POSSIBILITIES OF IMPLEMENTING AN APP FOR HAMK ALUMNI

Evaluation of different alumni app for HAMK´s use

HAMK
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Report for SISU project

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HAMK – International Business   Abstract

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This report is a part of HAMK – International Business project SISU – module. In this report, the authors will analyze the possibilities of implementing an app for the use of HAMK alumni network. Based on the results of the surveys which were created by the members of this SISU project, it was observed that using an app to connect with other members of the alumni network is considered as the best way. On the other hand, the survey findings proved that the students did not want a completely new app.

In this report HAMK's needs are also considered for the app, in addition studies of general prices of apps are included. During the research of app costs, it was found that generating a brand-new app and maintaining it would be expensive. There is already an existing customer relationship between TUUDO and HAMK, and therefore the authors concluded that it would be the most appropriate and price friendly partner. The continuation to cooperate with TUUDO to create a section for alumni in their app is perceived to be the most preferable solution.

Overall, to help HAMK activate its alumni network, the authors recommend that it would be most beneficial to use the already existing partnership with TUUDO to make a new platform for alumni in their app, because students already use it on their daily school actions.

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Appendices

1   Introduction

This is a report concerning possibilities of implementing an app for HAMK alumni. In the report, we will look at what type of application is wanted by HAMK and what wishes users want based on the surveys. The report analyzes the general application price structure and introduces the different possibilities, including an offer by TUUDO. At the end we present a summary and a recommendation on what type of application would be good to acquire for the HAMK alumni.
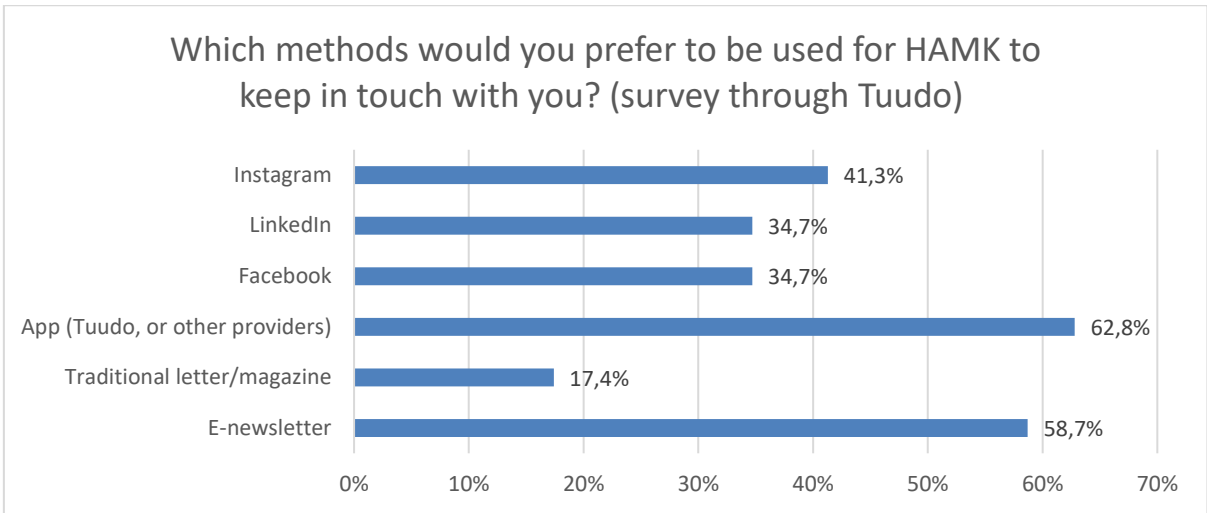
2   Features of desired app

At the beginning of our project, we were thinking of different channels how to stay connected with alumni. We found out that HAMK already has held events for alumni, they have newsletter that is send few times per year and HAMK posts alumni-related content in social media. In other universities there are also websites and apps for alumni.

The use of app seemed good for us. HAMK had not yet used app for alumni, so it offered fresh possibility to explore. We contacted Tuudo´s CEO to discuss possibilities for co-operation.

2.1   Survey results

To gain deeper understanding what the former and current students are expecting from alumni activities, we conducted two surveys. One was done with Tuudo, and the target audience were current students. The survey was open in Tuudo for one week and it got 121 replies. The other one was done through HAMK's newsletter, and the target group was former students. This survey had only nine replies even though the newsletter goes to 1518 recipients. The following is based on those surveys. (Amraoui et al, 2022).
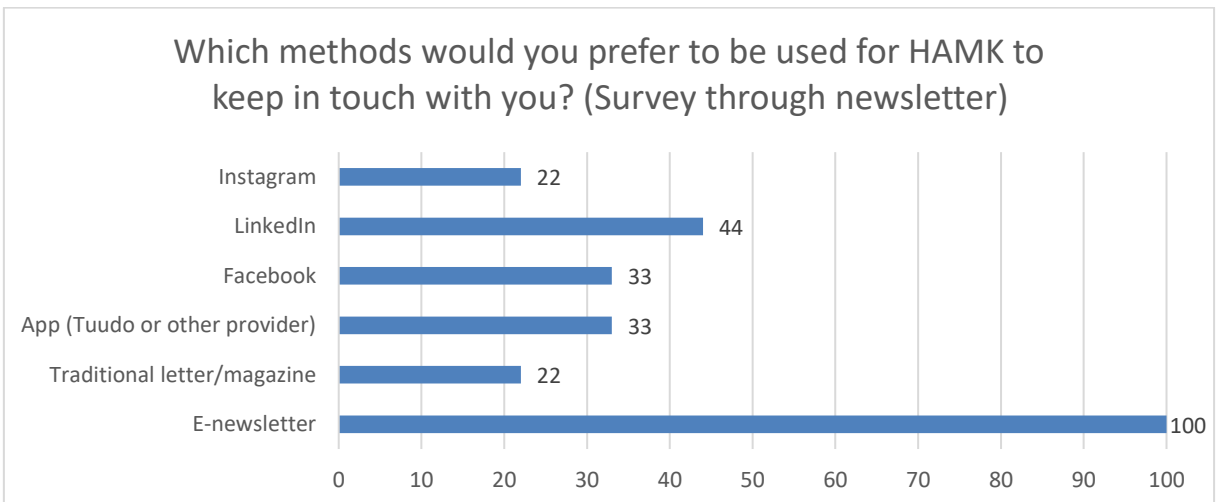
The first survey made it clear that the current students prefer to use an app as a contact channel (63%). The newsletter also got high points (59%).

Which methods would you prefer to be used for HAMK to keep in touch with you? (survey through Tuudo)

Method	Percentage
Instagram	41,3%
LinkedIn	34,7%
Facebook	34,7%
App (Tuudo, or other providers)	62,8%
Traditional letter/magazine	17,4%
E-newsletter	58,7%

The respondents could give wishes in open questions. About the possible app we got 26 different replies. The most common request was the app to be user friendly. This may feel self-evident but because it was mentioned several times it tells that many apps are not user friendly, or respondents are fearing that the possible alumni app is somehow complicated.

Other wishes that kept repeating in the replies were current information and possibility to keep contacts with other people. According to the replies, the current information could be news, events, discounts and learning possibilities. These are in line with the replies for the other question in survey: Why have you joined or would like to join HAMK alumni network. The three most common reasons for joining were career development (56,2%), opportunities for lifelong learning (52,9%) and classmates' connection (43,8%).

The other survey for former students had quite different results. However, because of the small number of replies it is uncertain how generalized these are.

Which methods would you prefer to be used for HAMK to keep in touch with you? (Survey through newsletter)

Method	Value
Instagram	22
LinkedIn	44
Facebook	33
App (Tuudo or other provider)	33
Traditional letter/magazine	22
E-newsletter	100

The most preferred method in this survey was the E-newsletter. The app was not so popular option among this group. In the open questions concerning the app, there were only two replies. Both stated that they will not use the app for this purpose.

Following but somewhat uncertain conclusions can be made based on these surveys: The app is the most popular option among current students for alumni information. For the already graduated students the app is not so important. The app should be user-friendly. The essential features should include current information and possibility to maintain connections with fellow students.

2.2 HAMK's needs

Alumni activities are important not only for the former students but also to their alma mater (= the school from which the person has graduated). To hear more from HAMK about their needs we had a meeting with HAMK staff 23.2.2022. We learnt that HAMK has already done some things, but they are aware that the present situation could be improved, and they were open to develop new ways. However, the challenge is that only couple of employees are working with alumni activities about 2 days per month, so there is practically no room for new workload.

In the meeting Leenakaija Lehto proposed different things that the "alumni toolbox" could include information about webinars and learning possibilities, research information, to announce practicum places, to come to school to talk about work life, own information and study history, open vacancies, and newsletter archives.

This proposal has many similarities with the students replies, like information about different learning possibilities. According to the surveys, majority of students/alumni (64,5% in Tuudo survey and 78% in newsletter survey) were interested in mentoring the HAMK students as a part of their alumni activities. Thus, there seems to be lots of common desires between students' expectations and HAMK's needs.

So HAMK needs new and fresh ways to build relationships with alumni, inspire them to participate in school's activities (e.g., continuous learning or as visitors from business life from voluntary basis) and to promote school for prospective students. And these should be possible to do with truly little extra effort.

If new openings in alumni activation are focused on current students, then the app is a good choice. If app is technically managed by some third-party provider, then it allows HAMK staff concentrate mostly on producing content for the app.

3   General analysis of apps

With the app's mobile, we can create a strong connection among HAMK Alumni's and analyse how we Alumni interact among ourselves, gives us an insight throughout the journey and in-app guidance based on the users. The main purpose of these apps is to bring HAMK Alumni's together (HAMK Ex- students and current students and University). We decided to create these apps for the sole reason that, many of HAMK students after graduation turn to forget about the University and concentrate on their tasks ahead, this is somehow not a good approach. These apps would therefore serve as a medium whereby we can share our individual experiences from HAMK and what current students should anticipate from the University as a whole, also it would serve as guide for Ex -students to share some common job opportunities for current students after graduation. One thing you should bear in mind is the fact that, your personal information would all be secure as we are going to make sure the apps are well secure to avoid any leakage of Students personal information as this might be very unprofessional on our part. These apps would work well in dispensing news and events taking place in school thereby reducing the problem of announcing updates individually. It will serve as the best medium where we must make announcements regarding events, schedules, and school updates. These apps would offer vital information that could be beneficial to us students and teachers and help keep the students and University updated.

These apps would be used to connect both HAMK Ex-students, current students and University to information that matters most in areas related to studies, job placement and jobs as a whole and making sure the latest information reaches everyone thus reducing the time, we students would have been using spending time on the school websites to see updates or what the school have to say about current students and their results so far. Being installed on our mobile phones, it will be easier for us to just click. In the nutshell, these apps are out to promote communication, allow access to information, promote involvement among HAMK Ex-students, current students, and the University as a whole.

3.1   Costs

How much it costs to make or create an app is a question we have been asking as we came up with our project. The cost of an app depends on the complexity of the app development. Even though prices for applications are around 750€/hr, others are around 40€/hr, the average cost for simple apps will be around €40,000 to €60,000 looking at the cost of apps development in 2022 while average apps development cost is from €60,000 to €150,000. So the answer to how much it cost to develop these apps of ours is based on the features of these apps, that Is what we are looking forward in including inside the app. Looking at our present situation with TUUDO, we could say we stand a chance related to the cost of apps or if not we could get in touch with app developers to hear what they have to tell us and which step to take.

4 Opportunities

The surveys have offered us essential information so that we can develop innovative ideas and ways to improve the status of HAMK Alumni. There is a possibility to create an app specifically for HAMK Alumni, but the costs are extremely high. Another option is to co-operate with TUUDO to minimize the cost. Besides these app related opportunities, we can examine the current events, web pages, newsletter, social media presence et cetera, which have been offered to the alumni and enhance them to perfectly fit their desired needs.

4.1 TUUDO

Like it has been mentioned before, we managed to arrange a meeting with the CEO of TUUDO and discuss our possibilities for co-operation. We asked for the costs if TUUDO would implement a section for HAMK Alumni in their app and the answer was a couple thousand euros and a thousand for maintaining it on a yearly basis. We discussed the fact that many Universities are in the same situation as HAMK, the Alumni have been forgotten or at least left unnoticed. Therefore, TUUDO was as excited as we were to conduct the survey and find out what measures could be taken so that alumni could be served better. This collaboration benefitted both parties since we were able to gather meaningful results for our project and TUUDO got valuable information. The outcomes of the survey were slightly anticipated but included some surprises too. Majority of the participants were in favour of using an app and that is why it could be a perfect match for HAMK if the budget would be adequate to co-operate with TUUDO in the future.

5 Conclusion

As mentioned above, a new app is not what students or future alumni want, but the usability of an app is perceived as the most convenient. Many students already have the TUUDO-app so utilizing it with future alumni would make sense. As with costs, creating a new app is expensive, but utilizing the already existing clientele with TUUDO would keep costs down. As it is also known, TUUDO, can correspond HAMK's needs when taking into consideration what is desired from the future application.

References

Amraoui, A., Dang, T., Laurila, J., Savolainen, J., & Tuiskula, T. (2022). Alumni Activation survey report 2022. https://hameenamk.sharepoint.com/sites/ProjectSISU2022PT-AlumniActivation/Jaetut%20asiakirjat/Alumni%20Activation/Project%20teams%20folders/Alumni%20survey%20-%20Report/Alumni%20Survey%20-%20Report.docx?web=1

Appendix 1 Survey questions

1. **How did you become aware that HAMK has an Alumni network?**
    From friends
    From teachers
    From former alumni
    HAMK's website
    Other. What?

2. **Have you attended any events with alumni while you were a student?**
    Yes
    No

3. **Check three most relevant ones. Why have you joined or would like to join HAMK alumni network?**
    HAMK values its alumni
    HAMK is a part of who I am
    Access to benefits, discounts
    Classmates' connections
    Career development
    Opportunities for lifelong learning

4. **Do you feel HAMK offers enough opportunities for alumni to engage with?**
    More than adequate
    Adequate
    Moderately
    Not at all

5. **In your relationship with HAMK, which of the following have you done? Check all that apply.**
    Read E-newsletter/booklet
    Visited campus
    Visited HAMK website
    Recommended HAMK to a prospective student
    Engaged with HAMK social media

6. **The amount of information I received from HAMK is:**
    Just the right amount
    Not enough
    Too much

7. **Would you be interested in mentoring HAMK students?**
    Yes
    No

8. **What kinds of activities would you feel like to contribute to HAMK? Check all that apply.**
    Degree program support
    Employment referrals for current students
    Peer relationships with current students
    Extracurricular activities with current students
    Other. What?

Appendix 1 Survey questions

9. **Which kind of alumni events would you like to see organized that you are likely to participate in? Check all that apply.**
    Class reunions on campus
    Student- friendly coffee meetings/events
    Athletic events
    Cultural events
    Community service activities
    Career networking events
    Training sessions
    Other. What?

10. **How would you like events to be held?**
    Remotely
    Face-to-face
    Both

11. **Pre-pandemic, what prevented you from participating in alumni activities?**
    Time
    Uninteresting events
    Geographical distance
    I will not make a difference
    Not sure how to enrol/register

12. **What are your preferred days and time for attending a future alumni event?**
    Weekend, during the day
    Weekend, in the evenings
    Weekday, during the day
    Weekday, in the evenings
    I would not attend any
    Other. When?

13. **Which methods would you prefer to be used for HAMK to keep in touch with you? Check all that apply.**
    E-newsletter
    Traditional Letter/Magazine
    App (Tuudo, or other providers)
    Facebook
    LinkedIn
    Instagram

Open-ended questions

14. **Do you have any suggestions about how can HAMK support you personally and professionally?**

15. **Do you have any wishes if HAMK offers App for alumnus?**