Hello. My name is Kimmo Uschanoff, and I work as the Head Job Coach at the Sampola Work Center under the Finnish Association of the Deaf Service Foundation. We have had several highly successful projects with HAMK (Häme University of Applied Sciences), and we plan to continue these collaborations.

But before we delve into that, I’d like to tell you a bit about our Sampola Work Center. It was established back in the 1960s, and today, it has grown to the point where nearly one hundred people work there daily, including about 70 clients. We refer to them as clients, although some of them are employees of the work center.

In addition to the clients, there are around 20 to 25 staff members, primarily supervisors and senior supervisors. At Sampola, we’ve built a solid reputation and are well-known as a reliable operator. We are a non-profit organization, so you can infer that our pricing is quite reasonable.

Among our clients, we are recognized as the best-supported workplace, particularly for both deaf and hearing individuals who require additional communication support. We offer high-quality services with the aim of being close to people, continually developing our services, and also bringing societal impact to the forefront.

Some phrases that accurately describe us are: a good partner, professional, friendly, socially responsible, evolving, ecological, and I dare say, even trendy. This ties into an upcoming project we are working on. Our goal now, where we need assistance, is to increase our visibility and awareness. We want to be more present in the media, especially on social media, which is very much of the current era, but also through traditional websites, to help spread our message more widely.

We have three main target groups. The first group consists of our primary clients—those who want to work with us. These are typically people who have difficulty finding employment, including many individuals with mild intellectual disabilities, whose main source of income is a pension but who still wish to engage in meaningful work.

The second large group is the business sector, which provides us with various subcontracting tasks, such as packaging, EAN code replacements, and other types of assembly and counting work. These are our main products in that sense, but for this, we particularly need local businesses, although some of our partners are not local, and we arrange the logistics accordingly.

The third major customer group, which is essentially a major funder, used to be the municipal sector. However, currently, municipalities no longer contract directly with us; instead, the negotiations are now with the well-being regions. Therefore, marketing to these well-being regions is a big deal for us. One of our challenges is that we currently lack a trendy logo.

We don’t have a logo that we’d really like, and while I’m speaking about Sampola, I’ll jump to our parent organization, the Finnish Association of the Deaf Service Foundation. They updated their website a few years ago, but we’re not satisfied with it. So, the idea of revamping the entire foundation’s visual identity is also possible, at least in theory. I think that since this idea has already been communicated to our headquarters in Helsinki, it might start to gain momentum.

Regarding the logo, we would be very pleased if we could get our own unique logo. Since we don’t have the expertise to design it ourselves and tend to produce the same kind of sketches, we hope that a large group of students would have enough ideas to create that perfect design that could serve as the foundation and Sampola’s logo for the next 50 years.

We have an online store, and while there is some activity, it is relatively small-scale. The issue may be that it’s not very appealing as an online store, and perhaps the payment options need improvement. Additionally, we need to consider how the store will function in the future. I have the impression that with a single click, customers should be almost at the checkout, but that’s not the case for us currently. Updating the product catalog on our online store has also always been a challenge; it should be easier than it currently is.

Regarding our products, we offer various sustainable items, such as birdhouses, insect hotels, and various recycled material products, including bags and hygiene pouches. Our partners include various sports associations, one of the largest being the Ski Association, which provides the materials we use to make these recycled products. Additionally, at Sampola, we have five different departments where we do subcontracting work, and we also repair and restore furniture. We have an upholstery workshop, and we still handcraft small-scale products like brushes. It would be ideal for our online store and much of our video material to be available in three languages—Finnish, Swedish, and English—to make it more contemporary.

That’s pretty much everything. Thank you.