

Volodymyr Piddubnyi, Doctor of Technical Science, Professor,
Department of Mechatronics and Packaging Technology, NUFT,
Kyiv

Karina Palamarek, Candidate of Technical Sciences, Associate Professor,

Konon Bagrii, Candidate of Geographic Sciences, Associate Professor,

Liubov Strutynska, Senior Lecturer,

Chernivtsi Institute of Trade and Economics of KNUTE,
Chernivtsi

THE IMPORTANCE OF MARKETING RESEARCH FOR THE SUCCESS OF RESTAURANT BUSINESS

The restaurant business is booming, especially in cross-border regions, which is the result of high profitability in the industry. The restaurant business is eager to invest heavily, and the growing market makes it possible to "survive" and grow new businesses in the industry. However, unfortunately, statistics shows that every fourth of the open institutions ceases to exist during the first year of its activity [1]. Many closed restaurant projects are at the heart of a range of problem areas: from low levels of service and incompetent staff to gaps in management skills. This problem can be solved by developing a quality development strategy for restaurants in the market for the first time in operation.

From the development of such a development strategy, management must have a clear understanding of the competitive advantages of their institution compared to similar enterprises. marketing research on restaurant business can appear to be a source of such information.

In our opinion, marketing research is the key to the success of a restaurant project. In a general sense, marketing research is any research activity that meets the needs of marketing. That is, marketing research involves collecting and analyzing the data needed for marketing activities. Marketing research is an analytical process that involves formulating a problem, justifying the directions of its solution, through gathering and processing necessary information and developing recommendations for solving the problem in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing activities [2, p.200].

Conditionally marketing research is divided into qualitative and quantitative. The first include group focus, in-depth interviewing, expert surveys. The second are mass surveys, questionnaires, monitoring.

Qualitative research is used for the initial research of a marketing problem (for example, to investigate the purpose of visiting a particular institution) and assumes a small volume of problem under study, but the results of qualitative research cannot be represented in quantitative form.

Qualitative methods involve the collection of information in a free form; they focus not on statistical dimensions but on understanding, explaining, and interpreting empirical data; they are a source of hypothesis and productive ideas. The purpose of qualitative research methods is to obtain intelligence, not a quantitative distribution of opinions. Qualitative methods do not use numbers but words to explain and interpret concepts. In other words, they do not answer the questions "how much", "how" and "why".

Quantitative studies are designed to analyze large amounts of data and provide quantitative and percentage results (for example, % of consumers attending a friendly or business meeting, for a Sunday lunch with family, etc.).

Quantitative research implies conducting various surveys based on the use of closed-ended structured questions, which are answered by a large number of respondents. The main objective of quantitative research is to obtain a numerical assessment of the state of the market or the response of respondents to an event. Such studies are used when accurate, statistically reliable numerical data are needed [3].

However, due to the specific characteristics of the restaurant business in cross-border regions, in particular, the presence of a large number of competitors, high saturation, consumer behavior, it is necessary that marketing research to be conducted in conjunction with the available specifications of the market and competent specialists in the field.

In practice, the choice of specific types and methods of marketing research in the restaurant business is based on the tasks set by the customer:

1. Opening a new institution without a specific concept. In our opinion, in this case marketing research will be:

- analysis of the market of catering establishments and the selection of key players in the market, their strengths and weaknesses;
- research of competitors on such parameters as: target audience, average cost of the bill, advertising policy;
- segmentation of consumers by demographic and cultural characteristics. As a result of the conducted researches, a niche can be occupied by the enterprise, and on the basis of the obtained data the concept of activity and development strategy is formed.

2. New institution with a certain concept. If the customer has already decided on the concept of his future institution and wants to know how much this concept will be required in the market by consumers and successful, marketing research will be as follows:

- analysis of competitors, the list of services they provide and identification of their own competitive advantages based on SWOT analysis;

- analysis of the attractiveness of the concept of new institution for the selected target audience and description of its characteristics. In this case, marketing research allows you to get the information you need to develop and implement an effective competition strategy, as well as to occupy the right niche, to analyze the essence of problems that arise when opening an institution, to find the right ways for development.

3. Problem solving in an existing institution. If the customer already has a working establishment, but would like to increase the profitability of the institution and ensure its further growth, marketing research will be conducted in the following areas:

- analysis: location, interior and style of the establishment, cuisine and menus, prices, musical design, average bill, quality of service, programs and promotions;
- identifying the characteristics of the target audience (satisfaction with the level of service, menus, prices, etc.). The result of this study will be to identify factors that do not contribute to the further development of the institution, as well as recommendations for eliminating these factors.

Before making a final decision on rebranding or any innovations that require serious investment, it makes sense to conduct a study known as an in-depth interview. This method is the most optimal, and possibly the only rational one in diagnostic research: evaluation of the efficiency of accounting and control systems, analysis of general management, marketing and advertising activities of the restaurant, supply and logistics.

In our opinion, marketing research of the restaurant business enterprises can take place in such stages (Fig. 1).

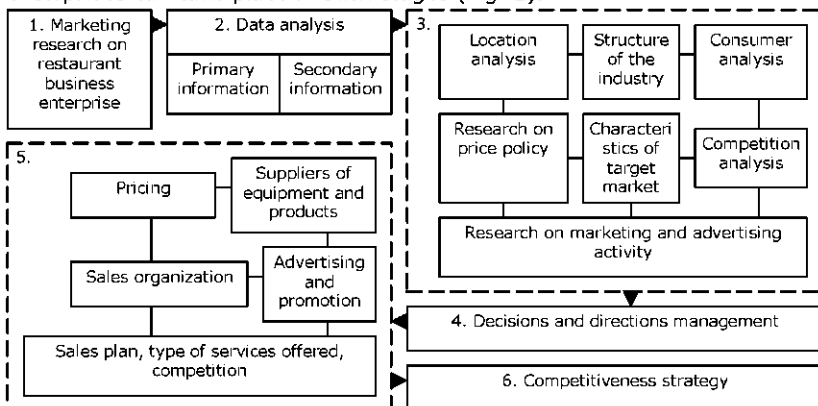


Fig. 1. Algorithm for conducting market research of restaurant business enterprises

Thus, the main function of marketing research in restaurant business is to facilitate the assessment of the situation, promotion of optimal development strategy, reducing the risk of making wrong decisions. The need for marketing research usually arises when a new restaurant is opened, when a functioning establishment is ineffective, or when a successful concept is replicated. Marketing research is the basis for achieving the competitive advantages of restaurant businesses, the key to the information needed to make a decision on a number of issues related to the financial side of restaurant business.

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Aleksandar Pesic, Doctor of industrial management, Associate Professor,
Faculty of business and Law,
Belgrade, Serbia

Duska Pesic, Doctor of mathematics, Professor,
The Higher Education Technical School of Professional Studies,
NoviSad, Serbia

MARKETING AUDIT IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY: A FUZZY SET APPROACH

In the current competitive environment and rapid proliferation of hotel services, marketing audit is not merely aimed to assess the achievement of the accepted marketing strategies but also to evaluate the hotel's marketing management processes. In that sense, any effective appraisal of the overall marketing performance must involve detailed assessment of the key marketing factors and drivers of market orientation. The outcome of such assessment should highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the marketing function of the hotel and suggest recommendations on possible improvements.

Generally, quantitative marketing evaluation tools, that serves as diagnostic aids and as prescriptive guides for selecting the most relevant marketing options may lead hotel managers to make decisions that are less irrational than those they make when using unaided judgment. However,