

Module 4, Session 4

Slide 1 - Customer service and Communication: Session 4

Introduction to Customer service and Communication session 4

Slide 2 - Session 4: Social Media Marketing Proficiency

This session will cover the themes of Social Media, Social Media Marketing, Social Media Platforms, Visual Marketing, Branding, Sustainability Marketing and Social Media Optimisation.

Slide 3 - Social Media Marketing Proficiency

In this session we will learn how to efficiently utilise social media platforms and websites, how to implementing customer communication tools to announce and promote menu changes or special offers, how to effectively reaching target audiences and how to maximize promotional impact.

Slide 4 - Importance of Social Media Marketing Proficiency

Social media marketing importance is rapidly increasing and is becoming the main entry way for new customers as well as an effective and relatively cheap promotion tool for your establishment. With the ease of reaching a broad circle of potential customers quickly it can have a significant impact on success and growth your company and brand reputation, but it comes with pitfalls you need to be aware of and avoid.

Next to a comprehensive, up-to-date and easy to navigate business website, internet presence on general social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and specialised platforms related to tourism and hospitality such as TripAdvisor are commonly used by food establishments to attract guests and widen the customer base.

Picture source:

https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/social-media-marketing-concept-marketing-with-applications_36295046.htm

Slide 5 - Advantages of Using Social Media

- You not only reach many people – you reach specific target audience of people in your area, who are interested in the product you are providing; the effect can be dual – you reach the consumers who are actively searching for a place to eat (or a catering service) as well as promote yourself to potential future customers.
- You can share as little or as much as you want to and feel that fits your business needs – only basic information (opening times, location, types of dishes you serve ...) or details of menu and prices, promotions, quick updates, photos of dishes...
- The inter-connectivity of the media also makes it extremely well suited for the inclusion in the sustainability initiatives.
- Social media is one of the fastest ways to keep guests informed about your food establishment, which means that relevant updates/changes can be instant and easy to distribute. This is a bonus for sharing changes to basic information (like opening times) but also uniquely suited for promotions.

- Active use of social media networks and presence of your company brand on social media platforms pushes your business up in the searchability rankings on all major search engines and on social media sites themselves.

Picture source: https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/medium-shot-people-addicted-social-media_33300298.htm

Slide 6 – Instant communication channel between you and your (potential) customers

Social media accounts and presence on social media platforms as an active user provide a convenient communication channel for your customers, which allows for growth of brand recognition, fosters close customer-business relations and an easy way of dealing with customer communication (questions, complaints resolution).

You must take into account that this is a communication channel for technologically competent user base so you should still provide options for the population that is less adept (or less willing) to use social media (and internet in general).

Picture source: https://www.freepik.com/free-psd/sales-discount-facebook-template_35308395.htm

Slide 7 - Visual Marketing

The emergence of Instagram gave birth to a collection of so called 'Food Instagrammer' accounts who solely (or mostly) provide 'Instagrammable' (visually appealing and enticing) pictures of dishes and beverages. This has brought on many food trends that drive consumer demand – from speciality drinks and meals, to preparation and serving methods.

The food culture of social media encourages its users to post pictures and reviews about their experiences in restaurants, which provides a convenient ways of promotion that is not only completely free (as you don't even have to take and post the photos yourself) but also adds an air of authenticity, since it comes directly from customers and is as such treated as more of a factual and credible representation compared to an idealised form of promotional photos a restaurant would provide on their own website or social media.

Picture source: https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/restaurant-business-banner-template-vector-with-ldquo-yes-we-rsquo-re-open-rdquo_17223336.htm

Slide 8 - Popular Social Media Platforms

- Promoting on social media platforms is effective strategy for gaining a competitive edge over your competitors (and is quickly turning into a way to keep up with the industry leaders). Local areas (or countries) often have local social media platforms in local language, but here we will present some of the currently most popular social media platforms globally (and also in the EU zone). Please take into account that different countries use social media platforms slightly differently (as far as the % of use is concerned) so check what are most popular social media platforms for your location and target audience.
- One of the first widely used platforms used for food industry marketing purposes were Facebook and YouTube and as internet developed, they came out on top. In recent times they have been eclipsed by newer platforms in most of the EU, but they are still widely used by older segments of population and so remain relevant in our context.
- Another platform that grew with food industry and trends is Instagram. This photo-focused platform lends well to food promotion and ease of use as well as a wide net of users enables promotion to more trend-conscious crowds.

You should create and actively use social media platforms that most closely relate to your target customer base (of course, if possible you should use as many as you can to cover all your bases, but if you have limited resources and time, you should start with the ones that fit your current (or desired) image best. Undeveloped and untended social media account provide little value, so it's best to develop social media account one by one – in this case more can be less, if it comes with more involvement for the social media accounts you do use.

The ways in which you engage with your audience depend a lot on the social media platform you use and the audience, but the interaction should be open and constant – the (potential) customer needs to know your social media account will provide feedback and relevant information or they will fall out of use. For this purpose it is best to delegate the task of maintaining your social media account to a specific tech-savvy employee (or more of them if the size of your business and work process allows for it) to keep the account current.

1. Make your business easy to contact
2. Update relevant information about your establishment/business
3. Keep your account visibly active

Let's learn some tricks to set up successful social media platforms!

- Setting up an account: you should set up a business account. This will enable you access to analytical data and ad campaigns. It also establishes the professional nature of your business.
- Instagram is a very visually focused social media platform. The focus will be pictures of food, events, people (always ask for permission and have your staff sign a waiver for promotional pictures). Your Instagram bio should be short and to the point – people are not on this platform to read, they want to see interacting and eye-catching pictures. Be succinct and professional but still try to present the spirit and tone of your establishment.
- Focus on your target audience: consider the type of people you want to attract. Search Instagram for profiles that match your customer persona. Follow these accounts to get inspiration and help you to reach your target market.
- Stick to your brand: if your brand is already established, keep to visual guidelines. Keep things consistent – this goes for colour themes, editing cuts, descriptions, hashtags...
- *Find best times to post and post at those times consistently – preferably daily. You also have an option to schedule your posts so you don't need to deal with this every day.*

Pay attention to your brand visuals and consistency

Slide 12 – Facebook

- Facebook target audience is generally slightly older (older Millennials, Gen X and even older – this was first global intergenerational social media platform that wasn't used just by segments of population).
- As with Instagram, you shouldn't set your page up as a personal account but as a „Local Business or Place“.
- You can give editing rights for it to multiple people. For that, this future editors will need personal Facebook accounts that you add (under professional dashboard you choose option Manage and view access).
- Add your location, contact information, and website link to your Facebook, you can also link your Instagram page, to make yourself more accessible.
- On Facebook you can post less frequently as on Instagram, but still be careful to post enough to engage your audience (couple of times a week or at least couple of times a month, so that the account doesn't appear abandoned).
- Facebook is ideal place announce promotions, special offers (for example 50% off for items that are nearing expiry date or you have in oversupply).
- Use language with the tone that is consistent with your brand. Your main page should represent your business, with professional main photo (a signature dish, action scene from your food establishment or picture of your food establishment).
- With your account you can join local food&beverage and tourism related groups and interact with them (and your customers) to increase your account and thus your brand visibility.

Slide 13 – TikTok

- TikTok is currently most popular short-form video hosting platform. It has been downloaded 4.7 billion times worldwide by the end of 2023 and has been a most downloaded app in recent years.
 - Biggest segment of adult users is in the 18-24 age range*
 - TikTok is a great marketing tool for fast promotions since it's a social media platform users usually interact with multiple times daily, and also use a multipurpose search & entertainment app.
 - You can repurpose TikTok content for Instagram Reels and Facebook Stories or Posts.
 - Remember to stay active in the comments – interact with your audience! Try to find a member of staff who is already familiar with the platform to manage your account (this can be a promotion opportunity for younger employees).
 - Explore other restaurant accounts for inspiration for your TikTok themes and participate in TikTok trends.
1. Young audience
 2. TikTok trends
 3. Showcase dining experience

Slide 14 – Growing Social Media Account

Growing a social media account means establishing an account in the eyes of prospective audience on your chosen platform. Results are measurable: your account traffic, likes, subscribed users and number of users who interact with the account and the frequency and number of interactions. Keep in mind that usually promoting restaurants and attracting audience takes time, but it should get easier with time and growth. There are tools to artificially

enhance traffic and you can pay for promotion of your account but in the end what you really need are actual people as your user base.

Here are some guidelines for growing your account:

- **Visual content**

There's a saying 'We eat with our eyes' and that makes social media apps extremely useful for food and beverage business promotion. Post eye catching photos of your dishes/beverages and highlight your customers' photos (but be careful not to 'steal' photos – always ask for permission and credit the customers unless asked otherwise. Don't antagonise your customers unnecessarily.

- **Interact with your audience**

Reply to customers, always politely and with appropriate level of familiarity – follow the customers lead! Always remember that there are many eyes watching – you won't just lose one customer with one bad interaction – it can turn into a landslide. Build anticipation and give people a reason to keep coming back. Post promotions, interactive polls, news...

- **Post frequently**

Post quality content frequently, at regular intervals (check the interactions and adapt the posting schedule). You can use scheduling to keep the posting regular even in the busy periods or in the offline time.

Slide 15 – Establish a Brand

- The point of the media presence is establishing or growing your business brand – keep consistent through all used social media platforms (and online and offline advertising venues).
- What makes your business special and attractive to customers? This can be location, signature dishes, special promotions...
- Dedicate specific hashtags that will refer to your business and will be used for all outside photos.
- To present your business and sustainability friendly present sustainable initiatives and food waste decreasing promotions.

Visability of your brand

Logo

Your colours

#UniformHashtag

Signature Dishes

Location Photos

Slide 16 – Involve your Employees

- Your employees probably already use social media platforms in their free time – put up incentives to get them to promote your business with likes and reposts.
- You can dedicate a small portion of their scheduled work time to social media promotion or give small rewards for social media promotion.
- Suggest to your employees to post photos and video clips of the product and business in action with your business hashtags on their social media channels.
- Like and repost their posts, since this can give you feedback about what you are doing right/wrong.

Picture source: https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/medium-shot-women-scanning-gr-code_24747967.htm



Slide 17 – Working with Influencers

- A popular way to promote your brand is to work with social media platform influencers – this are the modern day version of food critics in a form of an ad.
- Popular platforms for influencers are Instagram, YouTube, TikTok for younger generations – but many are active over several social media platforms, as well as their own blogs.
- If you decide to use this venue of marketing, check the influencer beforehand – firstly, that they fit your brand (you wouldn't want to work with someone who would bring you negative image) and secondly that they reach the target audience you want to engage. There's no great advantage to working with someone whose audience lives a half a world away or who has little followers.
- You can reach out to your local influencers and offer free meals for promotion on their social media accounts.
- With influencers you can also collaborate on initiatives – food waste prevention is a popular topic, so search out influencers who are partial to the theme and set up a joint action plan!

Slide 18 - Search Engine Optimization

Search engine optimization increases your search ranking and improves your chances of consumers finding your restaurant online. High ranking presents your business front to potential customers searching for places to eat in their area.

You can use paid optimisation services or buy ads directly from Google or other platforms, but with some work you can also optimise your search ranking yourself, by following the steps below:

1. Define your target audience.
2. Set up a Google Business profile and profiles on other dining related platforms (for example TripAdvisor, Yelp)
3. Use targeted key words to attract traffic to your sites.

For more, read the following article:

[Restaurant SEO: What It Is & 11 Tips for Better Rankings](https://www.semrush.com/blog/restaurant-seo/?kw=&cmp=EE_SRCH_DSA_Blog_EN&label=dsa_pagefeed&Network=g&Device=c&utm_content=683809340380&kwid=dsa-2264710307245&cmpid=18361923498&agpid=156456448517&BU=Core&extid=105138959479&adpos=&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjw-uK0BhC0ARIsANQtgGMT8Ym3vyn-_hYNTqGNjJ4Ow_f5_NKZqeXu2pgGD8xaA_OvKCl6bLwaAtO4EALw_wcB) (link: https://www.semrush.com/blog/restaurant-seo/?kw=&cmp=EE_SRCH_DSA_Blog_EN&label=dsa_pagefeed&Network=g&Device=c&utm_content=683809340380&kwid=dsa-2264710307245&cmpid=18361923498&agpid=156456448517&BU=Core&extid=105138959479&adpos=&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjw-uK0BhC0ARIsANQtgGMT8Ym3vyn-_hYNTqGNjJ4Ow_f5_NKZqeXu2pgGD8xaA_OvKCl6bLwaAtO4EALw_wcB)

Slide 19 - Social Media Posts Content Suggestions

- Involve customers – repost and like content involving your business, answer questions, leave positive comments; never leave negative comments!
- Post menus, promotions, discounts...
- Post high-quality pictures of signature food items.
- Post selected recipes or cooking tips from your chef.
- Share all relevant changes (hours, new locations, vacation/closed time, changes to the menu).
- Present your staff and show behind-the-scenes shots and videos.

Slide 20 - Sustainability as a Marketing Factor?

- Sustainability marketing promotes sustainable, environmentally-friendly products or services. The practice also extends to the promotion of a company's brand values and socially responsible practices and sourcing goods from fair trade and organic suppliers.
- We can define sustainability marketing as any form of marketing that focuses on a businesses sustainability practices. Businesses practice sustainability marketing to better connect with a customer base that is increasingly aware of environmental issues.
- Sustainability Marketing can be very efficiently practiced online. Access to a wide pool of consumers and ease of focusing on target audience and target issues make internet and social media platforms ideal environment for presenting your company as a sustainable business.

Slide 21 - Sustainability as a Marketing Tool

- Food and drink consumption uses significant resources and produces great amount of waste, but with growing emphasis on environmental responsibility, the food establishments are beginning to use sustainable production methods to attract new customers.
- Sustainable food production and consumption practices as well as an increasing demand for food products that prioritize ethical, ecological, and social considerations are a big decision driver for a wide section of consumers. With the emphasis on general sustainability, connected with the environmental crisis, this section is growing.

Environmental responsibility can result in beneficial commercial outcomes as a result of customers switching to or being loyal to organisations that they judge as being environmentally responsible.

The desire to satisfy the environmental concerns of customers has encouraged several organisations to adopt environmentally sustainable production and marketing standards."

[Environmentally sustainable food production and marketing: Opportunity or hype?, by British Food Journal 108, AUG 2006](#)

Slide 22 - Influence Factors of Sustainability

Sustainable Food Consumption market is being influenced by various factors:

- **Health Trends:** Consumers prioritize 'natural', organic, chemical free and genetically unmodified foods.
- **Growing consumer awareness:** A rising awareness of the environmental and health impacts of food production encourages consumers to seek sustainable and eco-friendly options.
- **Ethical considerations:** Demands for fair trade ingredients and animal cruelty free food create a new market for ethically sourced food.
- **Government Initiatives:** Through policies and incentives EU commission and national as well as local government bodies promote sustainable and environmentally friendly food production with big emphasis on reducing food waste.
- **Business Opportunity:** Sustainability might be sometimes harder to implement in its initial phase, but long term it can bring several economic benefits related to saving and more efficient organisation of processes.
- **Corporate Responsibility:** Sustainability has been one of the main themes in corporate world, relating both to general population consciousness shift and previously mentioned government initiatives.

Environment Friendly And Sustainable Food Market size is expected to be worth around USD 170.8 Bn by 2032 from USD 95 Bn in 2022, growing at a CAGR of 6.2% during the forecast period from 2023 to 2032.

We are observing a global shift toward environmental sustainability in all industries, including the food industry. As consumers become more aware of the impact their choices have on the planet, the environment friendly and sustainable food market has received a great deal of attention in recent years.“

[*Environment Friendly And Sustainable Food Market Report,*](#)

by MarketResearch.biz, Aug 2023

Slide 23 - Some Best Practice Examples and Tutorials

- [23 SOCIAL MEDIA IDEAS FOR RESTAURANTS](#)
- [The Guide to Restaurant Social Media Marketing \[+ 14 Examples\]](#)
- [9 Tips on How to Create the Best Restaurant Social Media Campaigns](#)
- [Restaurant Social Media Marketing: Ultimate Guide](#)
- [7 Reasons Why Social Media is Important for Your Food Business](#)

What are some of the ideas that you could you use in your business?

Slide 24 – Thank you!

Thank you!

