Party Center

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Party Center

A Survey on the Market for Cross-Cultural Party Catering and Organization

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Preface

The project "Party Center" consisted of a survey of the market for cross-cultural party catering and organization performed over eight weeks at the end of 1996. The main goal of this survey was to find out whether it would be feasible to set up a business in this market. The purpose of the business is to provide the location, catering, music, decorations, servers and any other needs for cultural parties of non-Dutch nationalities in Eindhoven and its surroundings. The Bedrijfskundewinkel at the TUE was approached to conduct this survey, which was then carried out by an international team of students. The interviews were conducted in English, while the questionnaires were translated into Dutch to more easily facilitate the feedback from non-English speakers.

The international team wish to recognize the work and support provided by the Bedrijfskundewinkel project coordinators. In addition to setting up meetings and providing project guidelines, they translated the questionnaires from English into Dutch and the answers back into English. They also acted as the liaison between the team and the client. Their assistance was invaluable.

This work would have been impossible without the gracious cooperation of the various inter-cultural centers throughout Eindhoven. They dedicated a lot of time and showed great patience with the researchers' cultural ignorance while answering numerous questions. Special thanks goes to the Stichting Progreso, the Centrum Voor Buitenlandse Vrouwen Nergiz and Radha Nari Samaaj, for their honest answers as well as distributing questionnaires.

Eindhoven, 25.11.96
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Summary

The challenge for the Bedrijfskundewinkel team was to forecast the future market potential for opening an inter-cultural party catering service in Eindhoven. The bulk of the research done involved a simple survey and personal in-depth interviews with representatives from different cultural backgrounds and within that age and gender as well. The results of the surveys and interviews gave the researchers confidence in suggesting a limited entry into the ethnic catering market. This limitation comes in the form of limited investments of time and resources at the project’s beginning, with an increasing commitment after six months so that data may be accrued to help create a better model. This will also protect the client from significant losses if the idea proves unprofitable. The focus in the initial stage will involve targeting three specific minority groups exclusively, such as the Turkish, the Moroccan and the Antillian community, with concept expansion after success. With relevant data, as well as a foothold in the tight market, a new strategy can be formulated as to the future heading of the venture.

It is recommended that the initial stages of the business venture focus on three ethnic minority target groups and should neglect all others until those markets become feasible. This will limit the vast amount of cultural knowledge that the role of inter-cultural caterer entails in addition to focusing marketing strategies.

The subjectivity of this proposal should not be underestimated as all survey results are subject to researchers’ interpretations. The solidity of this forecast directly stems from confidence in the target research group, their candor, honesty and their positions as representatives of their respective communities. Success will not be contingent on the strict adherence to this proposal, but the suggestions presented here should be given consideration when creating a final business plan.
Chapter I: Introduction

Eindhoven is a city in the Netherlands with approximately 221,000 people, 36,000 of whom have foreign ethnic and cultural backgrounds differing from the typical Dutch citizen. Because their numbers are so small, these ethnic communities have found it difficult to perform traditional social gatherings which are not based on the Dutch culture. These gatherings include weddings, anniversaries, meetings etc. Current Dutch catering services in Eindhoven have failed to catch this sector of the catering market due to their inflexibility and lack of exposure to individual minority cultures.

The purpose of this study was to decide if it would be feasible to set up a new business that caters to Eindhoven’s ethnic minority communities if the demand exits for such as service. Market research needed to be conducted in the prevalent minority communities to gauge not only the communities’ need for such a service, but also its acceptance. With these results, the client will have information allowing a fairly accurate projection of medium-term demand. Short-term demand is rarely an effective window on future performance due to start-up problems, while long-term demand is a reflection of service and entrepreneurial performance.

In Chapter I of this report, a survey of Eindhoven’s ethnic minority community had to be made. Chapter II describes in detail the reasons for the survey, its structure, its weight and accuracy, and the purpose of the chosen questions. In addition to the surveys, interviews were conducted with individual representatives at several inter-cultural organizations. Chapter II will also discuss the interview structure as well as the over-riding interview objectives. The analysis of the survey and interview will provide a basis for the market research results.

Chapter III will summarize the findings and Chapter IV will further discuss their meaning. It will also provide a clue to the market’s climate and acceptance of the proposed business through the use of directly posed questions from the interviews and questionnaire responses.

Chapter V will provide working recommendations that have been arrived at with consideration of interview and survey results as well as researched general entrepreneurial strategy. This will also include further options that
supplement as well as complement the market research result recommendations.
Chapter II: Survey Approach

The concept of the survey was to first identify the largest inter-cultural groups in Eindhoven and then to get a representative picture of their opinions on whether a cross-cultural party center run by an individual that does not belong to but would be knowledgeable about their specific cultural group, would be successful. The critical points were to find out what their biggest celebrations are, how elaborate these parties are and who traditionally caters and organizes these parties.

II.i Survey Methodology

According to the definition of the task of the survey, three sub-tasks had to be carried out:
1. First, the size of the inter-cultural groups had to be found to find the largest minorities.
2. Second, representatives of those groups had to be interviewed in detail to get an understanding of the basics of their specific cultures.
3. Third, more people from those groups had to be inquired by questionnaires.

The first of the sub-tasks was to be investigated at the city hall to get detailed figures and forecasts of the different nationalities in Eindhoven from census results. Population, broken down by racial background was available; unfortunately, it proved to be impossible to find out how many weddings of those international groups take place in a year in Eindhoven. Therefore, only absolute figures on the population can be given in this report. The numbers from city hall were also verified by one of the visited inter-cultural centers.

The second sub-task was to identify and interview ethnic community representatives to find out the specific traditions of their weddings and to get an estimate on the feasibility of the intended business. From a Eindhoven city guide and from the client himself the first two international groups were identified. Each in turn then helped by providing useful information on the other multi-national groups in Eindhoven. After uncovering the addresses, the organizations were contacted to set up a meeting of approximately two hours. The interview questions followed the scenario given in Appendix A.
The third sub-task was to distribute questionnaires to the communities to get more feedback on necessities and feasibility. Due to the fact that those communities might, in many cases, speak only Dutch and their native language, the questionnaires were translated from English into Dutch. To raise the return rate, the questionnaires were given to the contacts interviewed in each organization to distribute them to their members. Thus the motivation to respond to the questionnaires would be stronger than if it was, for example, received through the mail. The impressions from the interviews were put together with the results from the questionnaire analysis to form the conclusion of this report.

The interviews were always conducted by at least two of the project managers. A strict questionnaire was not used to ensure the informal character of the meetings. This made it easier to elicit the details of the specific cultures and to evaluate the feasibility of the proposal. The questionnaires were used to back up the general information gathered in the interviews and to allow people to express specific and personal experiences in this area.

II.ii Reference Groups

The concept behind the business is the assumption that non-Dutch communities with their specific cultural and religious background celebrate their parties in a way which need very specific commitment and detailed knowledge from the organizers. The way to determine the most important client groups for this business is to identify the largest groups in Eindhoven.

Table 2.1: Allochtone Population Figures for Eindhoven

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Population 1-1-96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Indonesians</td>
<td>7059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>6823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>6281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccans</td>
<td>3353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surnames</td>
<td>3250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgians</td>
<td>3216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antillians/Arubans</td>
<td>1744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Englishmen</td>
<td>1178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City Hall
The city hall issues an annual report with the latest figures that identify as of 1-1-96 the following groups as the largest with populations at least above 1000 people.

This concept of this business aims especially at nations whose home countries are located far away from the Netherlands, so that it is impractical for people to return home for big cultural or familial celebrations, in particular weddings. Middle European nations can, for that reason, not be typical clientele for that business. The next criteria for the target customer is to have a cultural background that is very different from the Dutch cultural background. For that reason the Dutch Indonesians (Indonesian, Dutch Indies, Papua New Guinea, Portuguese Timor) can be dropped from the list. The remaining groups are marked in bold letters. Those groups are possible reference groups for the survey. They will first, however, be subject to a more detailed analysis that includes in particular a forecast on future population developments.

The forecast from the city hall is of population size in the year 2010.

Table 2.2: Population Forecasts for 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>6827</td>
<td>9135</td>
<td>+34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccans</td>
<td>3365</td>
<td>5099</td>
<td>+52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surnames</td>
<td>3281</td>
<td>3691</td>
<td>+12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antillians</td>
<td>1755</td>
<td>1767</td>
<td>+ 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City Hall

Thus a considerable increase in the ethnic population will take place within the next 15 years, especially in the Turkish and Moroccan communities which are already the biggest ones.

Since there is no direct way to find out more about the possible size of the wedding market, other constructs have to be used. One possible useful indicator is the figures of singles, excluding the older age groups.
### Table 2.3: Singles Ratio for Foreign Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Singles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccans</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surnames</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>894</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antillians</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: City Hall*

This table shows that the Islamic communities of the Turkish and Moroccan people have about the same low percentage of singles which accounts for around 12%, whereas the two other reference groups, especially the Antillians show a very high number of unmarried people. The most interesting groups from this point of view are again the Turks and the Moroccans since it is in their groups that most people get married at all.

This population analysis of the individual cultural groups in Eindhoven leaves us with the result that the habits of the four groups Turks, Moroccans, Surnames and Antillians have to be investigated in more detail. Special emphasis should be laid onto the Turkish and Moroccan community which could provide a relatively high number of marriages per year.
Chapter III: Questionnaire Results

The questionnaires for the Turkish and Moroccan communities were distributed and evaluated together because of the similarity in arrangement of their weddings. There are no results recorded from the Surinam community since the proceeding interview made clear that that part of the market is virtually closed to people not of that background.

III.i Turkish/Moroccan Community

The total number of completed surveys accounted for eight. In cases where the total responses do not add up to this number then either the respondents had multiple answers or did not respond at all.

1) How often do you attend weddings each year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number Attended</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average: 2.6

2) How many of those weddings were within your own culture?

100% for all respondents

3) If so, approximately how many people were in attendance at a typical wedding?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>325</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average: 297 persons

4) In what kind of facilities was this weddings / receptions held? (i.e. Hall, gymnasium, restaurant, outdoors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gymnasium</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Hall</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria/Restaurant</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5) What kind of decorations were used?
- Flowers, Balloons and Garlands
- Modern
- Music/Band
- Native
- None

6) What kind of food was used and how was it prepared? (i.e. family, caterer, restaurant)

Food: pizza, eggrolls, chicken, several different kinds of cake

Prepared by:          Frequency
Family                66.7%
Moroccan Caterer     33.3%

7) Was alcohol served at this wedding? If so, what type and how heavily was it used?

No 87.5% (Religious Reasons)
Yes 12.5%

8) Can you estimate the costs of this wedding held in Eindhoven?

Cost Range          Responses
f. 15.000 - 20.000  71.4%
f. 20.000 - 25.000  28.6%

9) What was the most difficult part of organizing this wedding?

Responses          Frequency
Everything          33.3%
Band, Room, etc. on the same date 33.3%
The Hall            16.7%
Food               16.7%
10) If there was a person experienced with the needs and traditions of your culture and willing to organize the hall, food, decorations and music, would you take advantage of his service? Why or Why not?

Several thought that it would be a great relief to them.

Yes, If it is not too expensive 83.3%
No 16.7%

III.ii Antillian/Aruban Community

The total number of completed surveys was six. In cases where the total responses do not add up to this number then either the respondents had multiple answers or did not respond at all.

1) How often do you attend weddings each year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number Attended</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average: 2.0

2) How many of those weddings were within your own culture?

100% 66.7%
50% 33.3%

3) If so, approximately how many people were in attendance at a typical wedding?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average: 134 persons

4) In what kind of facilities was this weddings / receptions held? (i.e. Hall, gymnasium, restaurant, outdoors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cafetería/Restaurant</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Hall</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5) What kind of decorations were used?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flowers (all types including edible)</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Decorations</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of different pies and cakes</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowered Arch</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6) What kind of food was used and how was it prepared? (i.e. family, caterer, restaurant)

Typical Antillian Food: Hapjes (and other finger food) pastechi, kala, carbito, stoba (goat meat with rice and vegetables), banaan baked, omelet, salad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepared by:</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caterer</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7) Was alcohol served at this wedding? If so, what type and how heavily was it used?

Yes 100% (in great quantities)

No 0

8) Can you estimate the costs of this wedding held in Eindhoven?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Range</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f. 15.000 - 20.000</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. 5.000 - 15.000</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9) What was the most difficult part of organizing this wedding?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Servers</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band, Room, etc. on the same date</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hall</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cake</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10) If there was a person experienced with the needs and traditions of your culture and willing to organize the hall, food, decorations and music, would you take advantage of his service? Why or Why not?

Yes, If it is not too expensive 80%
No 20%

Figure 3.1 Wedding attendance by community
Figure 3.2 Wedding size by culture

Figure 3.3 Wedding location by culture
Chapter IV: Results

The first thing that we have understood from the interviews and the survey results is that there is a great deal of variation between the different cultures regarding their views on the usefulness of the proposed service. A good example of this would be the difference of acceptance between the Surinam community and the Moroccan community. The lack of acceptance in the Surinames community stemmed from the fact that a non-Surinames caterer would not be well received. Therefore success in this market would be hard to achieve. Another example would be the difference between the different age groups approached; the older generations overwhelmingly rejecting the idea while the youth see its advantages.

A recurring issue was that of cost. All groups seem to be concerned with the cost, feeling that a wedding in their culture could not be performed by a third party without the cost rising above an acceptable level. These individuals have created a preliminary expectation on the business profit margin and have decided that it may be more than is acceptable. Because of this hurdle, it will be necessary to address these concerns when marketing this idea.

An interpretation of the survey results will provide necessary insight into the problem at hand. When discussing individual questions, knowledge gained from personal interviews will also be inserted to supplement the survey results:

1) How often do you attend weddings each year?
This question was designed to be the least personal and least intrusive of the ten in order to create a positive atmosphere. When asked the number of weddings attended per year the majority answered between two and five. In this category, the older respondents went to fewer, while the younger peoples went to as many as ten. In the Surnames and Turkish culture, for example, it is common for people walking by the wedding hall to come in and join the celebration (without an invitation). Students that were talked to claimed to do this very often. The average number of weddings per year can then be placed at approximately three per person. It is for this frequent visitations that weddings in those particular cultures tend to be extraordinarily large. This also inserts an uncertainty factor in the computation of the number of
expected guests which has to be dealt with by the caterer by flexible food providing.

2) **How many of those weddings were within your own culture?**
The number of weddings attended each year that were in one's own culture was usually the exact same as the number in question one. The significance of this is easily seen to be that the different cultural groups in Eindhoven seem to celebrate weddings of their own culture mostly or even exclusively. Again, the younger members of each group are more liberal and attend the weddings of other groups more often. The Moroccan and Jamaican sectors definitely went to more extra-cultural weddings than the Antillian and Surinam communities. In the Antillian culture, for example, weddings are partially arranged by the families and community festivals and celebrations are usually closed events to those not of that culture. These responses, though, indicate commonalities in each culture’s wedding day and catering needs, which is beneficial information when catering to such events.

3) **If so, approximately how many people were in attendance at a typical wedding?**
The attendance at different weddings in different cultures is of significant interest to someone catering and organizing these events. The range in all of the cultures was between a low of 100 (in the Antillian community) and a high of 500 (in the Moroccan community). Again, there is a large difference between cultures with the Moroccan and Surnames communities having the larger weddings (between three and five hundred people). As argued in question one, the larger the attendance, the higher the uncertainty there is in predicting the actual number of guests.

4) **In what kind of facilities was this weddings / receptions held? (i.e. Hall, gymnasium, restaurant, outdoors)**
The responses to this question are more a reflection on the number of people attending the wedding and the amount the family are willing to spend on the wedding. It should be noted here that though there is quite a large disparity between communities on amount of money spent on individual weddings, the same variance occurs within individual communities. This is due to the fact that there are always some families better off than others. The question asks where weddings in certain cultures are held.
In the Surinam, Turkish, and Moroccan cultures, their larger weddings require a larger facility. Usually a hall or gymnasium is used and can usually be found to be economic. Restaurants are also a common reception and dinner area but are usually used at smaller weddings where the family can afford the luxury or when the restaurant is owned by a member of the family. Here, a clear market is identified where the family can afford a restaurant and their family does not own one. This situation was identified twice in interviews and may be fairly common. At the same time, people who held wedding dinners and receptions at family owned restaurants will probably not take advantage of a wedding catering service and are thus a lost market.

The Antillian community usually uses a restaurant, hall, or hotel for their weddings. Again, here one might benefit from the sector that is willing to spend a little more on the wedding and does not own the facility. There is no market to crack from the families that own a restaurant or from the portion of weddings that are held at home. The most common reason given in the interviews for holding the wedding at home was the cost involved in renting another venue.

5) What kind of decorations were used?
The decoration question will provide insight into the amount of preparation required at individual weddings as well as some of the cultural traits and the decorating costs. It was discovered that the most significant decoration at any of the inter-cultural weddings is the flowers. Along with being the most expensive, the floral arrangements are the one decoration that is common to all cultures. It was discovered in an interview that in an Antillian wedding the cake was the biggest expense, costing over 850 guilders. The most important thing taken from this question’s responses were that flexibility will be a necessity when organizing wedding decorations. This flexibility will be due to differing cultural expectations, different budgets, different tastes and differing locations. There were more than one instance in the Surnames and Turkish culture were no decorations were used at all, for example. However, where decoration is important a third party would gain major cost advantages by simply storing decoration used for previous weddings.

The interviews also revealed that the decision about how the decorations were placed and which decorations were required was ongoing for three to six months before the actual wedding. Although this is tricky to manage for a
third party due to missing expertise in the specific cultures it is as well the point where a third party could relieve the family from a big work load. An option here to control this problem may involve offering a number of decoration packages that could then be manipulated to order in the final weeks. In the case of Moroccan weddings, where weddings could last two or three days, the decorations for each day and for differing locations must also be taken into account. The main idea to be learned from this question’s responses is that decorations are primarily contingent on the individual’s tastes and the family budget.

6) What kind of food was used and how was it prepared? (i.e. family, caterer, restaurant)
This question deals with the types of foods that are typical at certain weddings. Here, as well as in the interviews, it seems apparent that there are a great variety of ethnic dishes served at the weddings and it is the food that people often think back on when remembering a wedding. Because of this, great emphasis is placed on the diets of certain cultural groups and the importance of quality. A large hurdle for a hired caterer would be to convince the clients of his quality and knowledge of the various ethnic dishes. However, the preparation of ethnic dishes requires extensive knowledge which often includes rules about actual cooking techniques and ingredients. This question’s main purpose was to discover who was responsible for the catering of wedding receptions in the past.

What was discovered in all of the groups studied was that the food was primarily prepared by the families involved. The reason for this is two-fold. First, families do their own food preparation because the cost to hire a third party is seen to be too high. Whether this is justified is not certain, but in the interviews it was revealed that for at least two of the weddings where the family prepared their own food, the family actually searched to find the price of outsourcing. Similarly, three others said that the family they knew who prepared their own food did so without researching how much it would cost to hire someone else to do the work. The families that actually looked at the prices of caterers can be considered as a potential market, assuming the caterer can provide the service at a low enough cost.

The second reason the families give for preparing the food for their own weddings is their lack of confidence in a third party. This could be a lack of
confidence in the caterers knowledge of the different dishes or in the caterers unknown ability. This reinforces the need for a good reputation in the catering field as well as a large referral base for the caterer to draw from. The international organizations contacted as well as the organizations were interviews were held are an excellent reference start and reference group who have agreed to support any individual seeking to exclusively cater in this field.

7) Was alcohol served at this wedding? If so, what type and how heavily was it used?
The question of alcohol is a good indicator of overall cost of the wedding as well as the amount of work that has to be expended obtaining a license and the alcohol itself. The amount of alcohol consumed at weddings was found to be most dependent on the specific religion of the families getting married. The use of alcohol is prohibited in certain cultures due to religious constraints and even the temptation of the availability of alcohol must in some cases be avoided. Because of this fact, a large part of the profit margin taken in by ordinary Dutch catering services is lost. Alcohol markup is usually the way catering companies in Holland cover costs.

Unfortunately, in weddings such as this, the cost for the meals and organization have to be increased to above normal levels. The survey indicates that a small majority of the cultural weddings taking place in Eindhoven are indeed dry, with the exception of the Antillian community. Variation in this aspect of wedding catering are minimal due to the prevalence of a predominant religion in a cultural community.

8) Can you estimate the costs of this wedding held in Eindhoven?
Question eight probes into the costs of weddings held in Eindhoven and though the questionnaires provide good information, the interviews turned out to be the most instructive. Because of all of the variables and hidden costs absorbed by the family, the questionnaires could only make their queries general. We learned from the interviews that the range of costs for weddings could start at a conservative 4000 guilders and rise as high as 60000 guilders.

The Moroccans seem to typically have the higher priced weddings due to the large number of guests, the number of days for the celebration (three
usually). Also of great importance in these weddings is the fact that the bride wears more than one dress per day and that these ceremonial dresses have to be rented. The rental charges alone could rise up to 3000 guilders alone. On the other end of the spectrum is one particular wedding that was reported to cost 4000 guilders. The wedding was held at home with the catering done by the family. The expenses that seem to arrive in the more expensive weddings are usually for fixed price items (dresses, halls, alcohol), and usually not services. Their willingness to consider services provides a market for an ethnic catering business. Wedding costs are the most important factor in deciding the feasibility of this venture and while a profit is possible in a 4000 guilder wedding, it will be negligible. The preparation behind any intercultural wedding will be so extensive and require such a significant amount of resources that the weddings under the typical average of 15 000 guilders may not support the expense.

9) What was the most difficult part of organizing this wedding?
Some cultures were reluctant to answer this question feeling that the weddings responsibility lies solely on the family. The most difficult parts of the wedding to organize turned out to be the parts that are typically organized by others in "normal" Dutch weddings. These include bookings for the room, the bands, the serving personnel, and the hectic preparation of the food. These are all areas that have been outsourced by families in many individual weddings and could be taken advantage of by an cultural catering and wedding organizing service. For other families, this is the source of wedding tradition, where it is the family whose hard work and toil represent commitment and a gift to the wedding couple.

A particular difficulty seems to be finding a hall that can support a large number of people in the summer. Hotels are available, but only allow their catered food to be served and served at an unreasonable cost. Bands are usually a individually chosen service whose timetables are usually busy. The bands commonly come from around the whole of Holland since few can meet the family's specific requirements. The compilation of an extensive list may facilitate band selection and availability for a party organizer in Eindhoven.

The cake design is important in some cultures because it fulfills a focal role in the reception but is also dependent on personal customer taste and desires. This is one area that should be done by an experienced baker but that baker
could be located by a wedding coordinator. Some respondents also referred to the need for serving personnel and reliable help, which could easily be supplied by a good caterer. The whole job of wedding coordinator relies on the response to this question and the answers are the jobs that people won’t mind paying for.

10) If there was a person experienced with the needs and traditions of your culture and willing to organize the hall, food, decorations and music, would you take advantage of his service? Why or Why not?

Question ten asks if the respondent would take advantage of this service if it were available. This question gauges the respondent’s acceptance of the service if it were available. The responses that we got back were favorable in all sectors with the exception of the Surnames community. There was a marked rejection of the idea of someone outside the family who lacked specific experience and background to organize something so special and important. The cultural traditions of the wedding couldn’t be performed by a third party because the tradition itself is that the family take care of the wedding.

In addition, there was a favorable response received from the younger respondents as compared to the older ones. This is not difficult to conceive considering diminishing traditional values throughout all cultures. In the cultures that responded favorably, it was evident that a third party caterer and organizer would be considered if the costs were less than if they tried to do it themselves. This is an important condition because the groups don’t put a price on the effort and trouble exerted when they put the wedding on themselves. Therefore, convenience is far less of an important condition than price. The job of a new caterer would be to cut his profit margin by a great deal or convince the family that their effort and time during the wedding are worth something. Neither task is easy or attractive. The advantage once a reputation comes out is that the families will discover that trading their time for the caterer’s price is worth it.

It now seems that the cost of the catering of the wedding is the most important consideration for a family in their wedding. The capacity and ability of the caterer to perform to cultural and traditional expectations is next and it is an important concern involving trust on both sides. The building of a
reputation concerning both of these issues will predict the success or failure of this endeavor.
Chapter V: Conclusion

V.i Options

After consideration of the information, there are three main categories of options for the client as far as the scope of the concept is concerned:

1) Do not pursue this concept at this time
2) Pursue this concept in a more limited fashion
3) Pursue this concept as intended and/or with a larger scope

The first option of course is always present. It may be that the client will decide that his concept is not realizable for the amount of work or costs it may require. In this case, no action should be taken at this time.

The second option is more flexible. It suggests that there is a possibility for success with this venture, but perhaps not in its original form. Many people surveyed complained about the lack of help in organizing the celebration or the of trouble finding a hall or band. The client in this case could work by helping plan or offering advice or connections but not actually having responsibility for the entire affair. One way this could happen is by purchasing a hall which would then be rented out (many people found halls difficult to come by in Eindhoven) and by providing references for caterers or music but offering no further service. By picking out one of the many aspects that such parties have and making it easier on the families to unload just part of the burden, it is likely that more people would take advantage of such a service where they would be leery of giving up total control to someone outside the family.

The third option would be to proceed in full with the original intent to provide a full service wedding coordination for ethnic celebrations. A variation on this option would be to broaden the view slightly so that in the event that there would not be enough purely ethnic business to keep the organization running then the client could do traditional Dutch weddings as well while still advertising the "other" side of the business. This would allow good publicity outlets while still ensuring that the bills get paid.
V.ii Recommendation

This report’s recommendations reflect the conclusions of its researchers and does not claim to be ignorant of circumstance. It should be a reference to be used when formulating a final business plan.

It is recommended that the third option is chosen to pursue this concept as intended and provide the complete service of a wedding coordinator. However, it is important that initial stages of the business venture focus on three ethnic minority target groups and should neglect all others until those markets become feasible. This will limit the vast amount of cultural knowledge that the role of inter-cultural caterer entails in addition to focusing marketing strategies. The target groups should be the Moroccan, Turkish, and Antillian communities. The Turkish and Moroccan cultures are the most positive markets as well as being very similar in food and other catering considerations. The Antillian community is added to the group of targeted cultures because it is the one culture where our feedback indicated no conclusive forecast. This community would be an excellent test group to allow for insight on market expansion. The community was a little apprehensive on the venture’s concept and benefits. Success in this group would be a strong indicator of success in future target markets.

The two top groups targeted have in common the highest profit potential of the differing groups researched. The average wedding size and consumption rate make these three attractive markets. All three groups have more liberal outlooks on the outsourcing of wedding catering duties. It is recommended also that limited resources be allocated to the business during conception. Added to the fact that the success rate of new businesses (especially in the food and hospitality industry) is relatively low, overall reluctance to hire a caterer without referrals or a solid reputation calls for caution. Investment should be reserved until the all important six month trial period when more solid forecasts can be made.

With these recommendations the objectives of this market research have been fulfilled. Feasibility in the Eindhoven market has been assessed to be limited in the number of ethnic minority groups that would consider using the proposed service. A strategy was formulated to access the limited market on
the basis of this research. The final decision to the format of the venture initiation is in the hands of the study’s recipient.

*Good luck with all your endeavors no matter what route you follow!*
Appendix A: Format for Cultural Center Interviews

I. Introduction
   A. Explanations of the project managers
   B. Explanation of the Bedrijfskundewinkel
   C. Explanation of the benefits of the study

II. Group Background
   A. Size and function
   B. What kinds of activities do they organize
   C. Have they ever been associated with the planning of weddings or other formal cultural festivals
   D. If so, How did they do it?

III. Personal Experiences with cultural weddings
   A. Location
   B. Decorations
   C. Food
   D. Alcohol
   E. Attendance
   F. Cost

IV. Would the organization be supportive of such a service?
V. Does the representative think there is a market for this service?
Appendix B: Bedrijfskundewinkel Survey

tel: (040) 2473415

This survey is being conducted by a student organization in the Technical University. We are doing research on native weddings which are organized in Eindhoven. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated and will provide information which would be of great use in the establishment of new minority-oriented businesses. Thank you for your time!

I. How often do you attend weddings each year?
II. How many of those weddings were within your own culture?
III. If so, approximately how many people were in attendance at a typical wedding?
IV. In what kind of facilities was this weddings / receptions held? (i.e. Hall, gymnasium, restaurant, outdoors)
V. What kind of decorations were used?
VI. What kind of food was used and how was it prepared? (i.e. family, caterer, restaurant)
VII. Was alcohol served at this wedding? If so, what type and how heavily was it used?
VIII. Can you estimate the costs of this wedding held in Eindhoven?
IX. What was the most difficult part of organizing this wedding?
X. If there was a person experienced with the needs and traditions of your culture and willing to organize the hall, food, decorations and music, would you take advantage of his service? Why or Why not?