of Destination Queenstown, if you have a tourism related business in Queenstown you are automatically a member.

**T: Are you part of another tourism network?**

I: Not in Queenstown, no.

**T: How would you describe the culture between the different tourism operators in Queenstown? Do you collaborate a lot?**

I: Yeah, it's quite friendly for a place hugely competitive. It's actually hundreds of activity operators in Queenstown. But it is a quite friendly atmosphere. You know, marketing people would regularly meet up just to discuss things that are happening around Queenstown. And there is collaboration between combination activities and referring activities, so I can only speak on obviously the activity side of things but it is quite of a good atmosphere considering how competitive it is.

**T: What challenges do you see for future strategic direction that Queenstown might take?**

Chinese market is a major thing that they have to look at and how it will affect traditional markets, and the capacity in Queenstown at certain times. There is its making peak season which is already busy, Queenstown is now fully booked which means that other markets like conference groups can not get accommodation and can not come to Queenstown so we lose their markets because of it. When you end up with these peak seasons, then there are obviously the shoulder seasons, which everyone kind of pushing Destination Queenstown to target really, and the quieter months before the ski season starts in May and June. Because that's when tourism number drops off dramatically and people still have to pay their staff and people are still open for business so.

**T: What are the challenges of developing your own business?**

I: Just the, obviously the health and safety is always an aspect when doing activities and the increasing legislation around that. And just accommodating to new markets, for example the Chinese market very different market to deal with. We are trying to tailor to them with our four wheel drive scenic tours, cause it's easier they don't acquire to speak English for the guided scenic tour and we now have mandarin commentary on iPads that we show them on the tours, we have a mandarin brochure to promote us, but then on the self drive options boogie tours and quad bike tours are more difficult to target to them, because they may not have even basic English which means it's unsafe to take them out there cause they can't understand the guide instructions. But the market is not at a stage for us that it would justify employing mandarin speaking staff. So you are always at that kind of analysing where we are at in terms of how we develop the business, target the markets and how we can keep traditional markets and yeah.

**T: The new target group, the Chinese market, how have destination Queenstown helped you in your process to adjust to this new strategic market?**

I: They did run a... promoted a cultural awareness seminars against the Chinese market which were kind of useful, and you know and that was it I think. Two meetings and

presentations on specifically how your business can adapt and how to target Chinese markets. So I did attend them and they were quite useful.

**T: That's great! Is there anything else that you would like to add in the relationship to the local tourism strategy? Ehm.. Why you think it is so successful or what challenges there is that you have to overcome.**

I: Ehm... No, I think I covered most of it in the questions really. Its all good.

T: Great! Thank you very much then! I got some really good information.

I: No worries, good luck with your dissertation!

T: Thank you very much and have a good day!

I: Cheers, bye.

(End of interview)

## **Appendix 5**

### **Interview transcript – Business number 3 in Queenstown**

**Interviewer:** Student Therese (T)

**Interviewee:** Assistant Manager at a hotel in Queenstown

Interview via telephone 19<sup>th</sup> of July.

Duration: 24 minutes and 35 seconds

(Start of interview)

**T: So we start the interview with, maybe you can introduce yourself and the business and your title, what you are working with at the hotel?**

I: Its breaking now, could you repeat?

T: Oh sorry, Could you introduce yourself and your position at the hotel?

I: Oh sure, sorry, My name is (name) I'm from Brazil but I have been here for about 15 years in New Zealand, I am the twice to the GM here, so (name) is my manager and I am the assistant manager. Because it is a small property we take care of everything, because it's a hands on position. But I mainly help Cam with all the sales and marketing plus the daily operations. What ever needs to be done we just do it.

**I: So more about the business, how many employees do you have at the hotel?**

I: It's a a small hotel, only 19 rooms We are 5 star rated by Qualmark and we are a luxury boutique hotel, in the heart of Queenstown and there's about 65 property in New Zealand, I mean Queenstown listed in Trip Advisor and we sort of swing between 2-3 which is great. The hotel is about 8 years old. So it's been consistent with what we offer and the exclusive service. Because it's a small property we do everything for our guests. We anticipate their needs and we just assist them with any enquiries that they might have.

**T: Oh ok. Great. Interesting. So how many employees are you in total?**

I: Sorry?

T: How many employees in total?

I: Oh, we do have 9 staff. Its not a big thing, its only 9.

**T: Are you operating all year round?**

I: Ja, yeah, we never close. Again, we got our shoulder season and our days in May, September and October but we operate all year round for sure.

**T: Going to the tourism strategy, why do you think Queenstown has become such a successful tourism destination?**

I: Its been officially voted on trip advisor as the number one destination in the country. Queenstown have a bit to offer, a little bit of everything to everyone to be honest. Because it got the outdoors, its beautiful scenery, beautiful wine yards. If you are looking for some crazy activities we've got that to. So it ticks a lot of boxes. If you looking for a nice and quite holiday we got that, and if you are looking for exploring the outdoors, hiking, mountain biking, bungee jumping skydiving we tick all those boxes too.

**T: That's great. What is your knowledge of the local tourism strategy?**

I: Uhm... again, we have meetings on a regular basis, I would say every 3-4 months. All business including us, we all assess what happening in Queenstown, all the arrivals, where they come from, how long they are staying for, based on that we do our marketing plan.

**T: That's great. How is the strategy communicated? Is it on those meetings?**

I: Mhm... we usually have meeting where the CEO explains verbally what's going on. And then he provides us with the copies of all the documents so that we can read more of the details. After that we sort of like get together with the boutique hotels, plus big corporations, plus lodges, plus backpackers, hostels and then we talk about what's happening and then we share experiences, you know. So that's how we communicate. Pretty much having catch ups

and formal meetings or just over beer.

**T: Oh Ok! Are you able to impact the local strategy, can you be involve in that process to, if you want to change or do some major changes to it, is it possible to be involved in that process?**

I: Individually speaking, yes and no, at the same time, because in the hospitality industry in Queenstown there is a big competition as you might know. Everyone wants to have their beds occupied. So what we can do to possibly do to sort of have an impact and possibly change, if when we notice if some of the hotel on the same level as our boutique hotel, when lowering the prices too much. So they compromise on themselves but us as an competitor, then we approach them and ask them what's going on here, why are you selling at this price when we know it should be higher. Its compromising my property too since people call and say "oh, but if I call over lady and see, they offer what you offer to a lower price" but I don't lower my rate.

Uhm, so what we do we have an open discussion with these operators and to see how the decision actually impact on our business too and we openly talk about it. Because it is a small community and a small town so we got that approach, but again, if we were a big city like Auckland, Wellington or Christchurch I don't think it would be possible they would just do whatever they want.

**T: So how would you say motivation and participation is encouraged within the tourism execution? The strategy execution?**

I: By keeping us up to date, having these meetings every 6 months, every three months when share with us, by listening and witnessing the progress is encouraging enough to be honest in itself, because we see the progress. When we come across difficult times or barriers, anything like that, we see how business have successfully come over that so we just carry on what we do. We are happy with openings of new hotels, lodges and hostels, it keeps us motivated and it reminds of how beautiful and busy Queenstown is.

**T: How has the strategy impacted your business or the hotel?**

I: Short term, rates and price. Our rates are quite dynamic and we change them on a daily basis. We change based on what's going on in Queenstown.

Lon term, increase of new rooms by building new rooms. So that's the plan.

**T: So what challenges have you faced implementing it I your businesses, for example the marketing strategy?**

I: I did'nt get the first bit, sorry.

T: So what challenges have you faced?

I: Competition. Again, I'm always sharing with my competitors in terms of price, packages, long stay rates, short terms rates. The challenge is to keeping everyone occupied. Selling rooms now is very competitive in Queenstown. You have to have an add-on to be more appealing to whoever is buying it. It could be adding breakfast, dinner skyline that is a dining complex in Queenstown. The competition is big and the challenges are to keep up with the competitors is doing to be honest. Based on research we have to understand what our potential guests are looking for. You know, if they are looking for just a room for the night or if they are looking for a room with a lot of amenities and facilities and those sort of things in a hotel. Then we just have to change to meet they expectations and hopefully keep ourselves busy.

**T: Uhm ok, that's great. Have you faced any challenges with implementing the marketing strategy, or are you using the marketing strategy that is implemented by Destination Queenstown?**

I: Yes, we do, have, what we do is that we always checking especially with referrals where they come from and how this people are, like how they are referring us and how they are finding us. And I often email them and get in touch with them, and I open ask how do you think you can be more successful in selling us? What can we tell you more? What information do you need from us? You know. Who do you target, do you target? Who is your audience? Are you targeting the Australian market? Are you targeting people by season? Are you targeting people by age? What are they looking for? And with that, when we ask them these question, we sort of implement sales and promotions and discounts and those sort of

things. And with our campaigns online with a lot of websites, we optimise our content so those people can find us easier. If they're between 40-50, what are they looking for? They are looking for luxury, dining experience so we look for these key words to be more exposed.

T: So, you are benefiting from the marketing strategy that destination Queenstown have?

I: Absolutely, yeah.

**T: What resources are the most important for you to be able to execute this marketing strategy? Do you feel that you have the resources that you need so that you can utilise the marketing strategy?**

That is a good question, because being a small property, our resources is more actually, financially speaking not large to be honest. So we need to be careful how we spend our money. And again, the resources of course, if you need more exposure you need to spend more money. And nowadays it's all about the internet, isn't it? Like, we are not spending all our money on traditional (?) it just a waste of money. It's the internet, so we use that as our main sort of sales point. When it comes to money we have listings with paid websites when we paid then weekly, monthly or yearly fee. But before we actually agree to be a part of the listing I do a big research if they will sell us effectively. That's the resources, with being a small property, we are quite limited, but we try to use them positively and in a good way as much as we can.

T: So do you feel that you have the resources to facilitate the local tourism strategy and the demands of the high quality product and the resources that you need.

I: Yeah I think we do.

**T: Are you a part of a tourism network? You talked a bit before about collaborations, is there an established tourism network in Queenstown?**

I: There is actually one in Queenstown and one in New Zealand, so we are linked with Destination Queenstown and automatically tourism association, uhm.. New Zealand Tourism Association. These are big guys, because they are the ones selling New Zealand and

Queenstown to the world. We are associated with them and they keep us up to date how they are doing to sell us. Not to mention Qualmark and the Qualmark rates independently, they could give us a two or a three star so we need to keep up to make sure that we are always leaving a 5 star service because we are always being checked by these third party companies.

**T: How would you describe the culture of the local tourism network?**

I: Friendly, aggressive, because they want to sell, you know. We are all friends with each other, but at the end of the day you want your business to be busy so they can be a bit aggressive but they are friendly at the same time. I find the local tourism operators here quite honest you know, they are very honest, we know what they are doing with a lot of transparency.

**T: That's great. What challenges do you see for future strategic directions?**

I: That's a good question. First of all we need to have rooms available, and that's a challenge, because now when Queenstown being so popular and well known, you know, everywhere, having the rooms available is a challenge. But possibly in the future we will increase the number of rooms that we have by building new rooms. Another challenge is to deliver the service, so staffing is really hard. Because, especially in Queenstown when people come and go all the time. So its hard to find good staff and keep, and even harder to keep them. And I would say, some times languages can be a barrier too. Being so international, we require staff that could speak German, who could speak Japanese, Chinese, English of course, Portuguese and to provide good service it would be ideal to have people facing the guests who could communicate through their language. Being a small property, we can't just have one person for each country, because we can not afford to have 20-50 staff. When people are travelling and they are welcomed in their language, or simple questions like how has your day been or things like that, they love it! Ideally they would come back because they fell like home

**T: Yeah! In regards to the current strategic direction of a adventure tourism destination, are you happy with that strategic direction or?**

I: I am, but I'm not at the same time. Because I think, uhm, with that a lot of sales and marketing companies they are selling Queenstown and not thinking about the future and the consequences.

T: Mhmm..

I: Because now we are so busy all year round, people are always looking for rooms which means we don't have all the rooms available all the time and they are selling Queenstown and they are targeting Queenstown certain times of the year when they should concentrate more on the shoulder seasons which would cover May, June, September and October. So sometimes when I see the strategic for the next year, or the business plan for the next year, there are no mentions of those months, which means they are suffocating us with a lot of people for 5-6 months of year and then there is nothing happening for 6 months. So it's a bit uneven if you know what I mean.

T: So do you feel that you are able to discuss this with the destination, do you feel that you have this kind of contact with them?

I: Yes.

T: Ok.

I: When we have these meetings with them, there is an extra half an hour where we can ask openly questions and that's when we bring to the table what the challenge are and how that is impacted on.

T: Do you feel that you are listened to?

I: I would like to think so!

T: That's great

I: If they are listening that's another story, but I would like to think they are!

**T: So, the local governments part – how do they support you as a tourism operator.**

I: Again, emigration is a big thing here so they sort of facilitate Visa applications, uhm, so if we have got someone who is looking for a job who is a non New Zealander, the visa application is not too hard, or shouldn't be so hard so they have opened a few doors there. In terms of rates, they could decrease the rates a bit too. As a local business we have very high rates. The liquor licence, legislation, they have actually helped us get through. By sort of increasing the number of opening hours for some bars and restaurants. Because Queenstown is a resort and people are here holidaying, so people are here to have a good time. So that's some of the things, Visa application, opening hours, liquor licence legislation they have actually helped us quite a lot.

**T: Do you feel that tourism is prioritised in the local government?**

I: Oh yes, absolutely, in Queenstown 100 %

**T: What do you feel is the challenges for further development of your business?**

I: Uhm... I don't know I think I actually covered it before. The main challenge would be the budgets, you know like money. Because we want to do a lot, but you have to sort of do what you can do with the money that you have. And again, the biggest challenges is when I see these bigger hotels of like 200 rooms, when they sell rooms for a crazy cheap deal, they can afford that because they are big cooperation, and we cant since we are a small hotel so we value every dollar that we spend here.

**T: What would you say is the challenge for further development of Queenstown as a destination?**

I: I would say staffing and accommodation, that's the top issue at the moment. With Queenstown growing so much in a short term, our biggest challenge now is to find staff and places for them to live. Because sometimes we are recruiting and people say to us , well I don't have any accommodation. Well, so I cant go further with this interview because if you are successful you will not stay because you don't have a house so what's the point! Of

course I don't see today but that's what we think, so biggest challenge long term and short term with Queenstown growing so much is staffing and housing.

**T: But do you feel like this adventure tourism profile will last in the future sense, is it something that you feel is a good strategy for the future?**

I: Something that they are doing at the moment?

**T: Yeah, the adventure tourism strategy and the profile that Queenstown, do you feel that its something to go on with in the future?**

I: Absolutely, yeah, absolutely. I would just spread it a bit, you know rather than just promoting Queenstown so much during summer and winter, you know lets do something about autumn and spring when we got empty hotel and empty rooms. They are targeting national tourism, so they are encouraging kiwis to travel more within New Zealand. But we'll see how it goes. I haven't seen any impact yet.

**T: Great, that was all of my questions! Do you have anything else to add?**

No, good luck with your studies and with your project! I did the same when I did my business degree. I have I was so happy when I found someone who could help me with the questions that I had. So I'm happy to help. Just flick me an email if something was not clear.

T: Thank you. Enjoy your day!

I: Have a good day, bye

T: Bye.

(End of interview)

## Appendix 6

### Interview transcript – business number one in Voss

**Interviewer:** Student Therese (T)

**Interviewee:** Former manager of the tourism office in Voss

Interview via telephone 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2016.

Duration: 22 minutes and 13 seconds

**T: Then we begin the recording of the interview. Maybe you can introduce yourself and your role when the Voss tourism strategy was founded.**

I: My name is (name). I used to run the tourist office in Voss starting in 2004 until Destination Voss was established and took over. Uhm so...

T: Great

I: I did not have any particular active role in working on the strategy.

T: Would you say that your role was more in the governmental part of the strategy?

I: I was in the unity party that had responsible for running the tourist office. It had been a destination company there earlier but they had all bumped into problems. And the result that the unity party took over and decided we'll have a tourist office it's important for Voss to have a tourist office and will also taking care of basic marketing campaigns that involved more participants in Voss. And be the face out and representing different events that had to do with tourism. Still it was said all the time, it was clear, that if a destination company, sort of, was establish that they would take over and the unity company would pull out. And yeah. And leave this task with them.

T: So just to be clear, Destination Voss has sprung out of this strategy then, or?

I: Well, there were two pillars of purposes, and the people who established Destinasjon Voss

they were also people running the process. I can't really say what happened. I believe the plan all the time was to establish a company, Destinasjon Voss to run the strategies in place.

T: I will then ask you questions as a business entity in this tourism network structure, because I have questions for the governmental part, local governmental and their view on the strategy and the destination organisation, and I would say that you are more of a business part. Because you are not in the decision making progress of the strategy. Would that be correct?

I: Im sad, for me personally, the whole thing was not positive, I lost my job, a job that I loved.

T: Aww, ok

I: Because they told me that professionals had to take over. So yeah.

T: Okey

I: It was kind of painful the whole thing

T: Oh I am so sorry that you feel that way, I feel outside the interview that we actually have this problem in Sweden too, that... the problem with the tourism information centres and their existence and its counterpart the destination management organization and their different roles. It is interesting that you also have had that issue or problems with role setting.

I: I wouldn't say that it necessary a problem. It was more of a personal thing. Me being told I was not professional enough to hold my job.

T: Ok, that was very sad to hear.

I: It was also happening like, I was participating in events where I used to participating in, and the leader of Destination Voss told me that you are not welcome here .

T: Okey

I: That was before they were running the office even

T: Oh okey

I: So yeah. The whole take over was a bit... ehm..they were not interested in taking in many of the experiences that was there before

T: If we go back to... because I believe that you have a great insight in how the tourism office operated in this time when the tourism strategy was founded. I will just ask you a couple of questions in regards to the strategy and how you felt and how it impacted you if that would be ok.

I: Yes, go on.

**T: Why do you think that Voss has become so successful in becoming an adventure tourism destination?**

I: I often compare Voss to you know Norway on finding oil. Have a bit of luck in finding valuable resources. Voss have everything, it has beautiful landscape, it has the water, the lake, and the rivers, and it has these warm currents that makes it perfect for paragliding, parachute, hanggliding, all those things. It has mountains for hiking, and a landscape that is alive. It's a alive cultural landscape. It's a unique place. Ehm, so... I think Voss could...it had everything it took to become popular sort of in tourism without doing a thing. That, I believe, is the main reason why it is always been so difficult for different operators here to cooperate. The hotels were competing all the time. Ehm, I mean the activities companies they were would not very good in giving each other customers. It was always competition and every man his island. So, previous company there was taking care of these things went bankrupt aswell and the munity party took over because of the lack of cooperation. There should be people interest in being together saying we are "Voss" together. I think the reason for this place is successful is not something that people have done together. Its just the strength of the place itself, its a magnet. There are also many entrepreneurs here. People are used to working, but they work for themselves. So the synergies are seldom there really. And I can't honestly see a thing that has happened the past few years that have changed any of this.

T: So since you worked in the tourism office, there is no particular change in the collaboration part?

I: I Cant see, no

T: So, at the time, did you have your own business strategy for the tourism office and how was that structured?

I: No. I had 800 000 (NOK) in my budget that I could spend, and that would include my salary, it would include everything I needed for the office and the people working there during summer. So if I wanted to pay for something I needed to collect money from different people, yeah from hotels and activity companies and so on. So there wasn't very much time for strategy or plan. I thought that through this I sort of don't provoke anyone. When I started in the job people told me, laughing that I would last maximum a year. And that taught me a lot about how things were.

T: I knew that you were participating of the creation of this strategy, reise livs strategin. What was your part of it? How was your involvement in this strategy process?

I: Finding facts really, strength and weaknesses, facts. Bringing them what ever they needed.

T: And how did that strategy impact your business or the tourism information?

I: Well, It was closed in the form that had, and was re-opened by Destinasjon Voss. It was the plan all along I mean when the Destinasjon Voss was established. It was a part of giving up running it, but the municipality now pays Destinasjon Voss three times what I had to run it (laughs) and also highly commercialised. And I suspect that having a business in the same location as the tourism office it not really according to the EFTA (?) laws as they are getting a lot of money from the municipality. But it's a different story.

**T: So how did the business change or tourism office change when this strategy?**

I: I believe that they have just as good people there as I had and they are working very professionally and do a great job.

**T: Did you face any challenges while implementing this new strategy?**

I: No, because a part of implementing it was that I had to leave.

T: Okey.

I: When that was done, I was gone.

T: Oh okey, that was a big challenge then. Did you see any other challenges for the business itself?

I: Uhm no, when you had the funding its not difficult to run a tourist information office.

**T: So my next question is, what benefits did you gain from the new strategy?**

I: I don't know if there were any! It was a huge document that cost a lot of money, made me loose my job and I see, they spent a lot of money on this profile for example and the profile is not used correctly anyway. So why?

T: So why..

I: You are talking to a very bitter person here and I know it.

T: (laughing nervously) Its very useful information though, because off the interview I recognise it myself. In a personal matter, I have been a manager of a tourism office here in Sweden and I recognise some of the challenges, economical fact and the human resources side that you have to rearrange.... Yeah, can totally see the challenges.

I: You see, I have always worked in tourism, I am an authorized "Bergen" guide, I worked on boards Hurtigruten for many years, and then I continued in Voss running the tourism office, I studied economics and business administration with focus on marketing, tourism marketing,

and I speak 4 languages and I have studied languages for six years so then being told that professionals had to take over hit me hard.

T: Mhm... I can totally understand that and I feel very sad that that happened to you.

I: I realise that its not an important thing and they seem to have really good people working there so.

T: Very unfortunate.

I: I really like the new leader of Destinasjon Voss. She is a nice person.

**T: How would you describe the tourism network in Voss, and how would you describe its culture?**

I: Uhm... It's a every man for himself culture. Cooperation is not really necessary, we have enough customers thank you. I know that some members have been provoked when Destinasjon Voss is working for a new hotel to be built in the town centre. Like why would we pay for them making more competition for us. Uhm.. No, well the reason why I was told that you last for maximum a year, it's a tough business.

**T: And, uhm, my last question is- what do you see is the challenges do you see for further development of the destination and for new strategies to be implemented or strategic change?**

I: The different companies in Voss they have enough customers as it is. They are private businesses, they don't need to pay someone from marketing Voss, they cant take anymore customer anyways. Its almost the strength is their weakness. Voss will struggle developing as long as everyone is content as it is with their business. I know some of the larger hotels can take more customers, but not really under the main season. If hey can develop more activities for spring and autumn for example.

T: I know that that was one part of the strategy, just to develop more activities for this seasons.

I: Yeah I written the document. But you know, people don't feel that its their document. It was a document that was made by people at the top.

T: So what would you say that should be done differently, how would you say it should be done? The implementation, so that everyone feel like its their document?

I: (Sigh)

T: Tricky question maybe (laughs)

I: People have to understand... uhm... I have no idea really. Voss rafting centre, I consider them one of the most successful companies here in Voss and they have developed their business in one direction, and they offer great customer service and they understand this thing that corporation leads to more income, more activity, and they are not afraid of recommending some other companies in Voss. I wish their company culture could spread to the rest of this place.

T: What was the company's name?

I: They were used to call Voss rafting?

T: Is it Voss active?

I: If I should pick one person to lead Destinasjon Voss it should be the leader of Voss active!

T: (Laughs) Okey. I think Im pretty content of how you, your part of the strategy, and how you felt when implementing it and yeah...

I: I knew all along when taking the job that if a destination company like Destinasjon Voss established would take over and my job is gone. It was there all the time, I knew it all the time when taking the job. It was not a surprise or anything. But there are many ways of doing things. A bit of politeness would never hurt.

**T: I would just like to ask a few questions about the government's role in the destination development and how the tourism is valued in the government's perspective**

I: It is valued as one of two main (sighs)... what's it called "näring"

T: Ehm.. oh I can add it later

I: Tourism and agriculture have extra focus and special attention in the local government. It's the third of the main plan and strategy for the municipality, so it have a high focus. Considers to have high importance. Brings a lot of work to Voss.

**T: How is the government supporting the local tourism growth?**

I: It pays. It pays for everything, yeah.

T: Yeah ok

I: Not everything, but it does contribute with, how much is it now, 2 million a year?

T: 10?

I: No, 2 million. Approximate

T: I think I got some figures there from Mona.

I: It has one amount for running the tourism office and one amount for marketing purposes.

T: Okey, great! I think I am content there. I might maybe, if its possible maybe if questions arising during y work I might call you and do some additions to the interview. Is it something else you would like to add to this?

I: Nothing really. I wish them well.

T: Laughs that's great) Then I will end my recording

I: I think the main problem with the strategy is that its not really implemented.

T: Okey. That's great. I will just stop my recording there.

## **Appendix 7**

### **Interview transcript – Business no 2 in Voss**

**Interviewer:** Student Therese (T)

**Interviewee:** Owner of a new started activity company

Interview via telephone 18<sup>th</sup> of July 2016.

Duration: 22 minutes and 18 seconds

(Start of interview)

**T: Then we will start the interview; maybe you can just introduce yourself and your role in (company)?**

I: My name is (name) I'm 36 years old and I'm the owner and founder of (company name).

**T: How many years have you been in business?**

I: In business? This is my first year as a business! We just started the company a month ago.

**T: Wow. So are you operating season wise or all year round? What's your plan?**

I: Ehh we mainly operating in the summer season, but we have different product for the winter season which we going to operate with holiday trips. We actually gonna to take from Norway outside to Brasil and Canada and Argentina. We have ski roadtrip Norway that we are bringing people from abroad to Norway.

**T: Hmm.. Interesting! So if you would summon your business idea in a couple of sentences, what would it be?**

I: We re a tour operator and we offer some guided tours in the summers time and also we have gear to rent out, mountain bikes, paddle and kayaking and we provide course for outdoors, white water kayaking and mountain bike, and in the winter time we have the

purpose to offer guided tours in the mountains which is a package trip with accommodation, food and guidance.

**T: So, why do you think that Voss as a destination has become so successful?**

I: Why Voss?

T: Yes.

I: I'm basis in Voss for 6 years and I have been working in the tourism industry for the last 15 years, and I think it has a lot of potential, I think it's a great place to access the outdoors so it's a lot of options. And I come up with some business ideas that no one has operating yet, so we just putting it on work and see how it goes!

T: So do you have any thought about why just Voss as a tourism destination is so successful? Why is it? Could you...

I: The main reason why Voss is so successful now as tourism destination is the extreme sport, and we get a lot of exposure in the media overrun the company and outside the country as well. And that brings a lot of people to come for extreme sport and to try it and did it for the first time and to the event just to watch. Definitely the fact that there are two ski resorts nearby that become very good ski destination in the wintertime so you kind of get a good package in the summer and winter actually. Other reason is that they are close to Bergen which attracts a lot of local tourism.

**T: How is your own business strategy structured?**

I: Regarding what?

**T: Maybe we should start with, how is your knowledge of the local tourism strategy from Destinasjon Voss and the local government?**

I: From the government and Destinasjon Voss you mean? I'm getting to know better now, because I'm a businessman. I knew a couple of things before. I worked in the rafting guide

for three summers and last to years with paragliding. So yeah, I actually now start to understand it better. And yeah, the business strategy is right now on the dropping clients with people just showing up and haven't any activity to do around Voss so we try to supply different activities. But it is a year for test, testing our products and see how it goes. And we really need to collect more media and photograph material to work better for the strategy next year.

**T: So how is your involvement in the strategy process? Have you been in contact with Destinajon Voss regarding the strategy and the local governments development strategy?**

I: Yes they have been in contact with me and I have been in contact with them. So, at the moment they are advertising my products in there. I had a little bit of a late start, and I missed a couple things that I should have been done at a early stage of the year. I was busy sorting out other types of permits to run the company, so I missed a couple of marketing opportunities with them. Everything will be better set up next year already.

**T: How would you say that the strategy has impacted your business?**

I: Hard to say, I haven't done that before. We are, as you know, a new business and people are just getting to know us. People are very questional, how we are doing how we are performing. But so far so good, at the time we are actually very happy.

**T: That's good! Have you found any challenges with implementing these strategies, the marketing strategy or the developing strategy?**

I: Yeah, definitely! There are many challenges! Wow, how to make people know about your products before they come to Norway. When you talk about international tourism, that's a big challenge. How you gonna connect with people that's example are in Germany, or in China, or in England or US, that's actually the biggest challenge to get those people to know you before they come to the country. Definitely when get close to your base, the place that you settle it becomes easier for them to know, you can use a couple of marketing strategies as to brochures and connections with hotels and stuff.

**T: Do you feel that the strategies that have been executed destination Voss that they are in line what you want to market and what you want to do...**

I: I haven't got the time to do any evaluation about it. So, yeah, it hard to say right now to be honest.

**T: Are you part of a tourism network in Voss?**

I: Tourism network?

**T: Yeah? Are you collaborating with some operators?**

Yes, we have been working in cooperation a little bit with a few of them. Actually we had a big event and I had to cooperate with them in logistics, and equipment, so its so far so good. Definitely there is a lot of things to do, and a lot of possibilities to do a better cooperation in regards in sharing sales like I could sell other companies tours and stuff. I think there is a lot o do. Lets say if I have a client that comes to me and do activity , and instead of letting that client go away travelling Norway, and lets say do a thing in Sogndal, I could easily sell product here in Voss, even if I'm not the operator of this product. I think that's what we have to think better here. You have the opportunity to get in contact with the client, you can sell more to them I guess if you can offer and deliver a good service.

**T: Would you describe the corporation culture between the different tourism operators in Voss?**

I: Very weak to be honest. Its one if the weakest spot. I think they should cooperate and collaborate more between themselves. I feel like yeah, "I don't want to sell your product" you know. It is just also because of the system, its not well connected. Everyone have different booking system and stuff like that. But if you would find some kind of booking system that we could connect in between ourselves and manage the inventory and the resource, so I can automatically book another tour or activity other operators system without have to do a phone call or email, that would increase a lot regarding the opportunity for selling.

**T: How are the collaborations today? How often do you, is there any collaboration? How does it look like? Is it people selling each other's products, is there a network in place?**

I: I don't think we do have that at the moment well set up. It's just a meeting there, but it's not anything officially. It's not anything happening towards that way, so yeah. If somebody wants to like, the rafting centre want to sell other product they just give that to their clients, the tour operators phone number, they might help with first phone call because if the person come from abroad they don't have a phone number here in Norway. But I would say it's amateur yet.

**T: Ok. So how would you say that the governments role in the destination development, how do they support you as a tour operator?**

I: Local government?

T: Yes, the kommune?

I: Ehh, well I don't know, they haven't been in contact with me yet. The only contact I have had was last year with them to get some fundraising to start up my business, which I applied but I only got the 15% for the amount that applied for in the fundraising that I applied for my project. So that was successful but not in regards to the amount I need to have to do a better start up and tourism in Voss and everything. Cause my company was not only my business idea was not only set up for the tourism industry, it came up with the idea to benefit the local community as well. Where locals could have access to the equipment that the company owns and be like a outdoor club centre, you know. So same tour and the same that we offer to our clients, to the tourists, the locals could have it for a cheaper price only by being a member, you know. Yeah, I think the government needs to work closer to us as well, because we make money for them so I guess for them it would be interesting and wise to work in more earning more money, because then the government will make more money. Lets say it would be wise if the government help in the start up companies. Especially with the oil industry is in crisis and Norway needs to step up and find other ways of earning money, right? It's a beautiful place so definitely tourism industry is a good way. Even because it is a lot of people visiting Voss and visiting Norway, but not many people is spending money in Norway, which comes

with big ships. They only buy a coffee in the coffee shop or a souvenir.. They should focus more on strategy for tourists that comes and experience activities and spends and try, you know.

**T: Would you say that the local strategy isn't enough for the tourism development?**

I: I couldn't here you.

T: Sorry. Would you say that the local strategy isn't enough for you as a local tourism operator? You would like to see more of the economical benefits?

I: Yeah, I would like to see more, definitely. I think that there is a lot of potential in Voss especially when we have the two ski resorts. But we don't have like, the operators, non of them are operating two times, in the summer to provide access to the mountains for take people up for trekking, for mountain bike, paragliding, and there is a lot of, you see a lot of tourism destinations all over the world that invest in summer activities when they have a ski resort very nearby. It increases tourism all around in all the other segments as well, not only the ones that needs the lift to access. But this became more attractive place to be and to spend time. Definitely should the government work better on it and also feel that the locals are given support as well and work together. I just give you an example.

**T: So what would you say is the challenges for further development of Voss as a destination?**

I: The challenges... oh. There are a lot of challenges here. People are complaining a lot about that the accommodation that it is not enough. I don't know about the other segments.

T: How would you say the challenges for you as a tourism operator? How would you say the challenges are to grow in the destination?

I: I think the main challenge is like if we would cooperate better between companies, the tour operators. I think that would be way better. If like, if you have kind of a different products then one can help to sell the others. Even if you don't sell but if you can talk about it. This tourist, this client that you talk with he is probably going to travel, keep travelling around the

country and he can spread the good word about Voss. Sorry, could spread a good word about Voss when he is travelling around. The client he will meet later tomorrow that is on the opposite way travelling, might be reaching to Voss the next day so. I think the start-up integration thing between the businesses and the tour operator would help Voss a lot to grow.

**T: Oh great. Uhm... I think satisfied there with the answers. It there anything you would like to add to the interview?**

I: No? I think they were good questions actually.

**T: Im just very interested in this, that Voss become so successful without the tourism network and collaboration, and they have a good strategy and a goos destination branding and it seems like the success of the destination is of the extreme week, the festival that they have, would you say that its correct?**

I: Uhm... That is correct in parts, definitely. But I think the main part of Voss is so successful is because of the clubs, the paragliding club, skydiving club, the kayaking club and the rafting clubs, they united to themselves and started the extreme sport veko. So, I think Voss is a place that you can have many kind of activities, and the sports clubs are very important for Voss. And there is no other place in Norway that you have four sport clubs like that, that can offer very good activities. And these clubs can also take passengers, they cannot only be for professional people, but they can take ordinary people on their tours. Para sky dive, kayaking, and take 5-6 people in a boat to go down the river and definitely this is very successful for Voss, you know. And the ski destination as well. I think these are the main points. When it comes to Extreme Sport Veko, it's more of exposure of this sports and activities in the media, so.

T: Ok, yeah. Thank you very much for the information.

I: No problem.

T: So, I will just send you this draft of the interview so that you can have it and review it before I put it in my dissertation. So that you can see that everything is ok. But thank you very much it was a very good conversation. I got a lot of good information.

I: Thank you, no problem, my pleasure.

T: Good luck with your company

I: Good luck with your research

T: Thank you. Bye.

## Appendix 8

### Interview transcript- Business number 3 in Voss

**Interviewer:** Student Therese (T)

**Interviewee:** Owner of activity company in Voss (I)

Interview via telephone 19<sup>th</sup> of July.

Duration: 32 minutes and 43 seconds

**(Start of interview)**

**T: OK, so maybe we can start the interview with you introduce yourself and the business.**

I: My name is (name), I live at a place called Uppheim in Voss. We have a lake here that's about 10 kilometers long and 1 kilometer wide or so. And my business is that I have a special boat on the lake that I rent out for tourists. The boat takes twelve people, it's an American boat made for rivers and fresh water lakes. Called Pontoon boat. From this boat you can go swimming, tubing, fishing, cruising and party.

**T: Ahh (hehe). Are you operating season wise or all year round?**

I: No, this is a seasonal thing. So second half of May to end of September it's available for rent.

**T: And how many employees do you have?**

I: I don't have any. It's just our family that do this on the side. Just to give some activities on to the lake, and yeah.

**T: How many years have you been in business?**

I: Since 2012.

**T: Great. On to the strategy questions. Why do you think Voss as a destination has become such successful adventure tourism destination?**

I: First and foremost, it's the natural given conditions with the mountains, rivers and fjords that we have in the county and close to our county. This gives room for a lot of different kinds of outdoors activities from family things where you go on the lake here or you do hiking, biking, you do rafting and you can do more extreme sport for people who seek more adventurous things, where paragliding, parachuting, hang gliding, they do mountain biking down steep hills, they do the same things with skis. Eehm, randonee skiing I guess they call it. And it's a all year destination. There is as many people here in the winter as in the summer. So I think that's the reason, its just a natural given thing that we have, snow in the winter and we also have snow in the summer for those who are really interested in skiing then.

T: So why do think you have been so successful in attracting visitors?

I: Combination of extreme sport and that I guess, is well marketing, both in Norway and outside Norway. Has been an old tourist destination from the 1860-70s, from especially England. Especially from the early days when they used their own steamboats that came in the fjords and they had a tourist base here. It just continued then I think. For a long time a lot of Americans came here, and now they actually coming back. But right now we see a lot of visitors from Asia, Japan, China, Korea coming here. And also continental Europe.

**T: Ahh Interesting. What is your knowledge of the local tourism strategies that are in place?**

I: Mine?

**T: No, the local ones, the one from Destinasjon Voss and also the one from the local government, the Näringslivsstrategi?**

I: What their strategy is?

**T: Yes, what are you knowledge? Are you well aware of it?**

I: Eh... I'm not very much involved but you can say that I am well aware of it, not all the details but.. Im a local politician so uhm.. so we have our own plan for tourism and stuff. But we try to help promote tourism in many ways by making things accessible for tourist and the companies who run different offers for the tourists.

**T: That's good! Have you been involved in the strategy process?**

I: Not in working out the strategy, no. I wouldn't say that. As a politician we have discuss it and we have put in money in different activities that they have done. Stuff like that.

**T: And how has the strategy been communicated for you as a tourism operator? How have you been...**

I: Well, they do have their meetings that you can go to every month, not that I have been there very much myself, but they try to maintain a good connection with all the companies who are sort of member of Destinasjon Voss. Ehm.. And they have at certain events they also come out and host things so people get to know them better. They have, like for Extreme veka, which I guess you know, they have programs where they try to inform people who like to move to Norway and to Voss, like where they can live and what kind of business they can start up if they are interested and where they can get support to get started. So that have attracted some people I guess, and with the international contacts there, they can build on their own things, yeah.

**T: Thats great. So, as a tourism operator, how is your dialog with the strategy owners? Now I know that you are a politician aswell, but how is your dialog with Destinasjon Voss? Is it easy in regards to marketing, or if you have any development issues?**

Mostly I correspond with them via email and they contact me with request with renting the boat. I could probably have done more myself, but its not my main living thing, so. I have another job so. But from time to time its busy and other times its pretty quiet. Its also very much weather dependent the boat thing that I offer, compared to rafting or water kayak were they supposed to be in the wet environment all the time. In my boat there not.

**T: I how would you say motivation and participation is encouraged? For example these**

**meetings that you can attend, is it a lot of people going to these meetings?**

I: As I said, I don't go there often due to my work schedule and stuff, so I don't know if there are many going there but they are well informed in advance and invited.

**T: How has the strategy impacted your business? What challenges and benefits have you found with the marketing strategy?**

I: The benefits is that I'm covered there is information material for what you can do when you're in Voss, people who look in the magazine and online they can find both mine and other companies and what they offer of activities. So, people can do it on their own and there are also people who also put together packages, not that I have been involved in that either, but there are certain things that they can do in a package of activities, like the wind tunnel and rope climbing and yeah.

**T: Have you faced any challenges implementing the strategy in your business, do you agree with everything that's in the strategy, both marketing and developing?**

I: My largest challenge have been that I have had a neighbor that's not very happy that I offer this on boat on the lake, so he tried to make a lot of problem, but there was.. eh the issue was solved by the county so.

**T: Ok, so you felt that you were supported by the county?**

I: Yes. They had rules and regulations that made this feasible, so.

**T: That's great. What resources do you say is the most important to execute the strategy for you? Do you feel like you have to resources?**

I: Personally, I should have had access to more resources that could help me marketing my boat even better. Well, that's a personal thing because I'm blind so like using the different social media, and stuff like that, putting pictures on the web. But that will cost me a lot of money if I have to hire people.

**T: That it could be possible to get resources from the local government to develop?**

I: Right now, I'm not sure, because the county decided to spend so much money on two different projects, so there are not much left for other people to get, I think.

**T: What are the two projects?**

I: It's a new gondola from downtown Voss and up on one of the mountains around town, and the other one is that they are building a new, I don't know if I should call it a waterpark or a swimming pool, but yeah, it's a combination of swimming, and diving and slides in there and stuff. They went for a very, very expensive option so.

**T: Wow, okey. Interesting, next question. Are you part of a tourism network? Is there any, I know that there is this meetings with Destinasjon Voss, is that the only local? But is there any other?**

I: No, I'm not in any particular network. With a little bit more, a bit from my own part, I could spend a little bit more networking with the hotels around my part if the county. We have... most of the hotels is in my area around here. We have 1,2,3,4, 5,6 hotels around here that I probably I could have marketing my boat more with. Especially in the summer for the winter destinations they have a lot of their guests are using the hotels or the cabins more like a hub and then they go and do adventure things around Voss or in the neighboring country, so I could have done more there, I'm sure of that. But again, it's a matter of time and priority to what I do otherwise so.

**T: How would you describe the local collaboration culture in Voss? Do you collaborate a lot?**

I: Historically I wouldn't say that, but with the burst of Destinasjon Voss they have come afar piece to collaborate more. And they try to bring everybody together; small or big companies into the same fold and don't try to favor any particular company more than the other. And they all contribute compared to their revenue so. Its better, but I'm sure that there are things that can improve.

**T: What challenges do you see for future strategic directions?**

I: Hmm, cost issues are one side of it. Some of these activities are very, very costly. At some point, some people find that it cost them too much to do the stuff they can do here. Travel in general. It's an interesting area, because we are talking about being environmental. To do tourism we need to bring people from A to B, which is not environmental at all. They come by planes, they come by boats, they come by cars, stuff like that. It's an industry that you can do a lot of things locally to be environmental, but to get your customers the equation doesn't quite add up, in my opinion.

**T: If the strategy would change, that the nationally strategy or the local strategy that you should do something else in regards to tourism would you think that strategy change would be easy? Would a lot of people trust destination Voss or government in a strategic change?**

I: Um.. I guess that would be very much dependent on what that change of strategy would be. If it's kind of strategy that sort of centralise around a few operators or companies as to bringing everybody along I think people would be skeptic. And we see some of that right now, with those two investments. One will be paid to the ski resort, and mostly the hotel downtown with the swimming pool.

**T: So would you say that there is, today, a little bit of a, how would you say, not a collaboration problem, but maybe some operators are favoured and prioritised by the strategy and some are left by themselves?**

I: Well, what you see what they put their money into, yes, I am sure that people will feel like that.

T: Hmm.. Interesting. Do you feel that Destination Voss and the local government are aware of this and have a plan to engage them?

I: That's a hard-... That's a hard question to answer.

T: (laughs) yeah okey

I: I'm just observing it more than knowing what's behind it.

T: It just interesting for me.

I: I can't give you an honest opinion about it, because it's just something that I see that has happened the last 6 months. But suddenly everything gonna be focused in two big projects and they both downtown. While tourism growth in all county is in Myrkdalen by far. So, my question is then- why would the county go in and support a gondola downtown for 20 million NOK while the biggest ski resort is in Myrkdalen and they don't get one dime. It's interesting!

**T: Yeah. Ehm.. what are the challenge for further development for your business in regards to the strategy from Destinasjon Voss and in the local government an their investments in tourism?**

I: What the challenge is actually to get more people to use the boat. I have a fairly simple business, so I wont not live or die with the business itself, but it's an offer for tourist around here. Because I like more activity, when tourists come to this area they tend to come, stay over night and leave again, they might just go for a hike around here. There should be more options for them while they are here, and maybe then you can get people to stay not one night but maybe two or three nights and you can get more out of that tourist when you offer more things and more experiences. It would be a better solution for hotels or campground owners because they spend more and they will also get a better feel for the county.

**T: My last question is actually the same, maybe you have been into it, but what is the challenges for Voss as a adventure tourism destination?**

I: Wow. (laughs) For the winter I would say that the largest challenge is actually access to tourists. To get more people to experience this place. I think they get close to what they can expect from the region, or western Norway. So then they need to, lets say, go international mostly to get more tourists. And then, that is of course a challenge, because winter

destination is in a time where people have less spare time and less vacation than in the summer, but we know that there is some wealthy and rich people in the world that they try to bring to the area. Yeah, so I think that's the biggest challenge that they have, to sort of make this area, uhm... what's the phrase.. "berekraftig" på norsk?

T: (laughs) my head stand still aswell, I have to look it up.

I: And in the summer what is the biggest challenge... I think it is to get the tourists to stay longer. It is much better to get them to stay longer than to have more tourists coming in. It's a cheaper way of marketing and it's a better economy for the companies that are involved in it. And they could even do a better job making better collaboration with companies that offers room and board like hotels and campgrounds, with those who offer activities to do. That they would put even more together and Destination Voss could probably do a better job there saying in your region you should probably offer this as a total package, and yeah.

**T: Hmm.. that's very interesting. That was actually my last question. Do you have anything else to add?**

I: Hope it was anything useful?

**T: Yeah it was great! Do you have anything else that you would like to add to this strategy discussion and Voss challenges and successes?**

I: I do have a question for you, why do you do your master..uhm, you are Swedish obviously, why are you doing your master on Voss?

T: Oh yes, actually have been working in Lysekil In Sweden which has a lot of soft adventure activities so and we feel, the local government its hard to take a strategy that everyone is agreeing on and also to implement it. It's a struggle. It is a very well known business problem with strategy implementation and execution that its so vital, and Voss is seen as a successful adventure tourism destination and that why I wanted to see how the strategy execution and implementation is working with this kind of strategy. And I also look at Queenstown in New Zealand as well and do some interviews over there.

I: Interesting. Yeah. I think an important key is to make sure that everyone is participating financially, but according to their own income. So there is a percentage more than that they have to pay a huge rate to be a part of the community that Destinasjon Voss has developed to be. Don't exclude anybody and but also make sure that everyone wants to be apart of it and take the economic burden of it. Because its all the things we think strategy is, making people working together and its not coming for free. Nothing comes for free, there's a lot of work into it. My experience is if you want something to happen, want different companies to work together, it doesn't have to be tourism, you get government funding to start these projects and then you run it for two or three years and then there is no plans afterwards. How is this going continue after the funding is gone? The companies are usually not financially capable of supporting the organization afterwards. And that's the same problem that most organizations are challenged with when they do things like this, and Destinasjon Voss is the same thing but they done a decent job trying to make everyone contribute economically and they are also good at getting public funding from local government and regional government to different projects.

T: Yeah I know that there was this project "Grenslösa Opplevingar" which was very successful with the collaboration between the ski areas. So yeah. As you said it is a challenge in the tourism industry, and especially I think, with my background in Sweden, this problem have occured a lot of times where the project ends and also the strategy or the initiative dies aswell and then a new project....

I: And then the whole network that you have spent so much time to built up dissolves. That's the challenge.

T: Yes.

I: Another challenge that, I did not say anything about it but, As a tourist community, its always a challenge with getting, yeah, hiring people, seasonal people, either its winter or summer. And if you are able to cooperate with another destination, lets say one is a summer and one is winter, and these workers migrate from one place back to the other, then you have a much more stable workforce and its much cheaper. Cause its costly actually to hire people to work for you for two months or four months, and then they are gone again and then you

have to do the same thing next season again. I know that there is a strategy between Myrkdalen and Flåm in Sogn where people in Myrkdalen and Flåm sort of share their workforce. In summer they mostly work in Flåm because it's more of a summer tourist area there, and in winter they work in Myrkdalen because there are hardly anybody in Flåm.

T: That's great. That's a very good solution for the staffing problem that occurs. That was a very good interview. I think I got a lot of interesting parts for my analysis. Thank you very much!

I: So if you have any more questions don't hesitate to call. I don't know if it was to any help.

T: It was perfect. Thank you very much. Good luck with everything. How's the weather?

I: Good luck with your... oh it was pouring rain when I got up. So not a good day for renting out the boat, but it was rented out so it was ok. There's a few people from, they must be from an Arabian country somewhere or at least their background. Maybe they live in Europe, I don't know. They wanted to go out fishing today.

T: Oh, maybe the fishes will be a bit more eager when it rains, I don't know

I: (laughs) Lets hope that for them.

T: Ok, have a nice day then!

I: Good luck with your masters

T: Thank you! Ok bye!

## Appendix 9

### Interview transcript – Business number 4 in Voss

**Interviewer:** Student Therese (T)

**Interviewee:** Former owner of skiarea in Voss (I)

Interview via telephone 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2016.

Duration: 59 minutes and 15 seconds

(Start of interview)

**T: Lets start the interview! I think we can start with you introduce yourself and the business that you had when the strategy was founded.**

I: Yes, I was, yes, my name is (name) and I'm from Voss. So I am familiar with the town and the history of the area. I was part of a start up which was called then (company name) which is started up in little bit earlier, but the first employees was in place 2004. After some time and development in a valley called Myrkdalen just outside Voss, we together with the rest of the travel businesses in the Voss area found out that we needed a strategy that we could all work together on, and we decided to put down a group and start to worked together with the consultancy group that helped us organise everything.

T: OK

I: The start up (company name) was a new ski area with both cabins and later on development of warm beds as we say and a hotel. At the end of my period there, at 2012, that is now of the biggest ski areas in Norway and yeah, employs about 150 people.

**T: Very nice. Did you operate all year round or was it just season wise when ski slopes were open?**

I: No, that's the beauty of opening up a ski area in Voss because general in the summer we have all the tourists. Normally ski areas have a challenge to fill up the beds and have some

activities during the off season period after closing time in may, start of may and until the start up again for the next season in November and December. But in Voss we have had a lot of tourists in the summer, so we were a bit fortunate there that we could have some traffic all year basically, maybe the exception of a period of end of may, and October and November. So for the warm beds in Myrkdalen, that was the actually quite warm beds. (laughs)

T: That's good!

I: Yeah. So the challenge for the rest of Voss was that Voss as a winter sport place was not at all known, lets say, abroad for international tourists. But Voss was very well known in Norway. So the Norwegians came to Voss to go skiing, but hardly any foreigners, but summer it was vice versa, then we had a lot of tourists and hardly no Norwegian guests. That's kind of showing that there is potential, but the challenge was how to make the international guests discover Voss as a winter sport destination and make the local guests discover Voss as a summer destination. That was kind of an interesting challenge.

**T: Interesting. Was that the base of the strategy, like the challenges that the strategy was based on so to say?**

I: At least that was the potential that we have, say discovered. It was a potential that was lying there but we knew that it might be easier to make the Norwegians understand that Voss was also a summer destination. Because its easier to communicate to just one country and one group of people, then communicating with everyone in Europe and US and make them come here in the winter is a tougher challenge so. The way to communicate with them was mostly through tour operators, as a start at least.

**T: Ok, interesting. I think I will continue with some questions in regards to the local strategy. I would actually like to first ask you why do you think that Voss has become such a successful tourism destination?**

I: Well, first of all I think Voss has become a travel destination because of little bit of luck, because we are in the middle of everywhere, we are on the road east-west, the main road between Bergen and Oslo as well on the railway between Bergen and Oslo. So it's a natural place to maybe make a stop. We also right in the middle of the two biggest fjords. The fjords

are the main reason why most international guests come to Voss. It's not so many bigger places to stay. That's why I think Voss is a ideal base for discovering the fjord area. Going from there, we lets say, that's was maybe a strategy started based on luck maybe from where we are situated, but then after a while we saw that people also want to make not only a trip on the bus watching scenery, the also maybe want to do a hike or other types of activities. And the area itself is perfect, or the typography, we have rivers, we have steep mountains and a lot of water so. A lot of extreme sport, like parachuting. We have our own amateur airport so we dot have any challenges with commercial flights. And we have had nice base for paragliding from the ski areas and all the rivers are perfect for kayaking and rafting. All of this were at the beginning just hobby sports, lets say interests of a group of people. Many of them locals. But then after a while they maybe had some friends that came to Voss, and stayed for the summer just to do their own sports. This developed into lets say small businesses that paragliders could take a tandem trip to kind of finance the hobby. The parachute club did the same thing with the tandem trips with anyone who wanted to try to jump, and also financed their business through that. The rafting centre is maybe the most commercial company. Really kind of made it possible for anyone to do some extreme sport while in Voss. So, all this, ended up in extreme sport week, which is really important. Then again, it gave us a lot of publicity. Both, let's say, natural television and things like that in Norway, but as the internet grew aswell, new platforms were launched, let's say show your videos etc. Its also, it's a easy thing, lets say to show your friends or Facebook or even some newspapers abroad picked up some of the pictures, because the pictures were spectacular with the scenery with the steep mountains. Then you have parachuting in the small valleys, yeah it looked pretty spectacular. That also helped internationally, "if we go to Norway we have to go to Voss". Normally, there's not so many people who come just to Voss. You know, if you are from Britain or even further away, its usually you go to Norway to see the fjords. And then, when looking at the fjords you are in Bergen and Voss. So it still the base for discovering the fjords, but maybe for those who want a little bit more active in the way of doing that, you come to Voss.

**T: Interesting. How was the strategy created? How did the process look like? Was it the local government who invited you as a local business to sit down, or was it the operators who sat down and said we need some support?**

I: It was the latter. Uhm, it was all the companies in this kind of industry sat down and said that we need a new strategy. Actually it was a little bit, yeah, at the time, changing times for who say, who made decisions on the travel industry here in Voss, because lets say traditionally the hotels had been the most important player. And if they didn't join in, no one else do anything because no one had any resources to, let say, push the right buttons. But there is another development, which is Voss resort. And that's the old ski area in Voss, because Voss has had ski areas since 1964 or something. Both Voss resort and Myrkdalen had at that time grow so much that we had more resources available financially then the hotels to put into something like this. So we said we are going to do this, no matter if the hotel is in or not. And we got (laughs) let's say, always a challenge, if you can't beat them, join them, it's a nice saying that could work here. Because if you look at the group, you can see that we had (*name*) in there and he was not a very pro-guy because inviting him in to the group he kind of got stuck with the project and he couldn't criticise it too much by just standing outside. The other hotel owners, lets say (*name*) were more involved and they are more pro- cooperation than the others. This was maybe the real reason why we could to move forward with a new strategy because the rest of the group of companies had become so strong that they could do it no matter what the hotels wanted or not.

**T: So this group created the strategy, were the businesses picked? Were they all engaged? Maybe (*name*) wasn't the most proactive in this. But he was invited. Was everyone invited to join or was it only the bigger businesses?**

I: Everyone was kind of invited to join with suggestions and it was an open process. But we had to have someone in the project group that would have the time to spend to finalise this in some way. In combination with the most dedicated people and maybe the least dedicated people. But we knew about that so it kind of was a way to help keeping the least dedicated people informed and also sort of a education of the people who are, lets say, if you talk more about topic and give them more information and sometimes they change opinion and see the world with new glasses. We did some travelling to other places, that had gone through similar processes trying to get some small tips from here and there and adapt them to our strategy.

**T: What conditions were created for successful strategy implementation? Did you have an action plan connected to it? I see that you have an activity plan, was it the plan to have**

**the other actors on board in a later stage? Or was it a document for you, the group who created it? How would you do that in that case?**

I: The challenge is always, when you do a plan like this, who is going to pay for all the activities. The bigger the plan is, the more players and shareholders there are, the worse it gets usually. So, one of the points were to coordinate lets say, some of the activities and investments that many of the companies already had a plan of doing and also to, lets say, its like making more people go in the same direction with their plans and their thoughts, and to share their thoughts about where we want to go in order to maybe have them prioritised a little bit more. Ok we do this because it is part of the plan. We don't have to do that first; lets go for the most important things first to bring everyone together. What can I do for my part of contributing to this plan? And lets say, Myrkdalen, as the company I know best, our ski area is situated about 25 kilometres outside Voss centre, but we said that its extremely important that Voss is a good town to come to as a tourist. We then said that we can put in money to, lets say develop the town of Voss, even if its away from the ski area. You have to have a sense of coming to a ski town. If you're a skit tourist and maybe you stay in Myrkdalen och maybe you stay at the hotel in the centre and both Myrkdalen and other skiareas. You have to broaden your horizon a little bit more than some other companies do. Spending your money far away from your business.

**T: How would you say you as a group worked with this, motivation and participation to encourage this among the other tourism operators in the area?**

I: Lets say, the most difficult thing to spend money on is not a new hotel, because that is more hardcore investments. So you look at that as an investment project and you kind of do your analysis and see if this is something that you believe will make some money at the end or not. And then you invest based on that. The difficult investments are those that are going to maybe a festival, maybe a new kind of soft activity. Things like that because normally you don't get any money back from that, and but still its really important because that, lets say it's like Internet without any content. If you just build up hotels and ski areas and you close the ski area at four o'clock what happens after that? Nothing happens. You don't feel like being here again because it's boring after the ski areas has closed. So it was for us really important to show that it's important to have the festivals that we have. One of them, Vossa Jazz, was about to go bankrupt actually. Just a little bit earlier than that. Most of the other companies

found out that we cannot have that festival go bankrupt so we all got together and put substantial amount of money to keep the festival going. And its still going with the same sponsorship. And that was the same with some other festivals, earlier the extreme sport was for crazy people doing things we don't even know what they are doing, and then it was developing successful marketing Voss and the local companies thought that, ok, its important to help them as much as we can, maybe we cant give them money, we can help them with equipment or work a little bit for them for free or. More sponsorship, some other companies also put more money in as cash just to kind of make them stronger, or as strong as possible, to market Voss. We see that without the festival, Voss wouldn't be known for anything actually.

**T: Interesting. I would like to ask a little bit more questions about the tourism network and the collaboration and how the culture is among the different tourism actors. But first I would like to go a bit deeper into the implementation phase of strategy process. When the document was finished, did you see any challenges in implementing it and getting the others on board? Were they motivated to participate in this new direction?**

I: Yes. Lets say, one of them who was a member of the company of Destination Voss ended up saying that they don't want to be a member anymore. That was a, let say, an act that we didn't really understand the reason why, or what the problem was. But that was not, not always easy to understand and we have different people everywhere and you can't always be happy friends with necessarily everyone. That was one of the challenges. But apart from that, the strategy made us think a little bit more in the same direction and understanding maybe why, and maybe I can do this as my part, and it was just small steps that brought us forward and also supporting, as I said, the festivals and the extreme sport week and maybe market the smaller companies together with our bigger companies, lets say, the hotels with packages with stay with us and go rafting, or go skiing. We did the same, stay with us and go rafting or do whatever. And also kind of recommending the guests to do this and this activity by staying at our place. It wasn't a really a huge activity plan, ok we need to build a new hotel there and finance that and another one there and maybe some activities indoor there, that needed a bunch of millions to be realised. It made us realise all the small steps that were important.

**T: How was the strategy communicated to the rest of the stakeholders?**

I: We had a bunch of meetings during the process, and we also had people in the project who were kind of responsible for communicating out to others, so I kind of took care of that in Myrkdalen. Telling them what's was going on, do you have any ideas to come up with that I can bring back to the project and things like that. But we also had some bigger meetings, where we presented how far we come now and challenges, and yeah things like that. Its important that this kind of strategy projects aren't a surprise for the others. Kept secret until its finished. So you have to have, lets say, make the others aware of the projects and let them have a chance to say their opinion. Then it's not to easy to come afterwards with your opinion. Having an open process is important.

T: Would you say that most of the tourism businesses was part of your group, that they were complying with the strategy or were you faced with challenges a long the way?

I: It was quite a good process when it comes to that. Because prior to that we had the process with establishing Destinasjon Voss. And, let's say, we had a lot of discussions then so when we had kind of done away with some of the most challenging questions and discussions before we started this strategy project. That was nice, that we didn't start out with a big growl, we were kind of done with that. You can join the plan and go for it or you can do you own thing and don't care for anything. We will actually leave you alone if you don't want to be a co-operator. Most of the people wanted to have good cooperation in the travel industry in Voss.

**T: That's good. So if we move forward to the tourism network. How would you describe the culture within the tourism in Voss?**

I: It has become quite good now because this process made us understand what are the challenges of the other players of the group. And also thinking that if I, can I do something that doesn't really cost me a fortune that can help the other guys at the table. That's more like I was saying earlier, that the bigger companies can have small mentioning of them in the newspaper ad or the internet add or article or whatever. Just for free you know, you don't have to have them pay for it. That's helps a lot of course.

**T: As a part of the tourism network, what benefits did you get from these corporations?**

Well, maybe the most important thing was that we got the importance of the festivals. We got that message through to the rest of the industry in Voss. As well, not just in the travel industry, let's say shopping industry and people are a little bit more of the side of the travel industry, maybe building the hotel or the cabins, those businesses also came aware of the necessity of things go together. Why am I building this hotel, it's not just because someone called and say I need a new hotel can you please build it? They understand that it's because new guests are coming, that's why we need a new hotel. They understood the circulation of the money, where does the money come from and who brings the money? Why do I get a phone call that I should build a new hotel? (laughs) Some businesses or people understand it quicker than others, if I say so. (laughs)

**T: How was and is the strategy monitored? How did you follow up the goals that you set out? Did you communicate the result?**

I: It is always difficult with a strategy that is a little bit general like this. You can not fire someone here because you didn't reach this and this goal. That's easier in a company that I worked with. Ok, you didn't reach the goal of this and this number of people are coming here in the winter, reaching this revenue, give a good explanation or find something else to do. It's not very easy for a general strategy because who is responsible for not making us reach the goals? It's just another reason for why we wouldn't. That's the most important thing was to make all the players think the same and understanding the importance of doing things together. That means also Voss kommune, because they are a little bit, they are not always thinking like a business is thinking. Let's say, they have their challenges of course with the economy, but it's not always necessary that the Voss kommune to give money to business, it's more understanding the importance of doing all the paperwork as fast as possible. For example, building a new hotel or let's say a building application with the kommune, they say yes you can go forward with this or all these things. Just small things that can take a very long time if you don't have efficient bureaucrats, you can put the stamp on it real quickly, or they can make a phone call and say are you sure, you can not do it like this but if you do it like this it would be ok and the architect can do a minor adjustment and then you are good to go and you can start things more quickly instead of waiting 8 months before you can do anything. That was the most important thing maybe to get the kommune to understand this and also, they usually have some money that they can give to a project or start up, so they said ok we have some money that we can give out, it should be to start ups within this area. So

maybe something that goes from agriculture in direction of tourism. Maybe a new activity on a farm, maybe some new food, things like that. If you came with the wrong idea, when it comes to the strategy, they would say that is not possible according to the strategy, but if you change a little bit more tourist way you can have some money to start your company with. That was the most important things, all the players understood the challenges that the other companies had.

**T: Hmm interesting. I was just thinking about the monitoring process as well. The parameters that was set for strategy success. You said the document is pretty general, but there are a few actions that are dated and who is responsible for each action. Were those followed up on and monitored and presented during your time at (company)?**

I: Well, I would say that, (name) in Destination Voss she was the only person who could, lets say, arrest us if we didn't comply with the strategy. It's like a combination of you give good criticism to the people who do the right things, not necessarily scolding those who are not. (laughs) Sort of a ways lifting up those who did the right things and then the others could see that "oh they are talking very well of these people, why? Oh its because they doing this, this and this – we can do that" and suddenly they showed up on the newsletter as a new and inventive company. And that was basically the way we did it. As I said earlier, it's not so easy for someone to come to me and say Per you haven't done your job. I could say that I couldn't care less. If my boss did the same, that's another thing. But that's also the challenge with such a general strategy that everyone can agree that we need a new hotel in the centre of Voss, but no one has the money to build it. No one else wants to build it, because its smarter to build a new hotel in Bergen or in Oslo than in Voss. So that's a challenge. Of course its possible for the bigger companies to work on that, those type of projects but its usually up to bigger players like Voss resort to make those investments. Many things are happening now as well, I don't know how much you have heard?

T: Yeah, I have heard a bit.

I: Yeah, there is a new Gondola coming up and maybe a new hotel in the centre of Voss so things are happening for those things take a lot of time of course. Just all the, lets say, paperwork with Voss commune and a lot of other bureaucrats that are going to say something about it. It takes many years to have the plans ready to grow.

**T: Just to summarise a bit, what would you say is the success factors of implementing tourism strategy? Because the strategy has been successful and has been successful and has put Voss on the map and have reached a lot of the goals in it so, what would you say is the success factors? If you would just summarise your own experiences?**

I: Maybe in just one word: Cooperation. If you get sort of an atmosphere that one of the companies has success, let them be happy for that. Let them have their success and be happy for that even if you didn't have success or more success than you had earlier. Maybe next year it's your turn. So it's a lets say, being generous with each other and being open with each other, that makes the cooperation more fruitful.

**T: What challenges do you see for future strategic direction in regards to changing environments and travel patterns, and travel trends?**

I: Challenges for Voss?

I: Yes. For a changing of the strategic direction? Would it be easy to change the strategy? Or would it be a tough task to operate?

I: Ehm... It's a... we have most of the activities here are nature based activities so, that would be, lets say if we needed to change the strategy, that would be first of all if people didn't come here, you can't fly any more or things like that, but if we don't put that into the perspective, changing because maybe people want something else, I think that Voss can deliver most of the things except lets say the typical beach weather, warm weather. You shouldn't come here if you look for a beach. You can get sunburned on a nice summer day, but in general it's a bit risky two weeks of sunbathing holiday in Voss. So I think that would be the major challenges, the climate change if we don't get any snow, ski areas could not operate. But I think if we have problem with snow, most of the places would already have problems with snow so for many years. The main challenge is to, lets say, make all the big investments because we don't have any really rich people in Voss. So we are very dependent on someone from the outside, so if they change their minds and say lets sell everything and get out of Voss as soon as possible, that would be the major challenge. Because if, people, lets say the people behind Myrkdalen that have invested a lot of money in something that

doesn't not give their money back in a short time. So thank god that we have some long term investors and not anyone that need their money back after lets say, 5 years.

**T: I was also fishing a little bit here about the, if there would be even a small strategic change for example choosing another target group for example the Chinese market, would that be welcomed? Would that be a easy implement or strategic change, based on your experience would it be a challenge or would it be an easy thing to do?**

I: I think, we have a lot of Chinese people already, but lets say that the biggest challenge actually is if we get too many tourists. It's a kind of interesting problem. Lets say if we just double the amount of people that can be sometimes tough. I have been to Italy just recently, and you can see some of the places there is just a swarm of tourists. There aren't really any real people left in some of the places. That's a challenge that we have to take in consideration. Its not necessarily the amount of people that are important, the most important is that those who come here are taken care of and that they spend the amount of money that is needed to keep things going. It is also a part of sustainable development, because you can make much better experience and much more real experiences if you give good quality instead of just quantity.

**T: Interesting. I think I got a lot of interesting answers from you and a lot of data to research about here. Is there anything more you would like to add in this discussion in regards to the strategy?**

I: It could also be important to have some people in such a process that have companies or lets say the chance to implement something, parts of it, as a part of their own company plans. Its important that you have a someone who is a doer in the project. You have people talking about how it should be and the key players are not involved or interested in it. Its important that you get everyone in the same boat and going in the same direction. It's a combination of the cooperation and the people who have enough guts and the resources to make the big things go. We have looked a lot at Åre, as you probably know, they have also had somewhat the same challenges and went forward together with good cooperation in between all the players there. And you have Skistar, which is the major player and can do things if they want to. But it's a little bit the same with Myrkdalen, which had the chance to build the hotel even if no one else wanted to do it. Not that it's a good idea financially but it's good for the ski

area. I remember people asked us before we started the project, are you insane building a hotel in Norway when everyone else is closing them own? That's brave! Or are you just plain stupid? (laughs)

T: You have to have the guts!

I: Yeah, and take some chances!

T: It was lovely to talk to you, I got a very good amount of information. It was very interesting as I said. If there is anything else just send me an email or if it would be possible if some questions arise during my work if it would be possible to contact you?

I: Yeah, just send me an email and I will answer it as soon as possible.

T: Thank you! Fine grejer!

## **Appendix 10**

### **Interview transcript**

**Interviewer:** Student Therese (T)

**Interviewee:** Marketing manager, Destination Queenstown

Interview via email 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2016.

### **What stakeholders have been participating in the strategy process?**

We invite all our members to provide input to our planning process and business plan. We have a Strategic Review Board, which sits above our Board of Directors, which is made up of 25 sector representatives and meets annually to input to, and ratify, the final plan.

### **Who is the core stakeholders?**

Members, local community, Council, Chamber of Commerce, Queenstown Airport, Police, TNZ, TIA, national tourism industry bodies

### **How is the core stakeholders taken care of?**

Regular schedule of communication, both formal and informal. Quarterly Update meetings for our members, Board meetings monthly, annual input into business plan, Annual General Meeting to elect Board members. Annual member communication survey and annual member satisfaction survey.

### **Why do you think Queenstown has become such a strong adventure tourism destination in regards to high quality activities and strong brand?**

Queenstown has a uniquely structured RTO which has enabled the effective, strategic and neutral (i.e. not favouring any businesses over another) marketing over the last 30 years. Great quality product against a backdrop of outstanding natural landscapes and a warm, welcoming culture.

### **Challenges with implementation of the strategies?**

Our strategy focuses on promoting our shoulder season periods and maintaining our peaks and growing value over volume. Our challenge is encouraging our visitors to understand the four season proposition of Queenstown (i.e. four unique and equally attractive seasons) and

getting them to act on that – i.e. book outside peak seasons.

**What resources are the most important?**

Human resources,

**How has the strategy been communicated?**

Via our business plan and at member and industry presentations. We also communicate each of our major campaigns and projects to our members too.

**How is it monitored?**

Campaigns are monitored through key metrics such as digitally or media reach.

**How would you describe the culture among the stakeholders/tourism network?**

Queenstown has a really positive overall culture within the industry. It is renowned for having a co-operative approach between members for the greater good of the industry. This has been built over many years as the town has grown with tourism as the biggest economic driver.

**How are you dealing with strategic change?**

We are driving our own strategic change internally to continually aspire to position Queenstown as the southern hemisphere's leading lake and alpine resort. Externally we engage deeply with other local agencies to understand their strategic focus.

**What are the major challenges with further development of the adventure destination?**

Infrastructure development keeping up with demand in growth.

