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RETHINKING THE DINNING EXPERIENCE

A case study of
New Service Development
at SKT. Petri hotel restaurant.

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A case study of New Service Development at SKT. Petri hotel restaurant



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Abstract

This thesis explores ways in which service design can help restaurants craft memorable experiences for their customers, in order to increase their satisfaction towards the service. Currently, restaurants do not limit themselves as being places where one can get a convenient meal. *The focus switched from just providing food towards offering a complete experience around the act of eating and sharing food.* SKT. Petri's hotel restaurant "P eatery" will be used as case to illustrate this paradigm change and to explore how to build a service context where customers can get a memorable experience. "Live Gourmet" is the final design solution of this project, that is centered around highlighting the headchef Brendon and his team's passion and dedication in cooking gourmet snacks. Customers will get the chance to see the food from the perspective of the one who creates it and will get to taste the final result. The solution aims to frame "P eatery's" original concept of "down to Earth" gourmet, which makes gourmet accessible for everyone, without any formal restraints.

Keywords: dinning experience, customer satisfaction, service quality, gap model, restaurant business, hospitality.

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1

INTRODUCTION

Restaurants as “experience-centric” services

*“Meals consist of much more than the food to be eaten.”
(Gustafsson, 2004)*

Restaurants are perceived as places that offer the convenience of a cooked meal and a selection of beverages that complement the food. However, this core function alone does not represent the variety of reasons that motivate people to visit a restaurant. *Besides from physiological needs such as hunger, customers choose to eat out for motives that can vary from reinforcing social bonds within their group to their own intellectual /entertainment needs* (Andersson & Mossberg, 2004; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Pullman & Gross, 2004). In this setting, the act of dining out becomes part of a wider experience that customers want to engage with.

Since customers started using restaurants for more than just food, the focus shifted towards offering them the desired experience. When guests have a memorable experience, they connect with the service in a deep, emotional level that shapes their positive opinion about the service quality. A good perception of the service increases loyalty and the chance of repeated purchase (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Because restaurants reshaped their offering by placing the dining experience at its core, Zomerdjijk & Voss (2010) refer to them as “experience-centric services”.

It is important to emphasize that an experience-centric service can not offer directly an experience like a product or dictate how customers should feel while using the service. *In reality, the service offers a context which helps the client create the desired experience. Restaurants can create this context by orchestrating the interactions that customers have with various touch points of the service (food, staff, atmosphere).* (Pullman & Gross, 2004)

Service design has a central role in helping food businesses build a context for the dining experience, since it can create and control touchpoints as well as the interactions between various actors of the service. For this reason, the management of restaurant “P eatery”, owned by SKT. Petri hotel, decided to collaborate with a student service designer.

The author will use this case as an opportunity to explore more about: **How do restaurants design their service in order to create a memorable experience?** and **Is the designed service compatible with the actual customer expectations?**

Thesis structure

The report is structured in 7 main parts followed by the “Case conclusion” and “Reflections”. In “Introduction” the project theme of restaurants as “experience-centric services” is presented as a base to build upon during the design process. Followed methodologies will be presented together with the motivation for adopting them and the way in which they will be used.

“Thesis case” will provide the contextual information surrounding the hotel brand “SKT Petri” and its restaurant named “P eatery”. “P eatery” and its business concept of “down to Earth” gourmet experience will be presented along with the current problem that the management faces in attracting the right target group. Project limitations and learning goals (both personal and official) will be addressed in the same chapter.

In “Explore”, “P eatery” as a restaurant will be analyzed from different angles starting with its position in the market to how well it stands out from its competitors. The focus will switch on disseminating the service reviews that “P eatery” received from clients. A general view over the years in regards to the service performance will conclude this stage. Service safari will be the first contact with the service and will be used to compare the existing data from previous steps.

“Define” will present the attempts done to identify the target groups which visit “P eatery” with the help of observations and an online questionnaire. Interviews will be taken of both the staff and management in order to grasp what their opinion of the service they offer. The chapter ends with framing the final problem formulation.

“Ideation” will present the process done in order to answer the design challenge. “P eatery’s” concept will be first analyzed from a strategic point of view in order to better ground the ideation results. In order to give more depth to the process, a workshop with locals will be done in order to gather insights on the created concepts.

“The final concept” will develop more on the ideathat was chosen during workshop. The focus will be on how to structure the service journey in order to achieve a memorable experience and to motivate people to talk about the restaurant service. There will be a chapter that develop on how can some touchpoints add tangibility of the service thus increasing the level of engagement.

Methodology

Double Diamond

Double Diamond (British Council, 2018) was chosen considering the following aspects:

- 1. Familiarity:** Double Diamond was used before in other projects. The past experiences with this methodology will help in managing the thesis case successfully, with the given time and resources.
- 2. Nature of the project:** Research will be done in a fine restaurant where one has to be discreet in order to do not interrupt the experience that clients have. It will not be possible to contact customers directly, ideate with them or test prototypes. From this perspective approaches such as “IDEO 5 steps” or “design sprints” can not be used within the current project.

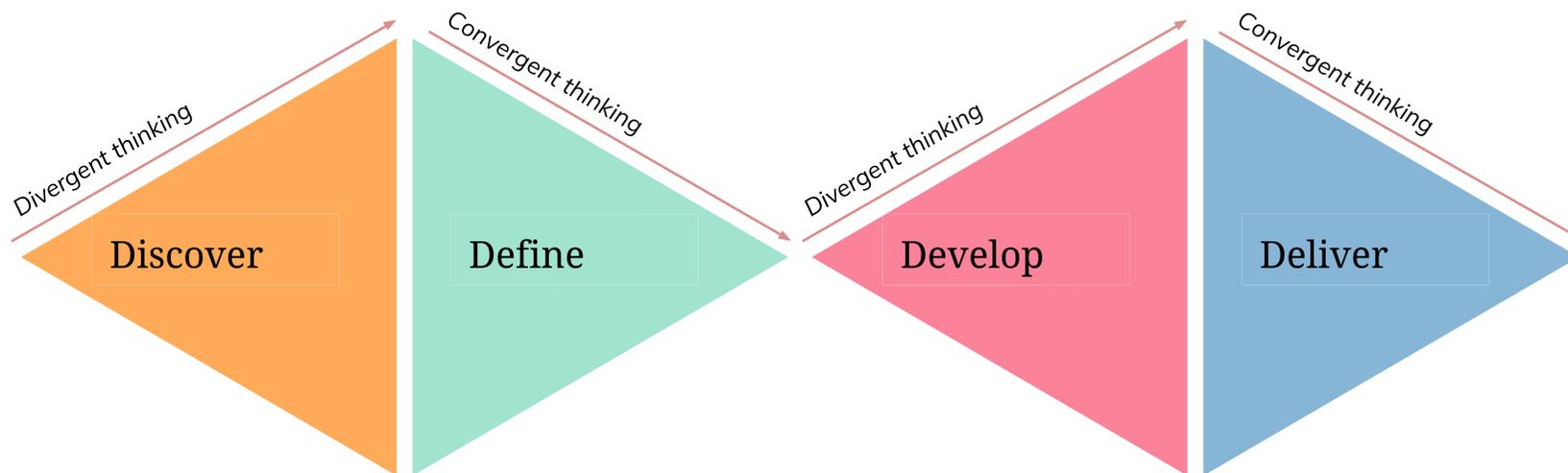


Figure 1. The Double Diamond where each phase allows to either think broadly or define the problem space/final solution

The Double Diamond phases alternate between **divergent** and **convergent thinking**. Using **divergent thinking** means to think broadly while discovering the problem space and ideating for possible solutions to it. Through **convergent** thinking the final problem statement is framed and the initial solution is prepared for implementation. (Van der Linden et al., 2011)

In the **discovery phase**, research will be oriented towards understanding the restaurant industry and its business models. P eatery's position as a service will be analyzed from multiple perspectives: the industry in which it operates, the way that the service is communicated on social media and on the website, its position towards the main business competitors and the customer's opinion about the restaurant, expressed in online reviews.

Defining will be focused on identifying what does the restaurant management think of its own service. Since asking customers directly is not a possibility in this case, the data will be gathered from restaurant observations and a survey directed to potential clients. At the end of this phase, the final problem statement will be formulated together with the relevant target group(s).

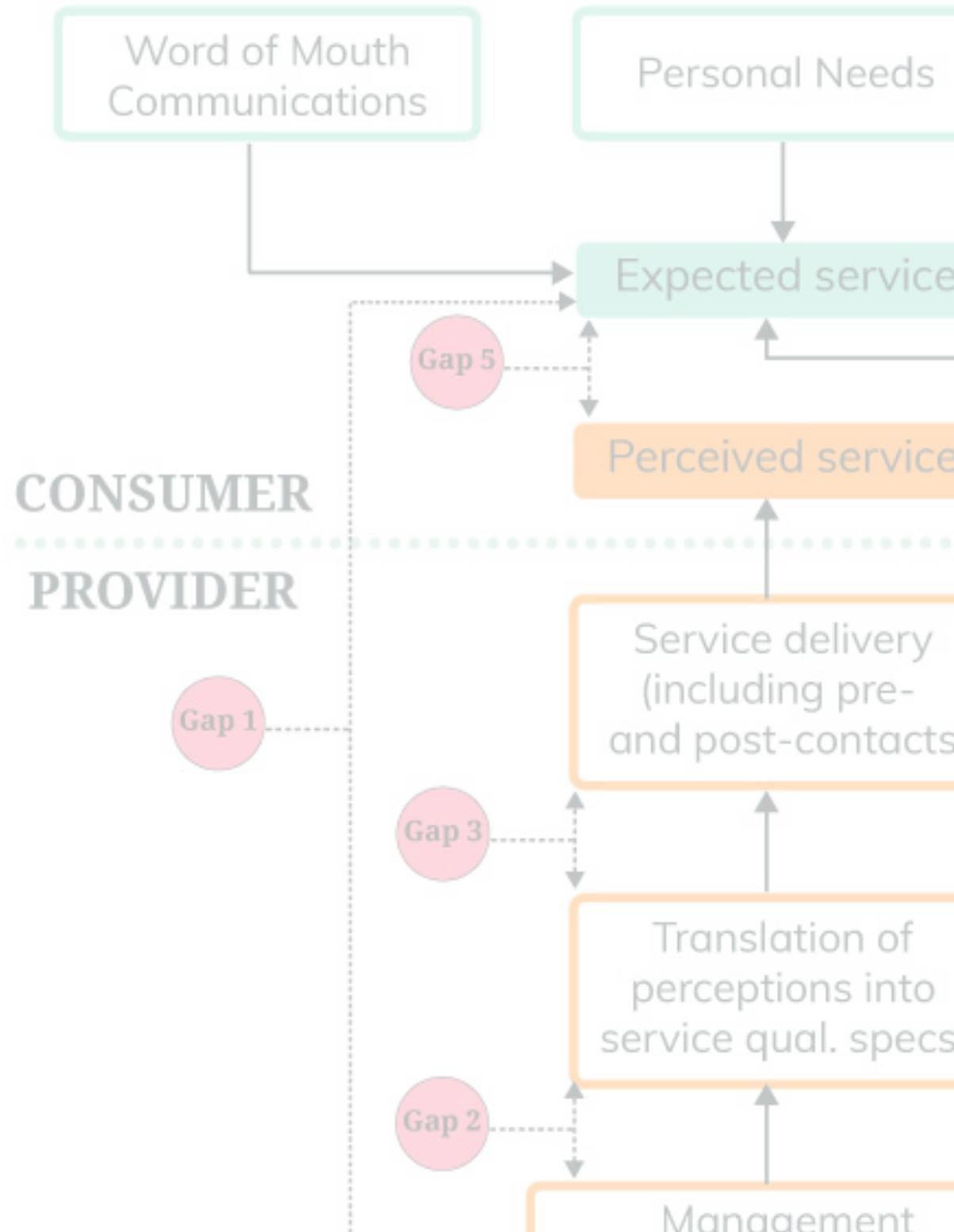
Various ideas will be brainstormed in **develop phase** and a few which have potential to become possible solutions will be represented through scenarios. Every resulting scenario will be analyzed to reveal both its strong and weak points. If possible these scenarios will be presented to people that are in the defined target group(s). Once initial conclusions are gathered about the initial concepts, they will be sorted out and used to build the final concept.

In the **last phase (deliver)** tools such as user journeys and customer value propositions will be used to analyze the final concept more in depth. By using these tools it will be possible to show a clear map of the main advantages and possible risks/problems that the final concept will create. The aim is to have a concept that can provide a memorable experience for the restaurant's guests.

SERVQUAL model-mapping out the intangible

Analyzing the quality of a service is a problematic aspect since it is difficult to perceive it in the same way at all times. Unlike a product, which does not change its initial qualities, services depend on the performance of their touchpoints in that respective moment. In some cases, that particular moment delivers a performance which is not compatible with the customer's expectations, thus creating a bad perception of the general service quality. For instance, long waiting times that occur during busy nights can drastically diminish the positive experience of the food service.

The dilemma in how can service quality be researched/ analyzed was answered by the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985). Customers form expectations of the service from what they hear about it (word of mouth communications), past experience with the service and personal needs (the reasons why they decided to use the service in the first place). These expectations form an ideal image of the expected service quality. In the model, there are 6 distinctive service gaps that affect how the service quality is perceived (figure 2). This model offers businesses the chance to review the service that they offer and take control of the weak points that disrupt the customer's experience.



The SERVQUAL model will be used to structure all the gaps discovered in “P eatery’s” service performance. Besides from offering an overview of what happens during the service encounter, the model will point towards potential directions to follow during the ideation stage of the project.

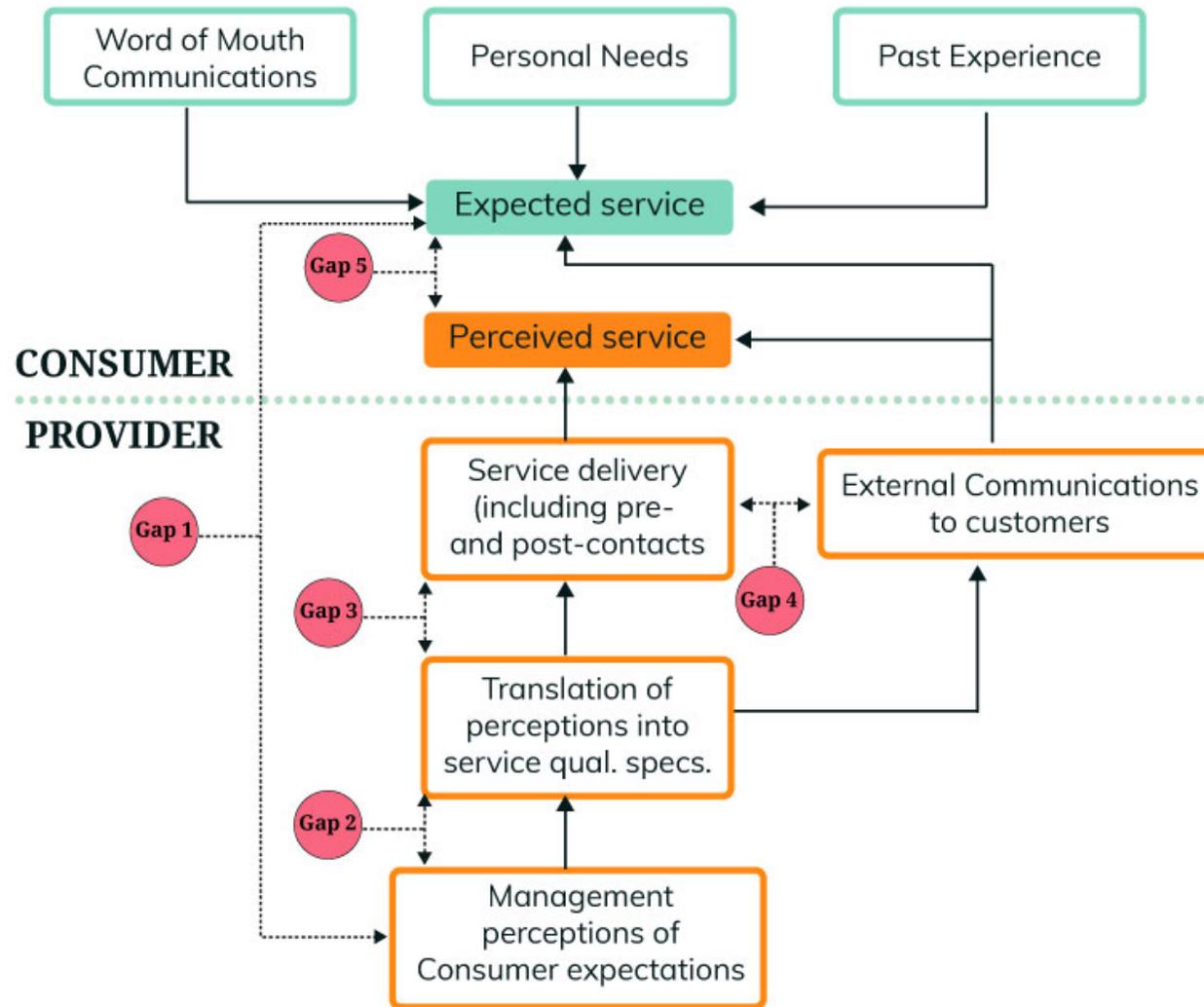
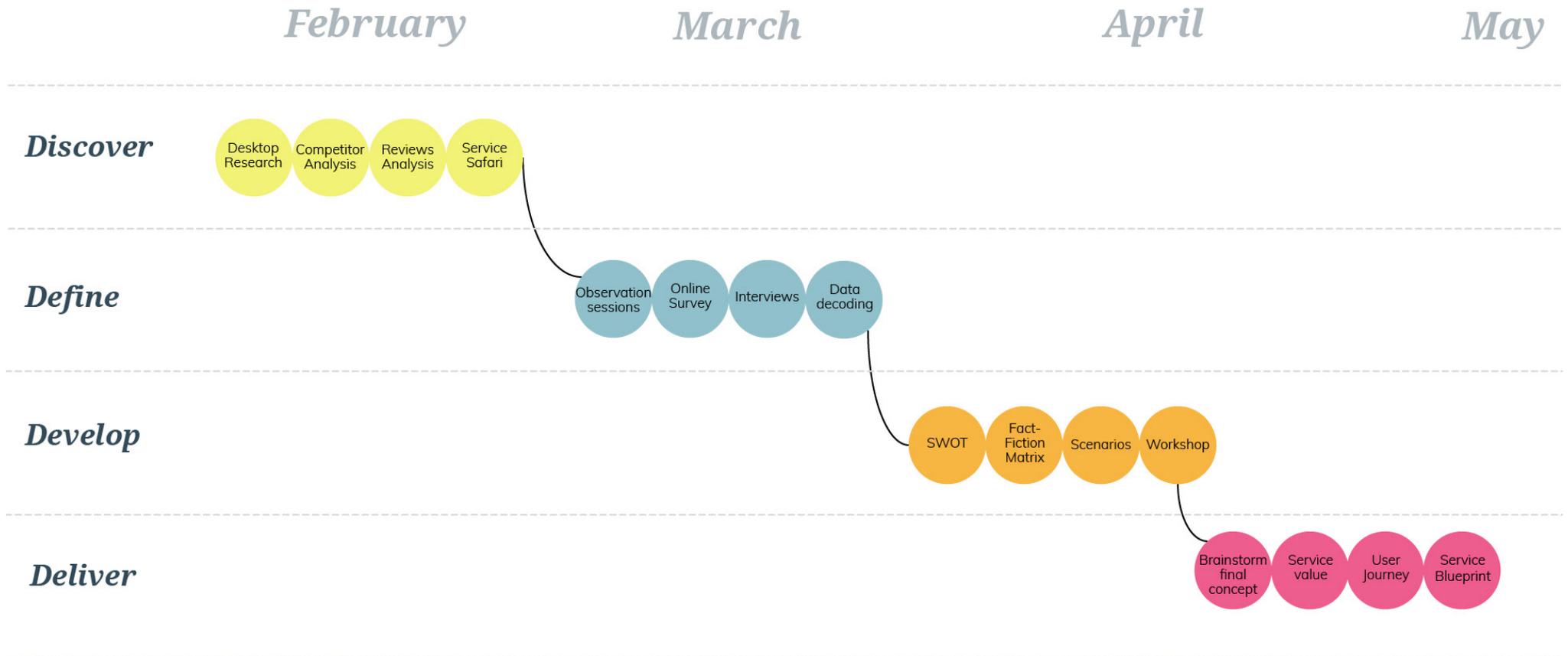


Figure 2. SERVQUAL or gap model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985)

Process overview



2

P

THESIS CASE

EATERY



Context

“SKT. Petri” hotel is placed in a heritage-building designed by the Danish architect Vilhelm Lauritzen, located in the Latin Quarter of Copenhagen- close to the main center (Norreport station). The five star hotel promotes the concept of “laid back luxury” where they focus is on offering their clients the best experience possible in a less formal/restrictive environment.(<https://www.sktpetri.com/>)

In 2017, the hotel brand decided to open a new restaurant called “P eatery” that would be different from the existing Petri restaurant-which was viewed as part of the overall hotel service rather than a actual restaurant.

“P eatery” is the abbreviated form of “People’s Eatery”, a restaurant promoted as a brand of its own with a different style from the usual aesthetics of the five-star hotel. According to the client brief (offered in December 2018), the new restaurant was striving to be the new “in place” for Copenhageners, where they could experience a gourmet restaurant at a “more down to Earth level”. Additionally, “P eatery” would house a series of events such as the ones centered around wine tasting(“Bring your wine Tuesday”) or sustainable cooking (cooking classes with their head chef or diner events with TooGoodToGo as partner). All these efforts were done in order to accomplish the goal of attracting 80% Copenhageners from the total of their clients.



Figure 3. SKT. Petri hotel building. Next to the street lights there is the entrance to “P eatery” marked by the “P” letter. Image source: <https://aaber-garkitekter.dk/portfolio-items/hotel-sankt-petri-ombygning/>

The “Down to Earth” gourmet restaurant

Initially, the kitchen profile was mediterranean, inspired by the restaurant’s placement in the Latin Quarter of Copenhagen. The concept was changed afterwards to Nordic Fusion, which aimed to give the locals a food experience based on sustainable and organic ingredients combined in a original way, with elements from other cultures cuisines. Among the reasons behind the kitchen profile change were the persisting desire to attract locals with food they might like and the change of staff - the initial head chef decided to leave and a new head chef called Brendon(British) came and started working on his culinary vision at “P eatery”.



Figure 4. The new headchef with two of his culinary creations. Image source: “P eatery” Facebook page.

Although “P eatery” strived to present itself as a refined bis-tro, that offers a gourmet experience in a cozy atmosphere at an affordable price (“down to Earth gourmet”) and with the chance to order wine per glass out of their high selection of 100 wines, the chosen target group did not seem interested in their offer. According to the client brief, only a quarter of the customers were local Copenhageners. *Furthermore, the team realized that they had no idea what kind of locals were visiting them and why. The direct consequence of this was that the marketing/sales strategies had no clear directions, thus making it even more difficult to attract potential clients.*

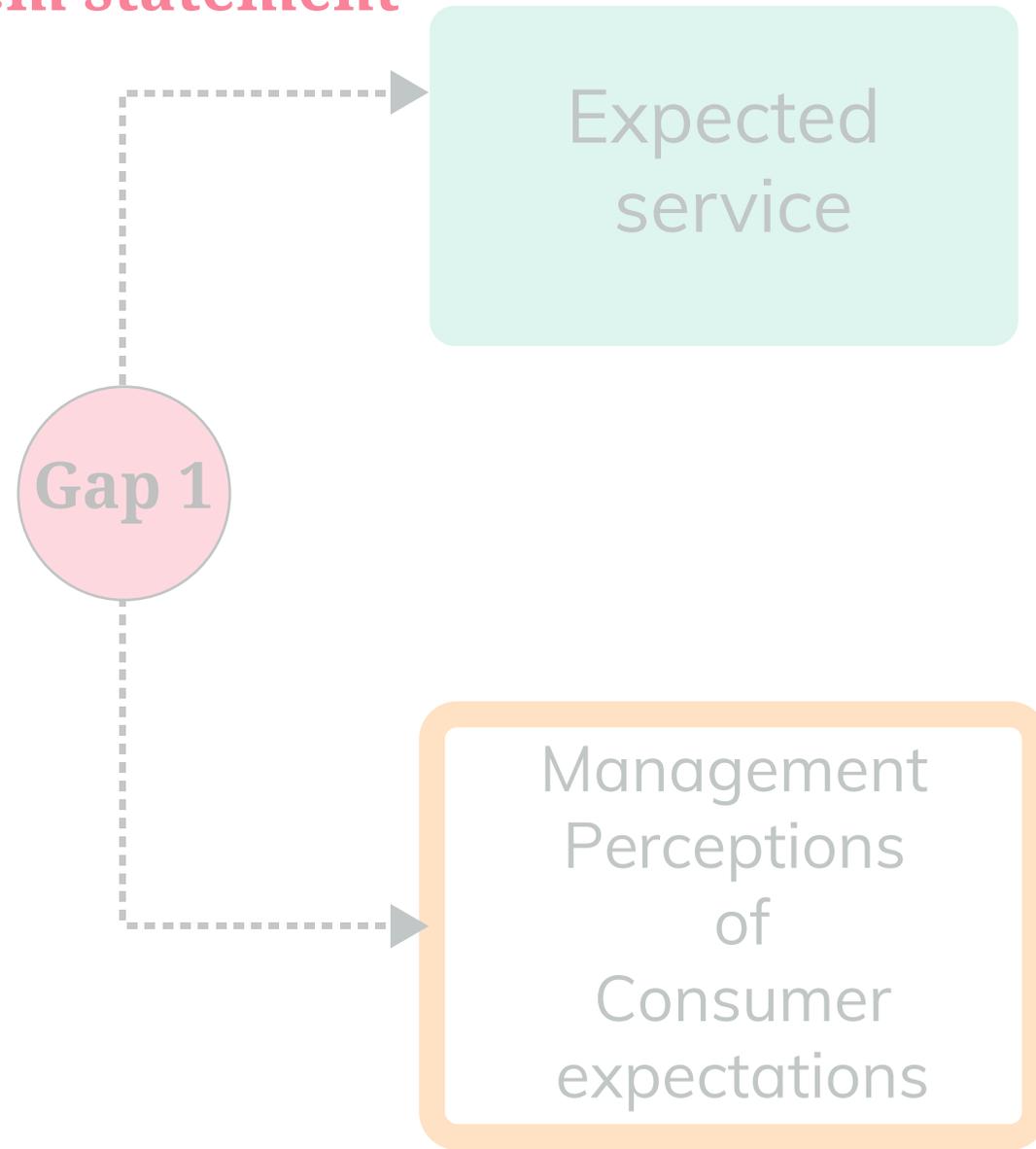
It is likely that “P eatery” is associated with a restaurant for tourists or internationals since it is part of the hotel building and the language used for communication on its social media platforms is English not Danish. The “down to Earth gourmet” concept is derived in some ways from SKT. Petri’s service concept of “laid back luxury”: both present a high quality service delivered in a casual way with a great focus on service personalization (for the customer). The similarity between concepts can influence the perception that “P eatery” is just another part of the hotel service, not a local restaurant.

Initial problem statement

The initial problem statement was developed from the client brief because it had already a relevant problem found in the SERVQUAL model: **the gap between the management perception and the customer expectation.** Customers had their own perception of “P eatery” based on how the brand was describing itself on website, social media and booking sites such as “DinnerBooking.dk” and “TRipAdvisor.com”. Word of mouth and online reviews have their own contribution in forming a first impression of the service. On the service provider’s end, “P eatery” had no idea about who their local customers are and what they expect; therefore most of their decisions in regards to how the service should be delivered were taken following the managements considerations on the matter, not actual facts.

Considering all this, it made sense to formulate the initial statement as:

How can service design help
“P eatery’s” management understand
what customers expect
from their service?



Learning goals

The official education goals taken from the study guide state that a future service designer graduate should have a set of skills, competencies and knowledge of the field as follows:

Knowledge:

- "Must have knowledge about the possibilities to apply appropriate methodological approaches to specific study areas."
- "Must have knowledge about design theories and methods that focus on the design of advanced and complex product service systems" (Aalborg University, 2017)

Skills:

- "Must be able to work independently, to identify major problem areas (analysis) and adequately address problems and opportunities (synthesis)."
- "Must demonstrate the capability of analysing, designing and representing innovative solutions."
- "Must demonstrate the ability to evaluate and address (synthesis) major organisational and business issues emerging in the design of a product." (Aalborg University, 2017)

Competencies:

- "Must be able to master design and development work in situations that are complex, unpredictable and require new solutions (synthesis)."
- "Must be able to independently initiate and implement discipline specific and interdisciplinary cooperation and assume professional responsibility (synthesis)."
- "Must have the capability to independently take responsibility for own professional development and specialisation (synthesis)." (Aalborg University, 2017)

Personal learning goals

This case offers a great opportunity to explore diverse ways of collecting, disseminating and visualizing data. Since a good research can make a difference in a design process, learning goals were focused on how to get relevant data in a context with new limitations, that were never encountered in previous work.

Explore diverse ways of gathering data

The interest will be on how to structure the research process. It was considered to use frameworks/models in combination with other tools used previously. For instance interview questions will be created with the help of interview protocols or the service safari can be structured using some models which divide the dining experience in distinct phases. The goal is to explore various combinations between tools/methods in order to get the most out of the research.

Learn more about how to disseminate and order research results

The focus is on defining what is relevant while keeping in mind the complete picture of the problem area. Data is what one makes out of it and by using different methods/tools for dissemination the author hopes to gain relevant insights that will create solid links between all project phases.

Improve academic writing skills

It will be likely the last time when academic writing can be practiced. For this reason, the author would like to try and write using a more professional English and a different way of structuring than what she would do normally. During previous projects, it was noticed that practicing a different way of writing helped in exploring the reasoning behind design decisions thus facilitating deeper reflections over the whole process.

Project limitations

Besides the time limitation to develop the project, two other crucial obstructions were identified: the limited communication with the client and the impossibility of interviewing users while interacting with the restaurant service. Their impact on the project is significant since it shaped the overall approach and used tools.

Communication with the client is done through email and sometimes through meetings (requested by email). In some cases, the replies came very late- more than 4 days waiting time. This can disrupt the process since it will force the author to suspend some research activities until she gets the needed answer. The fact that the author is not actively involved in the management's plans adds proportions to this issue since she strictly depends on the answers from emails.

To address this dilemma it was decided to send emails upfront, requesting times for activities such as shadowing or staff interviews. In case the client will still answer with delays, the only solution available would be to work on some other tasks which can be done at the moment while waiting for answers.

Unlike previous projects, **the users can not be interviewed while interacting with the service since it can affect the restaurant's business reputation.** Clients come at "P eatery" to get a memorable experience crafted around the act of consuming more refined food. Such moments can be personal and fragile for the person that lives them. The direct approach to request some answers can prove disastrous, attracting the discontent of clients and affecting the overall perception of the service quality.

In order to get some insights regarding what clients expect from the service, restaurant reviews will be analyzed and shadowing sessions will be performed in order to study who enters P eatery and why. Additionally it was considered to develop a survey in order to see what potential clients expect from a gourmet inspired restaurant and to send follow-up emails with questions to loyal clients of the restaurant.



3

EXPLORE

Desktop research

Working with food - A fluid business

The desktop research started with questioning the conventional definition of a restaurant. According to Oxford Dictionary, a **restaurant** is defined as:

“A place where people pay to sit and eat meals that are cooked and served on the premises”.
(“restaurant | Definition of restaurant in English by Oxford Dictionaries”, 2019)

Even though this definition applies in the majority of cases, there are changes that affect it, influenced by the apparition of new restaurant business models. For instance, the food is not consumed on the premises every time it is ordered from a restaurant. Now customers can order take-away or go to drive thru restaurants. Sometimes restaurants do not even have permanent premises such as in the case of pop-up restaurants, where cooking activities are done in temporary places- that were not originally made for this purpose.

According to **“gastromand.dk”**, pop-up restaurants became a popular concept among Danish customers. A notable example is **“NaCl”** (<https://gastromand.dk/nacl-showcooking-pa-svineriet/>) which is an association of chefs that occasionally meet and make food for people. **“NaCl”** challenges further the conventional restaurant definition by inviting the customers in the improvised kitchen to look at the cooking process. For a small fee, they can also cook meals on the spot with the chefs.



Figure 5. “NaCl” chefs cooking live for customers. Images taken from NaCl Facebook page, Live Cooking photo albums.

While researching different restaurant types, it became clear that the different business models in this industry are not static, they can be combined in many ways- which blur the lines that separate them. For instance there are restaurants which redefine the concept of making burgers. Instead of the regular junk/comfort food burgers, there are places such as **“Burger Klubben”** (<http://www.burgerklubben.com/>) that use high quality ingredients and even develop burgers that support alternative lifestyles (vegan, vegetarian). This tendency of making better versions of fast food reached the gourmet sector where restaurants such as **“Hache”** (<https://hache.dk/>) serve burgers that have unusual/exotic and high quality ingredient combinations.



Figure 6. Left: A burger made with high quality ingredients, image source: Burgerklubben.com. Right: A burger with exotic ingredients such as truffle and miso-mayonnaise, image source: hache.dk.

Besides the food concept and premises, *restaurant types are being reinvented as well. A practical example is offered by “P eatery” itself.* The management describes this as bistro type restaurant where gourmet experiences are offered at a more “down-to-earth level” in terms of atmosphere and price. When consulting various sources on the internet, it was revealed that a *bistro is the equivalent of a “neighborhood restaurant”*. This restaurant type is much smaller than the average and with a casual/relaxed atmosphere. Bistros have simple menus focused on French cuisine with small and inexpensive dishes-most common are braised meats. Sometimes these restaurants do not even have a printed menu. (Appendix Desktop research, page 1)

“P eatery” is calling itself a bistro yet the kitchen is Nordic Fusion not French and prices can vary depending on the selected menu. The dishes are more elaborate and customers can check them from a printed menu. Another difference is the restaurant size, “P eatery” has a big space with 150 seats unlike a traditional bistro. *The only thing that “P eatery” has in common with the original bistro is the name. Everything else had been replaced to suit the circumstances and desired business model.*



The food industry is a volatile field with original initiatives that reinvent old elements of the traditional restaurant definition. *This tendency of reconstructing restaurant identities can be a direct consequence of the highly competitive market.* Restaurant sales have increased in Copenhagen between 2009-2018 by 85% according to Denmark Statistik (Nørtoft,2018). Since 2010, Copenhagen earned the reputation of a New Nordic cuisine destination, thanks to “The Best Restaurant award” won by Noma. This influenced the emergence of restaurants that would develop their own concepts of Nordic cuisine, some even received Michelin stars.(Ooi & Pedersen, 2017; Byrkjeflot et al. 2013)

High competition determines bankruptcy. Since 2015, bankruptcies doubled, from 250 to 501 per year in Copenhagen.(Nørtoft,2018) In 2016, Copenhagen Post published an article based on a study made by Deloitte, where 28% of cafes and restaurants are struggling financially and are threatened by debt.(“The Copenhagen Post - Danish News in English”, 2016) *While the food industry in Copenhagen is diverse and opened towards original ideas, it creates at the same time financial insecurities among business owners. As a result, there are more efforts done in order to attract potential customers and to gain loyal customers with promises of good prices or special dining experiences.*

Figure 7. “P eatery” bistro food(A) versus Traditional French bistro food(B). Image source for “A” is the client’s facebook page. Image source for “B” is from a travel blog (<https://elainetravels.wordpress.com/2011/02/17/le-vaudeville/>)

Where is “P eatery” placed in this volatile market?

Following the conclusions from desktop research, polarizations were done in order to better understand where does “P eatery” stand in this highly competitive and versatile market. The polarizations included the most general restaurant types discovered during the desktop research. (Appendix page 2) The comparison with the general restaurant types helped in assessing how far did P eatery modified traditional concepts and allowed a better exploration of their “down-to-earth” gourmet identity.

Quality of ingredients



Quantity



Figure 8. The first polarizations were focused on the food quality and quantity. Judging from the client brief and internet reviews, “P eatery” uses fresh and organic ingredients of the best quality. Quantity generally comes in small portions, like in a gourmet restaurant.

Type of menu



Price



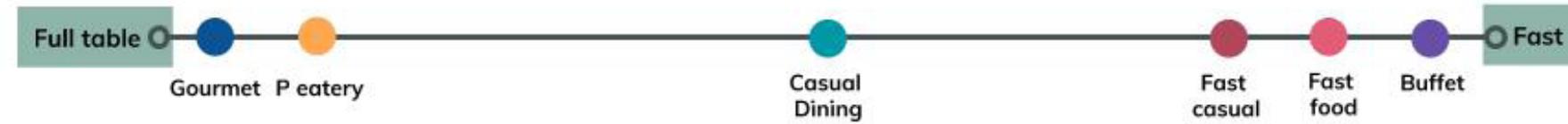
Figure 9. "P eatery" has seasonal menus with ingredients that are available in that particular season. Although the food is not as expensive as in a gourmet restaurant, it is still far from that of a casual dining restaurant, especially since the portions are small.

Atmosphere



Figure 10. The "down to Earth" gourmet concept has a casual approach towards the service which means that the atmosphere is more relaxed/cozy. Customers feel like at home while enjoying a fine dining experience. Following this description, it made sense to place "P eatery" in the middle of gourmet and casual restaurants.

Type of service



Quality of the service



Figure 11. The first polarization is about the table service, respectively the contact with the personelle of the restaurant. "Full table" is used in the industry to describe the service provided by the waiter, that comes at the table to ask about the order, gives suggestions and delivers personally the food. On the opposite side, there is the fast service, where the customer pays and picks the food personally, without any waiter. "P eatery" offers full table service with focus on personalizing the service in order to meet the client's wishes.

How “P eatery” presents its service -compared to other competitors-

The way in which “P eatery” presents its service was another crucial point of interest in the research, since it influences potential customer’s perception and expectations of the service they would receive. *Competitor analysis was used in order to give context to the conclusions and to better assess how and if the restaurant stands out from similar businesses.*

Benchmarking the ratings/ likes on social media and booking websites gave a fast overview of the situation. While P eatery has good ratings and it even made a better impression on TripAdvisor than one of its competitors, BouleBar; it does not stand out generally from the rest of restaurants. The table (figure 12) presents a rather neutral image of this restaurant.

<p>P eatery www.p-eatery.com</p>	<p>5/5 (55 reviews) 1170 page likes</p>
<p>Restaurant Brace www.restaurantbrace.dk</p>	<p>4.8/5 (111 reviews) 3408 page likes</p>
<p>Restaurant Vaekst https://cofoco.dk/en/restaurants/vaekst/</p>	<p>4.8/5 (233 reviews) 1644 page likes</p>
<p>The Olive https://www.theolive.dk/restaurant</p>	<p>4.9/5 (340 reviews) 1033 page likes</p>
<p>Boulebar https://www.boulebar.dk</p>	<p>4.5/5 (177 reviews) 2556 page likes</p>

	Facebook	Instagram	TripAdvisor	DinnerBooking
P eatery www.p-eatery.com	5/5 (55 reviews) 1170 page likes	1554 followers	4.5/5 79 reviews	4.8/6 341 reviews
Restaurant Brace www.restaurantbrace.dk	4.8/5 (111 reviews) 3408 page likes	11,8K followers	4.5/5 151 reviews	No profile
Restaurant Vaekst https://cofoco.dk/en/restaurants/vaekst/	4.8/5 (233 reviews) 1644 page likes	No instagram	4.5/5 464 reviews	No profile
The Olive https://www.theolive.dk/restaurant	4.9/5 (340 reviews) 1033 page likes	No instagram	5/5 1866 reviews +Certificate of excellence	5.5/6 1849 reviews
Boulebar https://www.boulebar.dk	4.5/5 (177 reviews) 2556 page likes	1,028 followers	3.5/5 104 reviews (complaints about service, Atmosphere and overcharging)	No profile

Figure 12. Benchmark of “P eatery” and its competitors. The list of competitors was provided by the management of the restaurant. In the table, red markings have been used in order to highlight unusually high or low ratings, what makes the service stand out and in what kind of way (positive/negative). It was interesting to discover that most of the competitors do not use “DinnerBooking”.

Comparisons were between how “P eatery” and its rivals promote themselves. In this case, P eatery is behind comparing to other restaurants.(appendix, page 4) On the “About” page (figure 13), there is only one text paragraph describing vaguely the good food quality. There is a mix of casual and informal language that can confuse a visitor. *The slogan “Expect the unexpected” is a vague statement and not convincing for potential clients since it offers no actual information about what their dining experience would be like.*

Compared to its rivals, “P eatery” leaves the sensation that the communication of the service is unfinished and depends very much of what opinion the customer makes out of it. Other restaurants use storytelling like in “Brace’s” case (figure 14), where the restaurant is presented as the owner’s “little gem”, where he gets to put passion in his craft and reinvents traditions. On a more personal note he includes his sources of inspiration (like surroundings, the team etc). This touch speaks out to the viewer and they get the feeling of feeling involved in this story. “Brace” took a step further in proving the excellency of its service by placing on the website footer, the various awards and appreciations that it won.

Another great example on how to communicate the service is offered by “Vaekst” (figure 15). Instead of storytelling, the business uses attractive descriptions to delight the senses. Dining at their place is like being in a green oasis with green plants everywhere and the food is fresh. Their idea is to let the customers experience a “never ending danish summer night” with the help of vegetable decorum and suitable lights. These two examples create a context for the client to relate with. The descriptions on the website already prepare potential customers for what kind of experience they will receive. It becomes tempting to book a table. P eatery should take inspiration from such ideas since their communication of the service is the first cue that customers get and it can have a big influence on their final decision to book a table.



ABOUT P

For the love of good food

At P eatery we take bistro gastronomy to the next level, offering modern Nordic cuisine on a plate. We cook with no pretensions and work at eye level with our guests. Dishes are created in tune with the season, by using as local and sustainable produce as possible. At P eatery you should expect the unexpected. No muss, no fuss.

Figure 13. The “About” section printscreen. What “P eatery” offers in terms of service is described in a short paragraph with vague sentences. It is hard to tell what kind of experience this place offers.



NICOLA FANETTI- HEAD HEAD AND CO-OWNER

AS YOU STEP INTO BRACE, YOU ENTER OUR
HOME

Brace is our little gem where I express my creativity, combine my experiences and explore my curiosity without rules and boundaries. My Italian background is the foundation of my Italian cuisine and Brace. We break borders with the traditions with inspiration from my life, our team and our surroundings.

Figure 14. Prinscreen from “Brace’s” website where the service concept is presented through storytelling. The chef and owner comes forward as a passionate man that experiments with his craft in the restaurant. Since he gave a human face to the service, it made it easy for customers to engage in the story.

In Sankt Peders Stræde in the middle of Copenhagen's old Latin quarter you will find Vækst. Gastronomically, Vækst is based on fresh Nordic vegetables and herbs but we still enjoy a great steak, seafood, and whole fisk. The menu is not the only thing that's green, as the decor is

centred around a beautiful greenhouse, stretching up through the restaurant's two floors. The rooms are filled with hanging plants drawing nature in all the way to the table, while the many lovely lights create an atmosphere mimicking a Danish summer evening which never ends.



Figure 15. On their website, "Vækst" describes its service as a green oasis that preserves the experience of a "Danish summer evening".

Reviews dissemination

Identifying main themes

Reviews offered a good start in exploring the type of service that P eatery delivers and how customers perceive it. Initially, focus was on identifying main service cues that interest patrons the most during their dinner. Comments about the service encounter were taken from three different channels: *Facebook*, *DinnerBooking* and *TripAdvisor*. DinnerBooking had comments exclusively from locals unlike TripAdvisor - that had a few- and Facebook- where all reviews were international.

The process started with curating reviews from all three channels. The criteria of selection was based on ratings (only the lowest and highest were considered) and on the texts which provided detailed information about the dining experience. All collected reviews were read first time to identify main themes and subthemes. In total five main themes were identified and paired with their corresponding subthemes. *Figure 16* presents the five identified main themes ; food, service and atmosphere are placed in boxes with saturated colors because they are mentioned the most by customers.



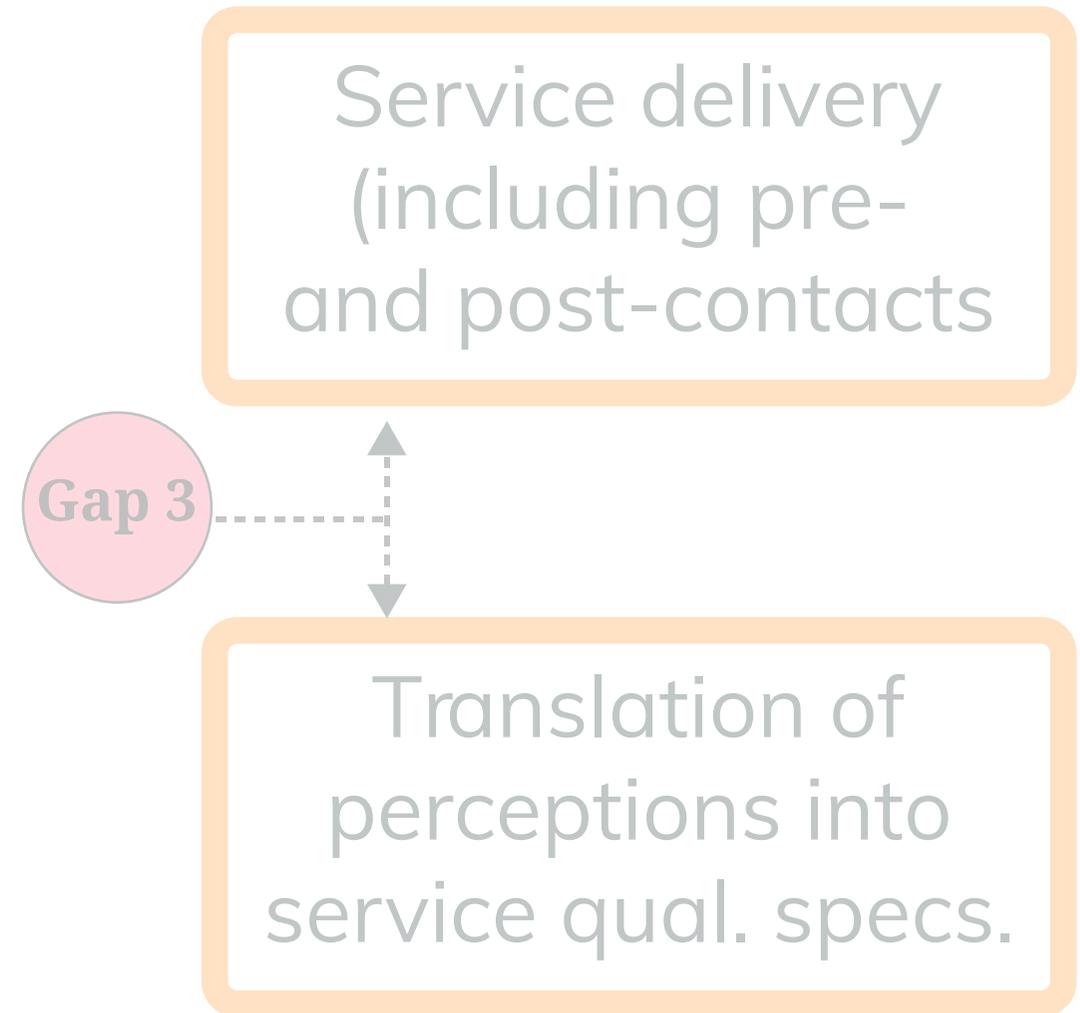
Figure 16. Main themes discovered during the reviews curation. Food, service and atmosphere were referred to the most.

How do reviews describe the service performance?

For the second phase of the review dissemination each theme got assigned a different color, such as in the circles next to each category in figure 16. A second reading of the reviews would be done to track the descriptions used for each theme and mark them with their assigned color. Negative comments were marked with a “-” while positive comments had “+”. *This in-depth analysis of the reviews found issues corresponding to gap 3, respectively gap 4 in the SERVQUAL model.*

Gap 3 represents problems which occur during the service quality specification and service delivery. In the quality specification, “Peatery”’s service is presented as a transparent process, where customers can get to see how the food is made and get waiters that are receptive towards their wishes. The manager believes that waiters have a key role in making the dinner experience for the guest.

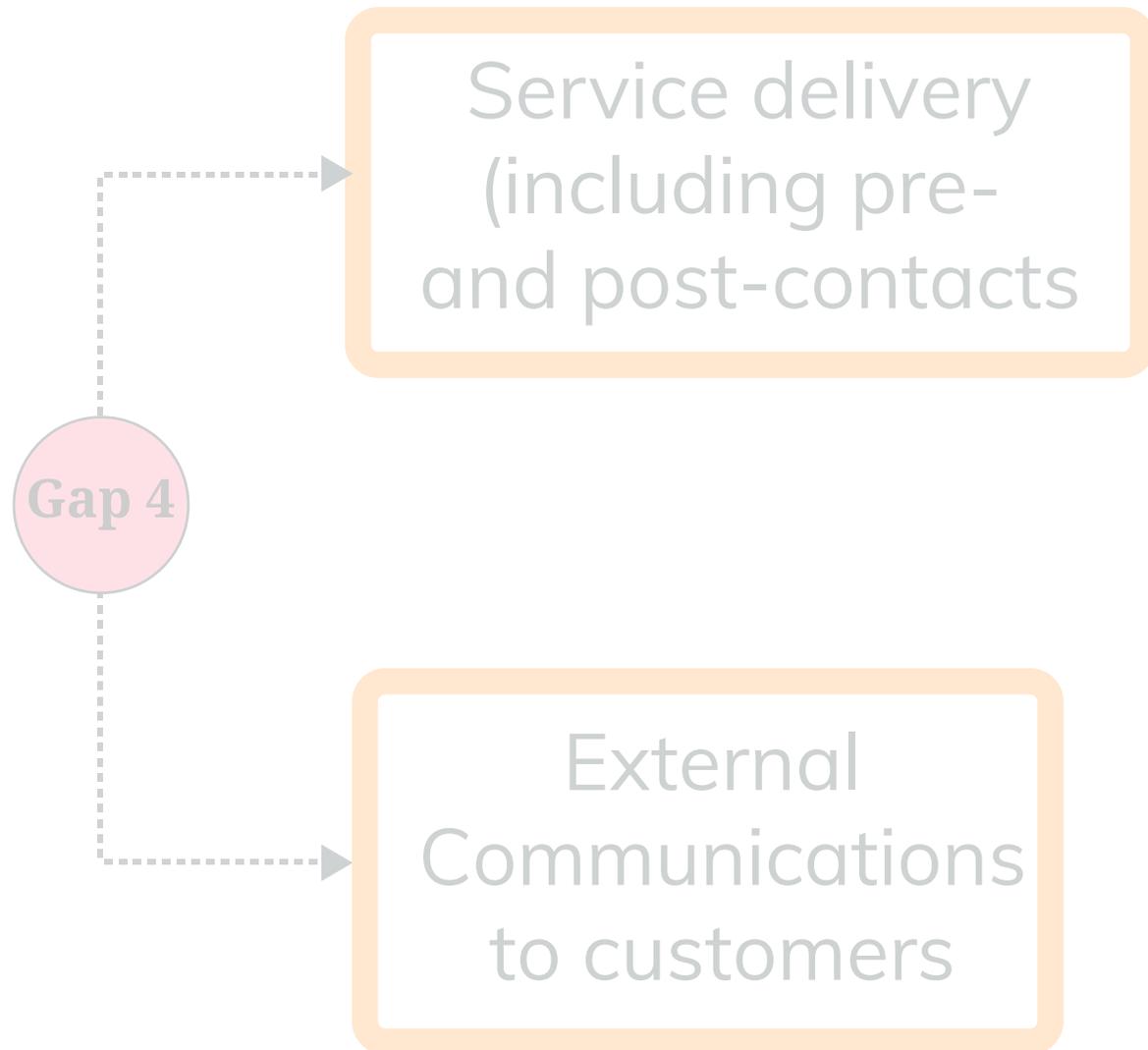
He declared that “a good waiter can make a bad steak be good”. When it comes to the actual performance, some of the customer reviews were suggesting that the waiters were not very experienced, since they would forget ingredients in some cocktails or have no advanced knowledge on the wine list. Some clients reported a “sour, dry” attitude towards them, the waiters seemed absent and hard to communicate with.



Gap 4 is placed between the external communications towards the customers and the actual service delivery.

“P eatery” is selling itself as a more affordable gourmet experience where customers can enjoy their dinner in a casual atmosphere, without formal restraints. In the competitor analysis, the communication of the service on the website turned out to be very vague and with a confusing combination between formal and casual language. Most of the social media communication is done in English which is unusual considering that locals are the target group and they probably expect a Danish presentation. In the service delivery, complaints were found about the food size (too small) or taste (“tasteless”, “overcooked” or “tasting bad”), atmosphere (“flat”, “Bad”). Food had a lot of criticism from locals while internationals seemed more enthusiastic.

The words/expressions used between 2017-2019 (Appendix, page 18) describing food, service and atmosphere were put through a word cloud generator. By using word clouds it was possible to get a fast overview of the general impression that customers had over the years. Although this analysis may not be as exact as if it were done by using programs for scraping data, it can still point towards possible directions to follow during the next research steps.



Atmosphere reviews



Figure 19. In regards to the atmosphere, the general opinion of both internationals and locals is that the place feels cozy. Like before, on TripAdvisor the terms used seems more enthusiastic.

Service safari

Preparing the service safari

A service safari was performed as a last step in discovery phase. The safari was done in order to form a first impression of the service, independent from the one created by reviews. This initial introduction helped in getting more familiar with the surroundings and in preparing the future observation sessions. (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2017)

An email was sent to the manager informing about the service safari booking and the need to have this kept secret from the staff in order to get genuine reactions during the service encounter. In order to avoid having this part of the research one sided, a peer which had working experience and some courses in the hospitality field was invited as a guest.

To give more structure to the process, the restaurant phases model from Young & Soocheong (2010) was adopted (figure 20). In their paper, Young and Soocheong used the restaurant service phases to better assess in which point of the experience service failures prove to be critical and influence a bad perception of the experience quality. In this case, the model was used as a way to organize the service safari and to represent, in a timeline, how the general service encounter went.

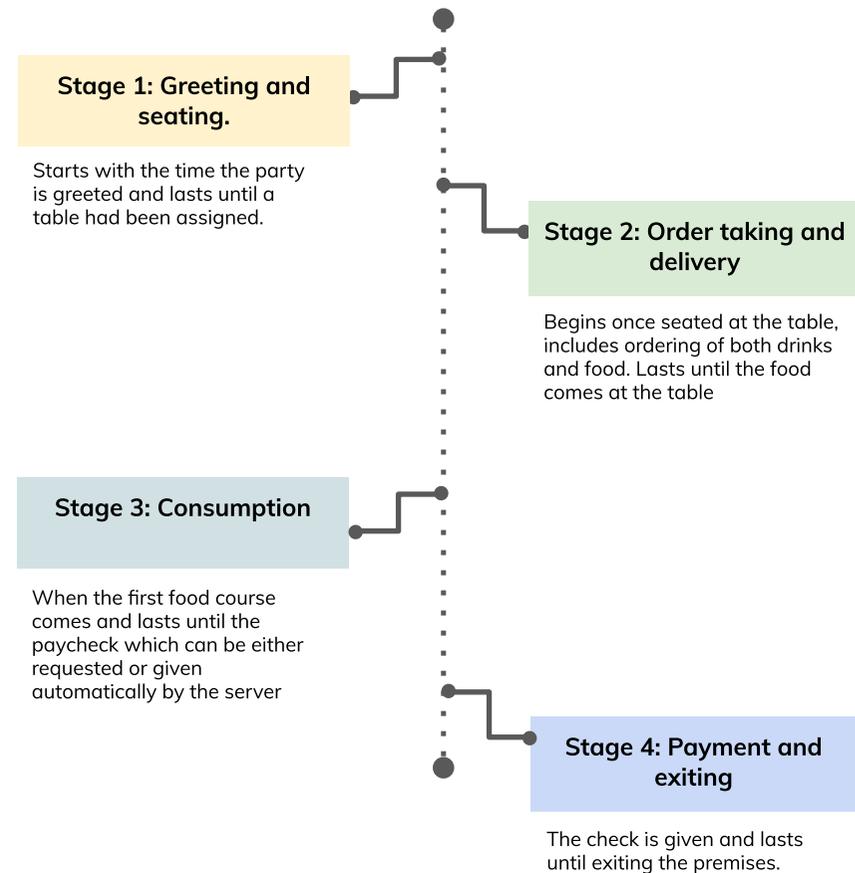


Figure 20. "Service stages" model by Young and Soocheong (2010) that divides the dining experience in 4 distinct stages: Greeting & seating, Order taking & delivery, Consumption, Payment and Exiting.

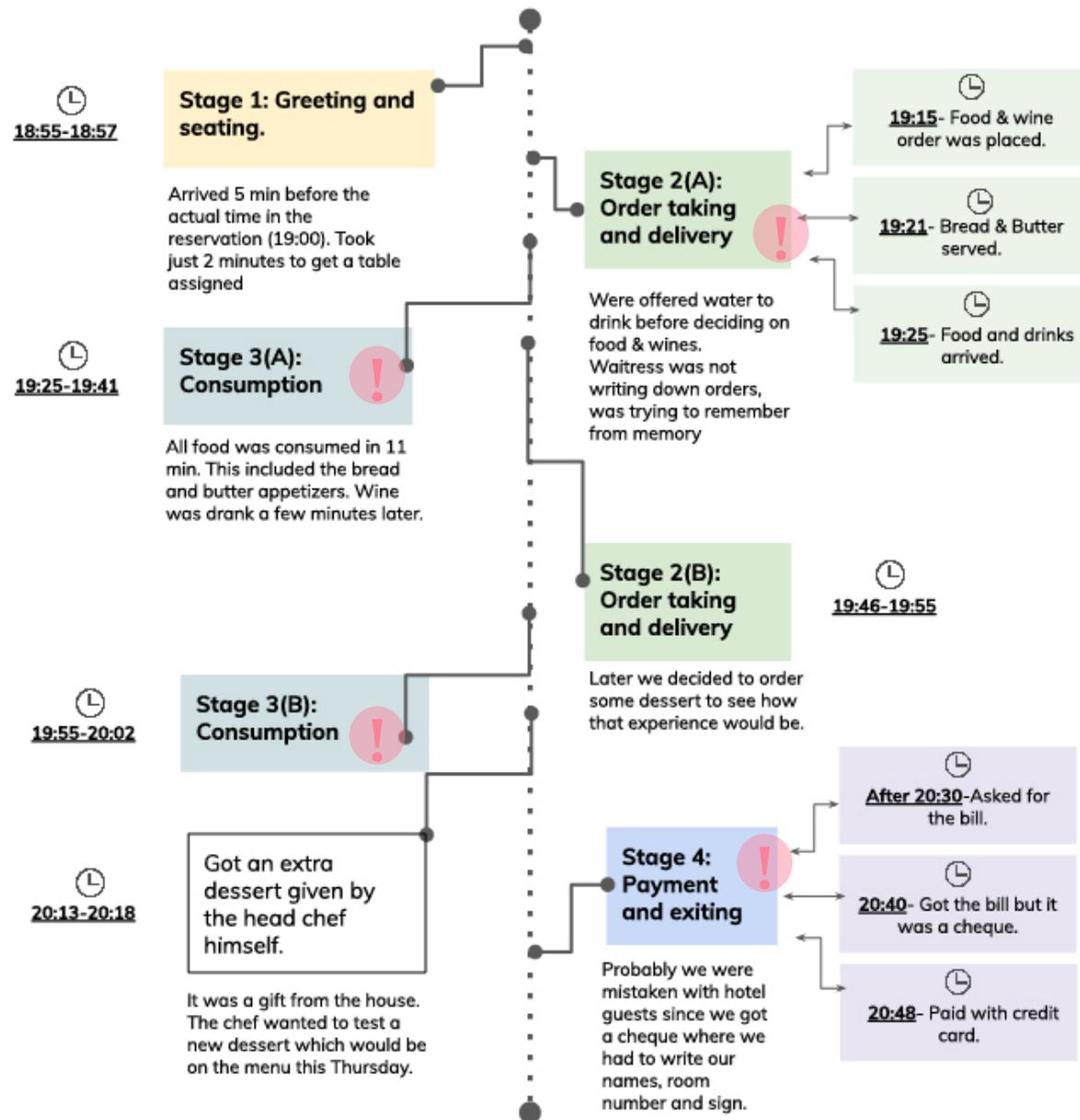


Figure 21. In total the experience lasted about 1 hour and 48 minutes. Generally, the service performance was fair. However, there were some mistakes found, marked by the "!" on the first order taking & delivery, both food and dessert consumption as well as payment.

Main findings

The restaurant experience lasted for one hour and 48 minutes. During that time it was possible to get an initial idea about the restaurant atmosphere and some types of customers. *Insights about the gap between the communicated service and the actual service performance (Parasuraman et al., 1985) were noticed during order taking and delivery, consumption as well as payment and exiting (Young & Soocheong, 2010).*

The service provided by the waitresses was generally good. Their open and friendly attitude helped considerably in establishing a close contact. From the discussions it was clear that the staff had strong knowledge in the wine and food menu. Incidents happened during the order taking and delivery, such as the waitress not writing down the orders and trying to memorize them or coming with the wine bottle already opened to pour in the glass (this could give a strong negative impression). *Since this restaurant is owned by a luxurious hotel and is advertised as a “more affordable” gourmet, customers can interpret these mistakes as a lack of professional service.*

In the consumption stage, critical factors were identified in the way that the food was plated and in the portion size. For instance the mushroom soup was minuscule. The plate used for the soup had a considerable size thus amplifying the impression of a microscopic portion. The “petit fours” dessert had a vague description, it stated that it was done by Oliver-a kitchen chef not a celebrity chef. “Petit fours” were two small chocolate tablets, randomly placed on the plate. It looked very unprofessional and some customers could interpret this as a sign of carelessness. (figure 22)

Payment and exiting had critical incidents as well. The waitress gave a receipt where one had to write the room number in order to get billed. It was assumed that the group was confused with hotel guests. It took 8 minutes to pay, which is a long waiting time. When this was presented to the restaurant manager after the safari, he had a different opinion and said that 8 minutes is an acceptable waiting time for this kind of hotel-restaurant. The bill received is a standard not a mistake, guests are getting the same format regardless if they are actual hotel guests or not.

The manager’s answer was intriguing considering the fact that in the previous meetings, it was stated that “P eatery” is a self-standing brand, independent from the hotel service.



Figure 22. Left: The small portion of soup placed on a plate that made it look smaller. Right: “Petit fours” dessert that has the same issues in regards to plating and quantity.

Chapter learnings

The restaurant industry is a highly adaptable and competitive market. Currently the business models of restaurants are reinvented and a lot of attempts are made in combining elements from each of them in order to get an inventive concept. Despite the increase in Copenhagen's restaurant sales, the number of cafes or restaurants going bankrupt doubled since 2015. Since "Noma" made Copenhagen famous with its "Nordic kitchen" concept, other restaurants started to follow this lead and combined this kitchen type with their business models.

"P eatery" followed the general trend of adapting the concept of Nordic cuisine to the initial French bistro restaurant model. The restaurant offers a "more down to earth gourmet" experience, where customers enjoy refined food in a casual/cozy atmosphere without paying an expensive price. On their social media channels and website, the service is vaguely described and does not offer any clue about what dining experience should be expected. While the restaurant does not have a majority of terrible reviews from, it does not stand out either.

During the service safari it was noticed that the general service was good and waiters were very customer-oriented. There were mistakes in how the service was delivered. Customers could interpret them differently, according to their own expectations of the service. Issues were found in portion sizes and in the way of plating food. Some food portions were minuscule and the plating was done on dishes which did not highlight the content in a positive way (aesthetically speaking).

Although the management aims to make P eatery a brand of its own, their approach has inconsistencies since customers, regardless of being guests or locals, are given the same type of bill where they are asked for the room number which would be used to tax them for the meal. This reveals that "P eatery" can not be seen as a stand alone restaurant since it is part of the SKT. Petri building and the billing is done in the same way as with other services included in the hotel.



4

DEFINE

Food and service with personality, feel the people behind the food and the delivered service!
Emma

CRUCIAL ELEMENTS FOR A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE

"Personalization of their event or their dinner and that we treat them as a hotel guest!"

"CASUAL APPROACH"
Jonas

...ing the hotel destination". (with ... experience ...)

"The fact that there is the experience of different restaurants in the same hotel."
Jonas

"Service ... at ..."
"The ... be good?"
[STELA, WAITRESS]

"how passionate the staff is in their presentations!"
[STELA, WAITRESS]

"Staff service and food quality!"
"Price and location"

to personalization"
... are one a lot of ways ... the restaurant ... a good experience.

"Service and food making."
[Mads, cook]

"level and quality of the food"
"atmosphere, it has to be cozy"
"to be included in a good way"

"personality (...) all our chefs coming out, presenting the food"
"combination of quality food and service"
[EMMA, WAITRESS]

"Food and service, the service can make a night I would say."
[ANDREAS, WAITRESS]

CONTACT WITH CUSTOMERS

"Once in a while the service is a bit slow"

"MAINLY ABOUT WAITING TIME ON THE FOOD"

"Compensation help"
"In instance he really repaired some chairs that had a bad Christmas"

Observation sessions

Planning

Observation sessions were used in order to better understand who the clients are and why they chose to have a dining experience at “P eatery”. To display the information more efficiently, tables were used where each column had a parameter that was relevant for defining the groups of customers (such as approximate age or sex). The sessions were performed generally in the weekend days and on Thursdays. In total there were 7 days of shadowing. Weekends were picked because more people dine out then, thanks to the free time they have from work/school. Whenever it was possible, the collected information was presented to the waitresses in order to check its accuracy.

The author decided to take the role of a “ non-participating observer” where she will not attempt to influence actively the environment. The observation sessions were performed from the distance, at the table nearest to the main restaurant entrance (Harboe, 2010). The location offered the chance to notice who enters the restaurant, at which time and when they depart. There was a secondary entrance to the restaurant from the hotel. Though it was considered, the main focus was the restaurant entrance since it was used by locals.

The parameters used to identify the customers were their **approximative age and if they usually come alone or with company**. Additional details such as **sex and dress code** were included in order to make the general customer categories more accurate. The **time spent at the restaurant** can provide additional hints about how comfortable guests feel in the current atmosphere or if they have other reasons for dining out, besides ordering and consuming food and drinks. For this reason, the arrival and leaving times were noted down to identify a possible pattern. **Comments were also added in case the author would notice anything interesting/relevant.**

Arrival	Group/alone	Dresscode	Sex	Age	Additional Comments	Hour of departure	Local/International (L/I)
18:30-18:40	Alone	Casual, had the trench coat on her still	F	25-30	No reservation, walk in	19:55/20:00	International
18:00	Group2	Casual Elegant	M,F	20-30	Couple, reservation Early bird	20:17	locals
18:00	Group 4	Casual elegant	2M 2F	Early 30-25(F,M) 50s (F,M)	Seems like a family gathering. Early bird reservation	21:10	Lady-international Guy & parents-local

Figure 23. Printscreen from one of the tables used to record the observation data.

What did the observations reveal?

The conversations had with the staff and the dialog between the customers and waiters revealed that the majority of reservations done by locals were through Earlybird.dk. Early bird is a platform that offers the possibility of getting cheaper meals from various restaurants across Denmark's biggest cities. "P eatery" is on the list, offering its tasting menu with 1/4 less of its original price. ***This finding can indicate that locals visiting P eatery come to the restaurant for the bargain- not necessarily because P eatery displays an attractive concept or stands out in any way from other similar restaurants.***

Customers, whether local or hotel clients, had the tendency of bringing company with them. This shows a desire to share the experience and connect with people that mattered. It was interesting to observe that smartphones were seldomly used and not for long time. All the groups focused on conversations between themselves, in some cases affectionate gestures were involved such as holding hands or bending over the table to reduce distance and increase eye contact. ***The finding confirms the initial conclusion found in both reviews and literature, that the social element plays an important part in the dining experience.***

The habit of going in groups and the time spent indicate that the dining experience is used as a way of reinforcing social bounds and of possibly showing status. In this context, food, drinks and atmosphere were acting as mood enhancers - they helped better the experience by engaging all five senses and by giving a context for guests to manifest in. By comparing the arrival and departing times it was possible to estimate that customers spend on average two hours in the restaurant and it can increase up to four hours in weekend days. The findings are compatible with the time spent during the service safari.

Reflecting on the observation's results revealed that "P eatery" offers a standard service. Despite the fact that its elements are of good quality and the staff is very proactive, it does not stand out with anything special for the customer to remember it. Customers create themselves the experience they want with the help of their peers/family/date yet this scenario can happen at any restaurant or cafe. As for the good service, it is a standard that people expect of any place, therefore "P eatery" only provides the bare minimum.

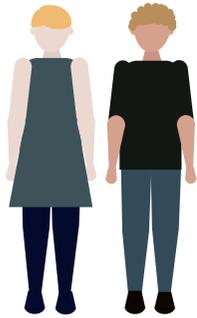


Figure 24. Left image: A place specially arranged for waitresses to have the clutter and menus nearby customers. Middle: A glimpse of the open kitchen that is placed in the middle of the restaurant, between the dining place and the snack place. Right: A close-up from the open kitchen where jars of ingredients prepared by chefs are exhibited.



Figure 25. Images of the service during the observations. The light and the fact that photos had to be taken with discretion affected the quality of most pictures. However, they are still relevant as documentation material.

Main user categories discovered during observations



Most common user group: Couples

Couples (both local and international) with the general age between 20-30 years old, sometimes 40+. Usually, these users already had a reservation and in some cases they were mentioning to the waitress that they had it done on “Earlybird.dk”. This category came for both social and romantic reasons.



Third user group: Families

Families with 3-4 members. The parent ages were generally from 45 to 60 and 20-30 for their children. For them, going out is an occasion to have good quality family time or celebrate a special event such as a birthday. In one occasion a family gathering was made so that the parents meet their son’s girlfriend.



Second user group: Friends

Groups of friends, from a small group of 2 people to groups that had more than 4 members. Ages would vary from 20-30 years up to 50-60 years. Sometimes there would be members of the same sex or mixed. Dining out is a way for them to get together and spend a good night. Another reason was to have a “double date” where two couples would meet.

Understanding local dining habits

Preparing the online survey

In order to frame the findings from observations, a survey inquiring about local dining habits was released online. The initial draft of the questions was made in English (appendix page 49) and translated in Danish afterwards. Translating it in the local language would reduce the bias of getting answers from internationals—since they were not the targeted group. Questions were mainly about what attracts when deciding on a restaurant, how often people dine out or how do locals search for restaurants. The format had multiple answers formulated from the existing data about what clients seek when choosing a restaurant. Other questions, such as how they find a restaurant to dine at were left as short paragraph answers.

To have a consistent set of data, it was estimated that 20-30 answers would be enough to get relevant insights about this subject.

Survey key findings

The survey had a total of 31 answers, mainly from people between 20-30 years old. Even though there was an invitation to collaborate in a possible future workshop, that field was not completed by anyone. In general, locals eat out a few times per month, followed by a smaller group that would dine out once a year or never. It was reinforced once more that the social aspect became prevalent in choosing a dining experience and that food, although important, is not enough to convince guests to come in the first place.

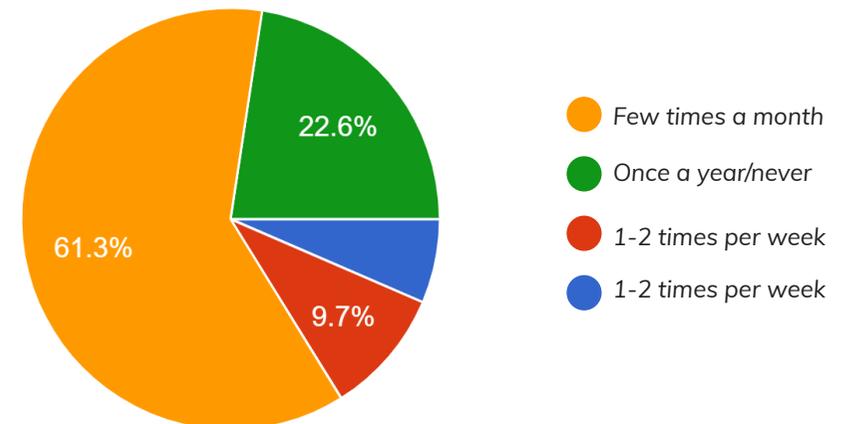


Figure 26. The Google form result depicting how often locals dine.

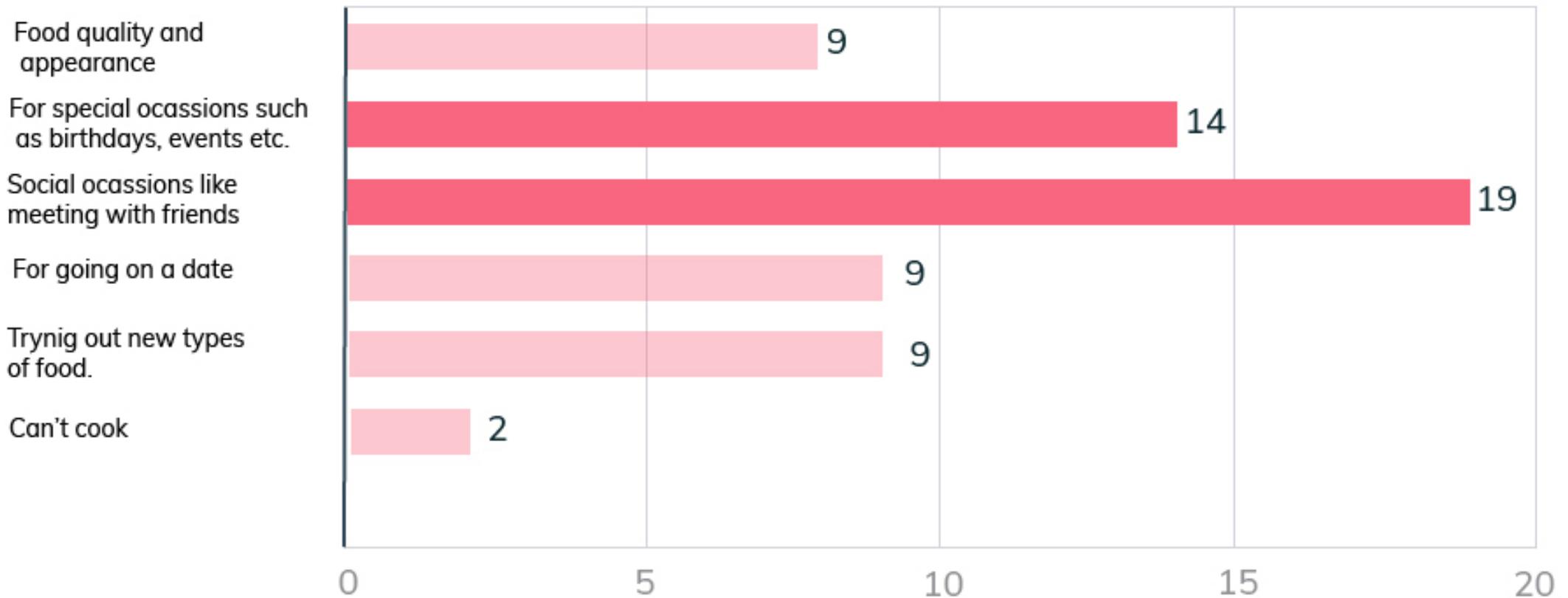


Figure 28. The survey also inquired about why do locals go out to eat. Building up social bonds and marking a special event like a birthday or a graduation are what motivates people to seek a dinning place. Food by itself is not considered a strong motivator. This confirms that it is not enough to provide good quality food since the main interest shifted towards getting a memorable experience; where food is just one of the elements that form it.

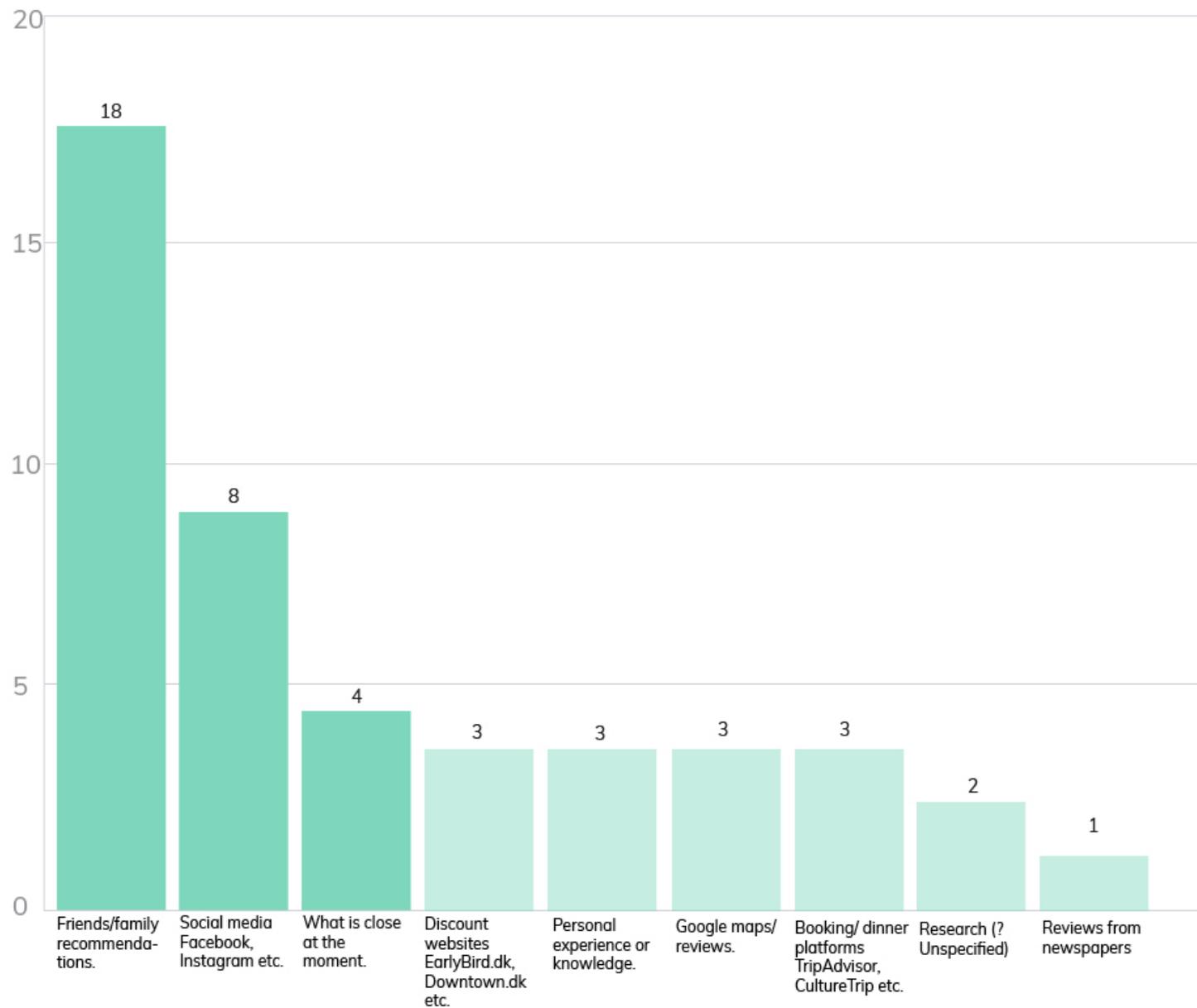


Figure 27. When asked about how they pick a place to eat, more than a half declared that they follow recommendations from friends or family. The social element (word of mouth) is prevalent in this case and has a decisive role in the process of selecting a restaurant. Social media research is the secondary factor that respondents use, followed by what is available to them in the respective moment.

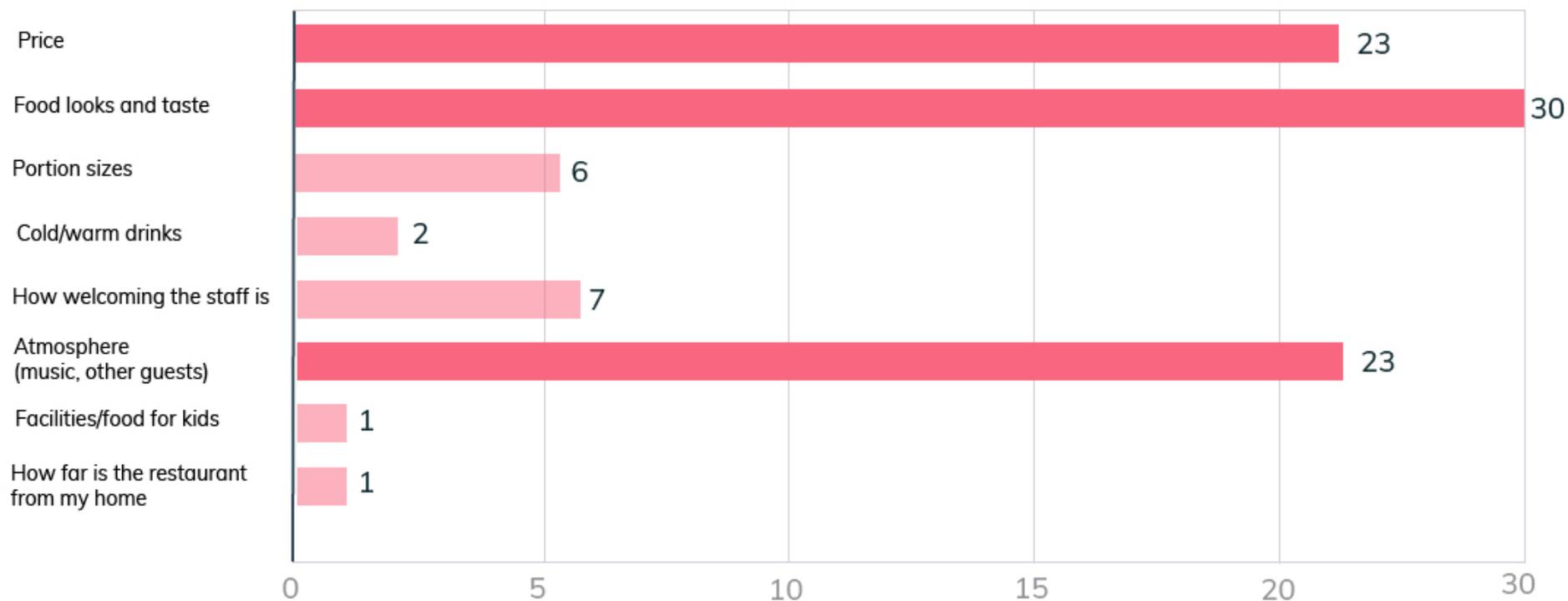


Figure 29. From the factors which are considered important when dining out, food got in the center of attention with 30 out of 31 answers, followed by the price. How big the food portions are is not that relevant for the respondents. Instead, locals focus on places with good atmosphere. It is intriguing to see that the respondents did not prioritize the staff's courtship among their options. This does not necessarily mean that locals do not seek friendliness from the staff, it may be that this is considered a standard and will be commented only in special situations (such as if the waiter does something remarkable in the service or if it does the job poorly).

Who is a “local Copenhagener”?

In the observation sessions it was possible to identify 3 main user categories (couples, friend groups and families). Combining the observations data with the survey data unfolded who the “local Copenhageners” from the user categories are. The first group is comprised of “Local Danes” that live and work in Copenhagen. They have tight relations with another group named “Expats adapted to Copenhagen life”. Both groups have the chance to interact often since they can be present in the same work space, at the same events or can be already part of the same family.

“Local Danes”

Includes youth between 20-30 years old that are either students or just alumni which entered the job market. They dine out a few times a month. While the food quality and price is important, they are also attracted to places which have a good atmosphere and allow them to form strong social bonds with their peers/family. Dining out represents a good occasion to celebrate important events in their life. (birthdays, graduations, dates etc.)

“Expats adapted to Copenhagen life”

This group of expats have been spending a few years in Denmark, getting used to the culture and traditions of the place. By now they should have a fair understanding of Danish language. They have a steady job and formed by now a network of friends among both locals and internationals.

This group is relevant since it has close relations to the first target group. They may be spouses, best friends or work buddies. Both Danes and expats form relations and use dining out as a context of increasing social contact.



Staff and management interviews

Interview protocol

Taking staff and management interviews was an important step since the conclusions from them were later used to compare with the data gathered from customers. The goal was to explore potential gaps that can be addressed during ideation and to check if both the restaurant and customers pay attention to the same context cues of the dining experience.

In this project, the author decided to make an interview protocol(appendix, page 50) to follow during the discussions. Interview protocols are important research instruments when making semi-structured interviews since they give the opportunity to verify if the topics are congruent with the research goals. Using this framework helped in structuring the topics in a logical way while revealing what aspects had to be improved upon. (Zomerdjiik et al., 2010; Milagros, 2016)

Research Questions	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do restaurants design their service in order to create a memorable experience, and is the service compatible with the actual customer expectations? 2. Which cues of the service experience are of interest for restaurant customers(patrons), when deciding for a place to dine at? What cues could potentially demotivate their decision? 	
Introduction	
For All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional background - For how long have they been working at P eatery - Daily activities/Main responsibilities
Transition	
For All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there are differences between working in a hotel-restaurant like P eatery and a actual restaurant business. - What kind of restaurant P eatery is, if they consider it gourmet or something else
Key questions-directly linked to research questions	

Figure 26. The questions were classified as Introduction questions-to find out more about the person's background, Transition-would slowly move to the main topic and Key questions-that are directly linked to the main research points.

Decoding the interview data

With the help of traditional coding (figure 27), the interview data was grouped in three main categories with their respective subthemes.(Bjorner, 2016). The analysis revealed inconsistencies in “P eatery’s” identity, **every interviewed person had a different opinion about what type of restaurant they work at. Besides these significant discrepancies, another surprising discovery was the attitude of the salesman towards how he sells “P eatery”. He declared that he sells the hotel as a destination, where “P eatery” offers an alternative experience from the usual restaurant service in the hotel.** This shatters the initial client brief affirmation that “P eatery” is a brand of it’s own. There is an excessive amount of data that proves this initial statement to be wrong.

“P eatery’s” business Identity

“P eatery” is not the only focus since the whole team behind it is in charge with taking care of the hotel business as well. Other differences between a hotel restaurant and an actual restaurant involve more strict rules for waiters such as interdiction to smoke or come at the restaurant with other clothes than the working uniform. Besides rules, there is a lot of bureaucracy which makes it difficult to make changes from ordering new spirits to menu style or to how the service is delivered.

Every interviewee had their own perspective of how gourmet or close to casual service “P eatery” is. The sales and marketing employees considered that the restaurant is gourmet, especially since the food comes from gourmet restaurant distributors. Each waiter had a different opinion as well, from “gourmet” to “casual gourmet” and to “casual restaurant”. **It was interesting to notice the change of attitude from the newly hired restaurant manager. The manager declared in previous meetings that the restaurant is a “down to Earth” gourmet. His view was completely different during the interview when he concluded that “P eatery” resembles a “high end brasserie”. The only element which everyone considered to be gourmet was the techniques of preparing the food such as “molecular deconstruction”.**

Restaurant service

For the majority of interviewees **food, service (from both cook and waiters) and atmosphere/ personalization were crucial events in creating a good atmosphere for guests.** Even though each member of the restaurant team had different opinions over how gourmet or casual “P eatery” is, they all agreed mostly on the same elements in regards to give a great experience to customers. Event organization is shared between the marketing and

sales employee, with the last being the “mastermind” behind them. At this stage it appeared that the team is experimenting with various events such as cooking classes or sustainable meals in partnership with “TooGoodToGo”. Some were successful whilst others, such as the sustainable meal did not work despite of having a big stakeholder involved. In regards to why the event did not get enough participants, both marketing and sales had different opinions about it.

P eatery’s customers

Handling complaints is done only by the sales guy, talking with him offered the opportunity to find out that the customers which had bad Christmas dinners due to long waiting times, got refunded and invited to another meal on the house. It appeared that they were very happy and declared to the sales employee that he improved their initial experience. *However, even though customers got compensated very well, they never mention this and the bad reviews remain.*

Between locals and internationals there were differences in attitude: locals were more reserved unlike internationals that were enthusiastic and open to talk. The restaurant manager went more into detail by mentioning that *for locals, dining out is all about atmosphere whilst for internationals, restaurants such as “P eatery” are an affordable way of getting familiar to the local cuisine and restaurant experience.*

Waiters and manager were asked about the calls they usually make to clients on the day to confirm booking. From the service point of view, it seems as an extra touchpoint that may annoy clients since confirmation emails and messages are sent as well. Opinions were once again diverse: from a useless thing to do to a step that had to be done and offered a chance to add extra to the service-by inquiring about the client’s special wishes (if any). The only general fact was that customers actually rarely answer to these calls.

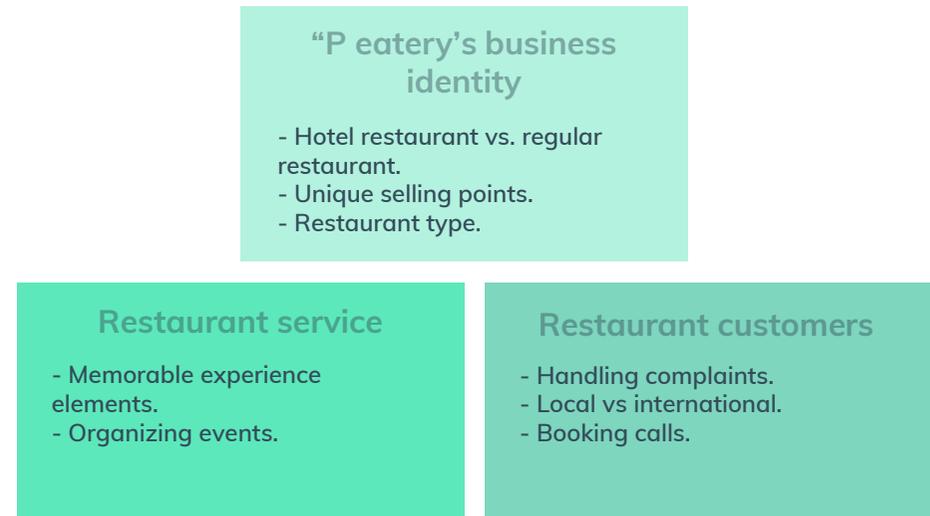


Figure 27. The main concepts extracted using traditional coding: “P eatery’s business identity”, “Restaurant service”, “Restaurant customers”. Under each title their corresponding sub-themes were placed.

Research conclusions

The initial thought in the exploring phase about “P eatery” having a service which does not stand out is being reinforced during the observation sessions, where customers were making their own experience in the restaurant. Moreover, the service is displayed on a list from EarlyBird with bargain offers for food. Although this is not necessarily bad, it does not help the business either since it may appear just an option out of the many on the platform’s list. Besides that, it seems as an inadequate way of managing the food resources which are either grown from scratch by chefs or supplied by gourmet restaurant distributors.

Even though customers who had a bad experience get refunded and called back for a meal on the house- like in the case of bad Christmas dinner experience- they do not feel the need to talk about it and the ratings remain the same on the booking platforms. This indicates that people once they had a bad experience, will not return to the place even after receiving the compensations. Additionally, it appears that customers will not generally comment on the service unless things go terribly bad such as in cases with long waiting times for food.

Both staff and management focus on the food quality and service when it comes to offer a memorable experience. Even though these are indeed crucial elements, the approach focuses only on the quality level and on offering multiple options to customers. *It is equally important to add personality, element which is not actively present in how “P eatery” communicates and delivers its service. The “down to Earth” gourmet is reduced to casual atmosphere and more affordable prices, which gives the sensation that the concept is incomplete.*

Final problem statement

Generally, “P eatery” tries to keep a good standard when delivering the service, but it is missing an original element of its own to stand out as more than a casual restaurant with high quality food and staff that are very customer-oriented. That touch of personality can be the key towards making the experience more memorable for the guests. Moreover, guests are not prepared beforehand about what experience to expect when choosing to dine at “P eatery”. As the competitor analysis showed, the experience starts with the service description on social media and website. There was no consistent concept of the dining experience presented clearly across online channels.

The final problem statement was formulated to address the issue of providing a more attractive dining experience.

How can service design help “P eatery” to be more active in providing a memorable experience for its customers?

Chapter learnings

Although most of the research was carried using analogue methods it offered important insights about the gaps between “P eatery” and its customers and between the management and staff. Observation sessions offered insights about how customers use the service provided by “P eatery”. It was shown that customers value highly the social aspect of dining out and use the service in this manner. Launching a survey to get an understanding of how local Copenhageners dine out and choose restaurants helped confirm findings from the observations and gave an accurate picture of the two identified target groups and their dining habits.

On the service provider’s end, there is emphasis on providing quality food, service and on establishing an open relation with the customer. However, the management does not actively design an experience for the customers, instead it only offers the standard interactions that are expected of the service. The ambiguity surrounding the concept was brought to attention once more during the staff and management interviews, where each interviewed person had a different perspective over the restaurant’s identity. *As a result, the problem shifted from the management not knowing its audience to the management not knowing themselves what they actually sell.*

The new findings helped frame the research process and confirmed initial findings in the discovery phase. Interviews showed that the service is focused on standard things and does not offer a general direction of the experience for the customer to follow. As Pine and Gilmore (1998) stated, it is not enough for services to focus only on the delivered quality. At the end of the define phase, a final focus was chosen about how to have “P eatery” more involved in offering a memorable experience for guests.



5

"P EATERY"

BECOMES

"DADA"

WE'RE CLOSING,
FOLLOW FOR UPDATES

Consequences of the shift for the current project

Towards the end of March, the P eatery management took the decision to abandon the current concept and try something different. The restaurant would close on the 13th of April and reopen in May under the name of "DADA", a family style restaurant with Middle Eastern food. This sudden decision is logical considering that the current identity is unclear, the service offering is described vaguely on the website/social media and that different mindsets about what restaurant type this is exist in the same team. Furthermore, the fact that the business relies on bargain websites such as EarlyBird creates further damage since food made from premium organic ingredients is sold for less than the actual value.

By the time the new restaurant concept was adopted, the research phase of the P eatery project came to an end. From this perspective it was reasonable to continue with the project as normally, especially since the the next step was the ideation part- which is already placed in an ideal realm. The major consequence of the pivotal moment is that the client will not be as active or receptive to the developed service ideas since it was already decided on a solution. However, the possibility of ideating or presenting possible concepts to the identified target group can still be done and the results will not be influenced by the latest circumstances.

Both staff and management focus on the food quality and service when it comes to offer a memorable experience. Even though these are indeed crucial elements, the approach focuses only on the quality level and on offering multiple options to customers. *It is equally important to add personality, element which is not actively present in how "P eatery" communicates and delivers its service. The "down to Earth" gourmet is reduced to casual atmosphere and more affordable prices, which gives the sensation that the concept is incomplete.*

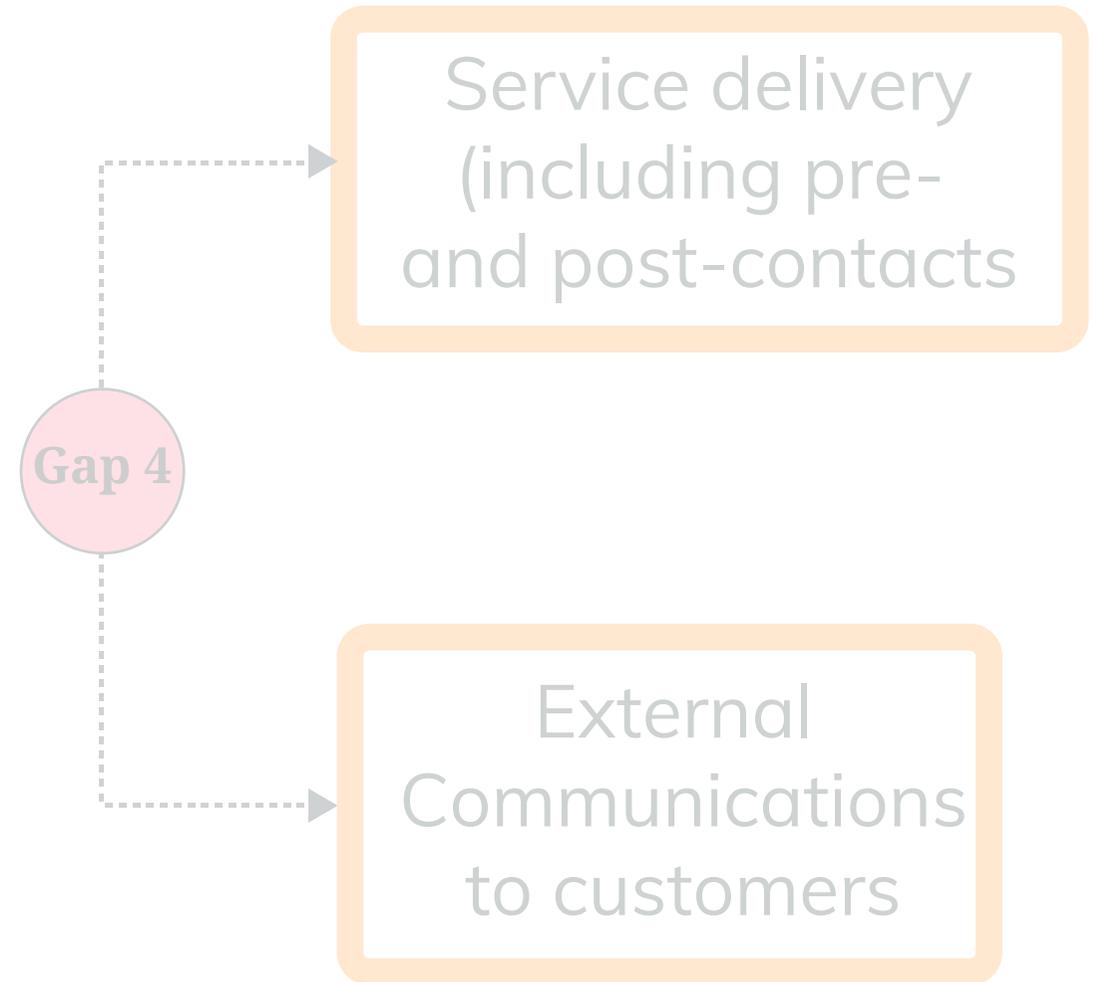
From gap to opportunity

Ideation focus: Gap number 4

Initially, the focus was on the first gap, following the brief offered by the “P eatery” management, that had no idea about which locals visit them and why. The research presented another issue: there was no consistent business concept to follow and the offered service was a standard which did not actively offer an experience.

These findings are compatible gap number 4, where the issue is between how the service is communicated and how the service is actually delivered. “P eatery” communicates its service in vague terms and does not offer a general direction to follow when anticipating the future experience. Although there is focus on the customer, there are few elements that facilitate a deeper engagement with the service to make it unforgettable.

The ideation phase will be focused on solving issues from gap 4, since the dilemma in regards to attracting more locals stems from it. Gap 4 is also compatible with the findings about “experience-centric” services and how are they used to gain loyalty and the chance to attract potential new clients.



Situation assesment - S.W.O.T.

Before starting to ideate possible solutions, a SWOT analysis was performed in order to map out the important strenghts and weaknesses of “P eatery’s” business concept.

(“SWOT Analysis – Discover New Opportunities, Manage and Eliminate Threats”, 2019)

The goal was to understand, from a strategic point of view, where is the business standing, what opportunities can be used and what weaknesses to acknowledge while developing new ideas. SWOT was used as a way to get inspiration for this case.

Strenghts

One of the main arguments for why is “P eatery” not gourmet is the restaurant size. The space is comprised of 150 seats , which is too big for a gourmet restaurant that has less than one third of this number. *This can become “P eatery’s” strenght since it offers the possibility to rearrange the place in order to accomodate various events or activities.* In regards to trying out new ideas, the management is receptive to it and a willingness to improve the service in such way that it makes it better for both staff and clients was remarked. Such qualities are of great help in this everchanging business market. The team of chefs is a relevant asset because they treat food making as more than just a job. They personal-

ly grow, select and prepare ingredients and enjoy sharing insights of the process with customers that come to taste their food. Moreover, chefs work on their own recipes and participate in national cooking contest, making a name for themselves and the restaurant. Personalizing the service according to customer wishes can become a strenght because it communicates that this is an environment where everyone is welcomed and preferences do not create any boundaries between guests themselves or between staff and guests.

Weaknesses

Although the team of chefs have an attractive process and philosophy of preparing food that can frame the “down to Earth” gourmet concept, it is not highlighted on the social media or website. *There is a great opportunity for storytelling to engage customers yet the team does not use it.* This can be one of their mistakes which determines the vagueness of their concept and selling points. The restaurant interior and playlist give a confusing perception since it emulates in some ways a cafe or a tea house. It makes the concept seem even more fragmented than it already is. Between members of the management and staff there are obvious communication issues which add to the unclear message around “P eatery’s”

service. For instance some members want to represent the restaurant as an independent brand yet the sales man promotes it as an extra experience in the hotel service.

Opportunities

An evident opportunity is “P eatery’s” advantageous position which allows it to form connections with relevant stakeholders. This is not a simple local restaurant, a relevant hotel brand is behind it. Their interest to reduce food waste by using food resources to their maximum potential can offer a chance to rise as a representant of the current market trend that aims to reduce food waste (just like Too-GoodToGo or Wefood). The fact that chefs participate in the national cooking contest can be interpreted as an opportunity since they can get remarked by other restaurants or organizations that will be interested in connecting and promoting them.

Threats

“P eatery is placed in a highly competitive market, if it is not receptive frequently towards the changes that occur, the business risks to fall behind, becoming invisible in a sea of small restaurants with similar kitchen types. Another issue is the general perception of people, if the restaurant will end up appearing as just an element of the hotel service, locals will not be interested to come since it will be assumed that this is only for tourists.

What did the situation assessment reveal?

Performing SWOT before the beginning of ideation helped to better understand what elements from “down to Earth” gourmet can be adopted in new concepts and how to combine them. For instance it was appreciated that the approach of making events at the restaurant was a good initiative, especially since the size allows it.

The size of the place was used as one of the main arguments for why “P eatery” is not a gourmet and for why the techniques used to cook the food are simplified versions of gourmet cuisine. *This is not necessarily a weakness since it was revealed in the desktop research that the food industry is currently reinventing the standard models and experiments with innovative approaches towards preparing the food.*

What “P eatery” lacked was that the management was not consistent in organizing events and in planning events that would reflect the personality of “down to Earth” gourmet. Considering the resources and opportunities, events are a good approach since they create an atmosphere where people can engage emotionally with the service.

Strenghts

- Big restaurant space that can be used for various events or activities.
- Management and staff are receptive towards new ideas.
- Chefs involved in procuring the right ingredients.
- Chefs like to engage with clients.
- Service tailored to customer needs.

Weaknesses

- Concept and unique selling points are not well defined.
- No updates on social media/website about the service or awards won be the restaurant chefs.
- Restaurant aesthetics and playlist not compatible with the general identity.
- Communication problems between management and staff.

Opportunities

- Chances of connecting with relevant stakeholders such as TooGoodToGo.
- Their interest in reducing food waste by using all available food resources in the kitchen can help them become relevant in the fight against food waste in Denmark.
- Getting remarked as a restaurant by the participants in the cooking competitions attended by their chefs.

Threats

- A competitive market where original concepts flourish.
- Will become invisible in the area of restaurants that have similar concepts.
- Never be considered as an independent restaurant from the general hotel service.



Figure 28. SWOT was used to make a situation assessment- understand what resources are available to work with and potential risks that can affect the concept.

Idea generation: Using “fact-fiction matrix”

The “fact-fiction matrix” was initially presented during a second semester workshop about video sketching (Vistisen, 2018). This tool helps map out all the research results into “Histories”, that are lessons learned during the project and “Myths”, the misconceptions believed by people about the respective service. Both fields are placed in the horizontal axis “Past” part. “Future” is comprised of “Signals” that show possible tendencies gathered from the existing data and “Scenarios” that offer possible solutions based on the gathered data and predictions.

This structured approach to ideation was considered relevant for the current project for two main reasons: The first reason was that it ensured a strong link between the generated ideas and research. Having the research in the same graphic with possible scenarios gives more inspiration and can minimize the risk of developing concepts that are not compatible with the findings. As second reason, the matrix offered a different way of interpreting the current data starting from the main findings and misconceptions to possible tendencies and solutions for the existent gaps.

“Histories” included the importance of atmosphere/social element for locals when dining out or that the food served at “P eatery”, although it is not exotic, gets a personal twist with gourmet techniques. The misconceptions were about “P eatery” being confused with the hotel entrance or with “Petri” the restaurant included in the hotel service. Future “Probabilities were centered around the fact that the classic restaurant definition changes and people will expect more than food or courtship. Finally, the “What if...?” scenarios focused on organizing events/ social gatherings that can attract customers.

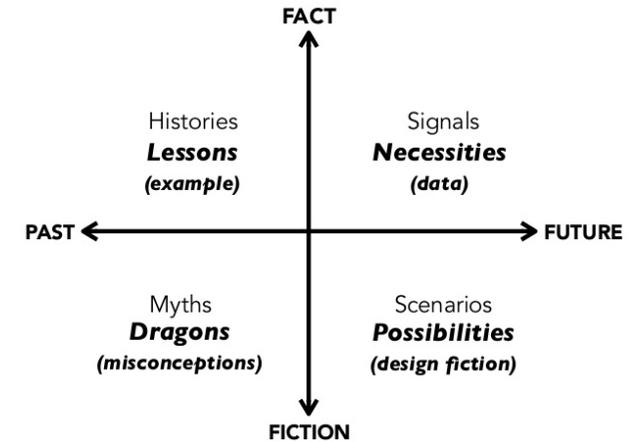


Figure 29. The fact-fiction matrix introduced by Peter Vistisen (2018) during a workshop.

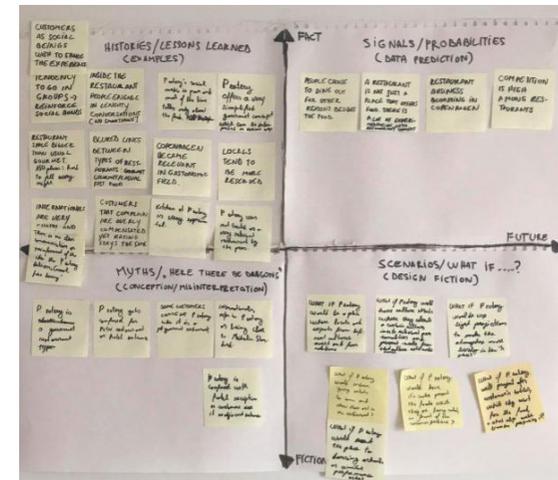


Figure 30. The matrix used to brainstorm different scenarios.

Three service concepts

The “What if....?” questions were analyzed and in some cases they were either combined to form a concept or put aside since they were presenting an idea that could not be transformed into a service; such as using light projections to make the atmosphere more entertaining -which could be relevant as a touch point in a service but not as a service itself. In total 3 main concepts were developed from the idea generation.

“Peatery Live Cooking sessions”

Concept description

Through live cooking sessions presented by the head chef Brendon (figure 31), customers get to experience the process of making gourmet inspired dishes that arrive on their plate. This concept makes use of the open kitchen where the chefs work. Brendon is usually enthusiastic and talkative about how he grows and prepares himself the ingredients and then transforms them into great dishes by using gourmet techniques. His presentation can be transformed into an experience where he demonstrates his talent by cooking a dish which would be served to customers afterwards in order to complete the experience.

Strengths

“The live cooking” will ground the “down to Earth” concept by bringing gourmet food at a lower level, where everyone can experience it. It will highlight the talents of the chefs and their involvement in every stage of the cooking process, from preparing ingredients until the plating. From this point of view it adds more personality to the service and enables emotional engagement from customers. Moreover, clients are entertained while learning at the same time new things.

Weaknesses

The main concern is how to organize this event in order to do not disrupt the current restaurant service. At the same time it will be a challenge to ensure that people remember it afterwards and will consider coming again-bringing even more friends or family members.

“Fine art meets fine dining”

Concept description

This scenario was formed keeping in mind the restaurant size and placement in the center of Copenhagen. “P eatery” can team up with different art schools, associations or even aspiring young artists. The students/young artists would have events or exhibitions in the restaurant (figure 32). Their friends, family or supporters will come and enjoy the event and will get to taste some dishes that Brandon made, inspired from the exhibited art.

Strenghts

“P eatery “ gets access to stakeholders that can bring a lot of potential clients in the restaurant. It can gather a community of people interested in both fine art and fine dining. The service will get more exposure and will be remarked as a place that makes literally art on a plate because Brendon will make a dish inspired from the exhibition team.

Weaknesses

A relevant weakness in this case is the fact that it may appear as an event exclusively for art lovers/professionals. “P eatery” may risk entering in a small niche in this service won’t be communicated in a way to suggest that everyone is welcomed regardless of their knowledge about fine art or fine dining.

“People’s Eatery meetup”

Concept description

This concept focuses on “P eatery” hosting its own tasting events (Figure 33). Once or twice a month the restaurant can plan a special menu and invite people to taste it on the day while getting the chance to get inside the kitchen and hear Brandon’s presentation of the food. Customers will get to touch and see some sample ingredients used in the food that were prepared specially for that event. The presentation in the kitchen will occur before the official opening hour in order to avoid any inconveniences.

Strenghts

The customers will be presented with a one time offer and the experience of going in the kitchen, exploring how the cooking process is done and interact at a closer level with Brendon and his team. Moreover, they will be the judges of the new food since after consumption Bredon will ask for their opinion. This will increase the level of satisfaction and engagement since people will feel that their thoughts actually matter and the restaurant can get relevant data from their customers in regards to what they like.

Weaknesses

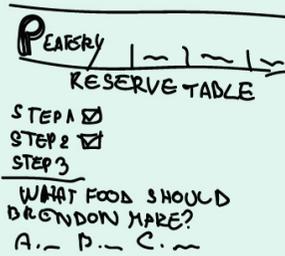
It is not clear if people will be very interested in a tasting event. At the same time, even tohugh there is engaement with the chef, it feels like it would not be enough to have clients remember this service and thinking to return a second time.

Comparing concepts

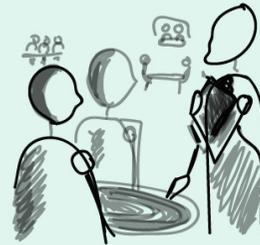
From the concepts presented previously, “Live Cooking” appeared to be promising since it involved both entertainment and acquiring of new knowledge. “Fine art meets fine dining” appeared too focused on a certain type of knowledge and the entertainment element was not actively present. Although the meetup event was less exclusive and involved contacts with the kitchen and chefs, it did not appear to make a strong/memorable impression.



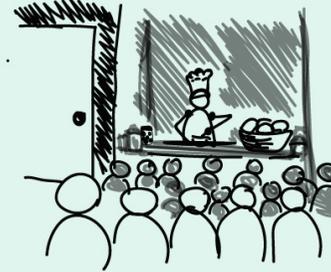
Sees a post on Instagram about "Live Cooking sessions" with Brendon at P eatery.



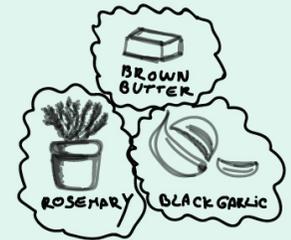
Decides to reserve a table. Before confirmation, a food poll is shown to vote on what food guest thinks that Brendon should make.



At the restaurant they get seated and start ordering drinks.



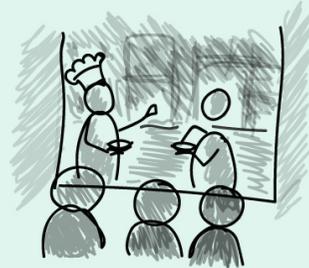
Live show starts, Brendon makes and intro and presents which food from the poll got most votes.



Before the cooking demonstration, Brendon presents the ingredients he will use highlighting the fact that everything is done from scratch.



Monitors will be put in the restaurant so all can have a chance to see the show, even though some did not do a reservation for it.



A random guest is chosen to taste the food first.



The other guests get also from the food to taste.



At the end of the experience, they get a brochure with the food recipe.

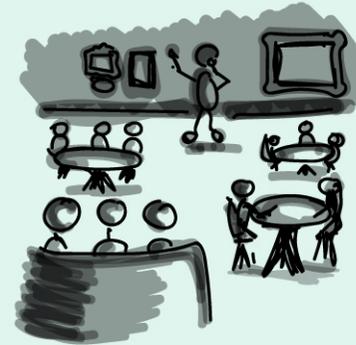
Figure 31. The fast sketch of the "Live cooking" idea, where Brandon will demonstrate how to cook a simple gourmet snack. Customers will experience the cooking process, will get the chance to taste on the spot the snack and can take this experience home by receiving brochures with the recipe so they can try cooking the snack themselves.



Finds out from friends that have art exhibition about the event. Books a table on P eatery website.



Arrive 30 min before the event starts to get seated and buy drinks.



Event starts, speaker presents the exhibition and the artwork.



After the presentation, Brendon presents the dining menu which is inspired from the exhibition theme.

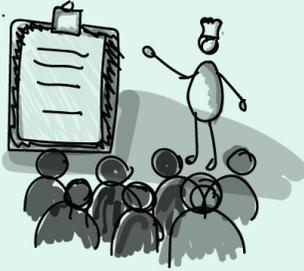


People enjoy the food while admiring the artwork that inspired it.

Figure 32. The fast sketch of the “Fine art meets fine dining” idea, where “P eatery will partner up with art schools, associations or young artists to exhibit their art works at the restaurant. As a part of the event, a special menu will be presented where the food is inspired directly from the exhibition theme. People will get the chance to engage with both the artist’s and the chef’s vision of the theme.



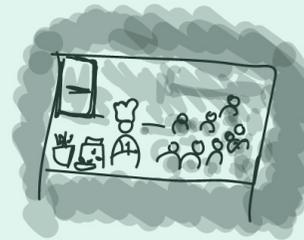
Sees that meet-up has an event hosted by "P eatery" about a tasting menu.



At the event Brendon presents the new tasting menu concept.



Customers receive the menu from the waiters to follow it as Brendon talks about what inspired him to create it.



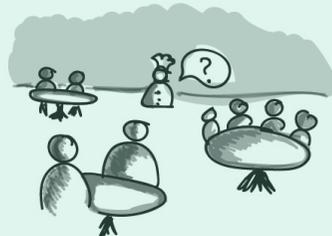
Afterwards all customers are invited in the kitchen where Brendon continues to discuss about the ingredients he selected/ grew personally.



Customers are given samples of the ingredients to touch, smell or taste in order to complement the chef's explanations.



After the presentation, customers can order the menu for that night at a special price since they will be firsts to test it.



Once guests are done with the food, he will ask everyone for feedback and engage in further discussions about the food.

Figure 33. "People's Eatery Meetup" has an exclusive side to it where people that booked on the evening where "P eatery" launches its new menu get to talk personally to Brendon and find out more about the side "over the counter" where food is being prepared.

Reaching out to locals: Workshop

Why a workshop?

Motivation

At this stage of the project, the thesis partner closed the restaurant and decided to change the concept, therefore eliminating the option of presenting and building together on ideas. However, valuable insights could still be received through a workshop with local Copenhageners (Martin & Hannington, 2012). In previous projects, workshops/testings would mostly be done between other students from the university. On this occasion, it was decided to launch the invitation outside the university building and see what happens in this case.

Planning

Three scenarios were developed on sticky notes and placed on a cartboard. The purpose was to present each scenario to the participants and then engage in a conversation about what is attractive about this idea, what the risks are or what could be done better. Insights would be written/drawn on sticky notes and placed on the board. At the end of the session, each participant gets 3 votes that can be placed to the concepts which are more attractive.

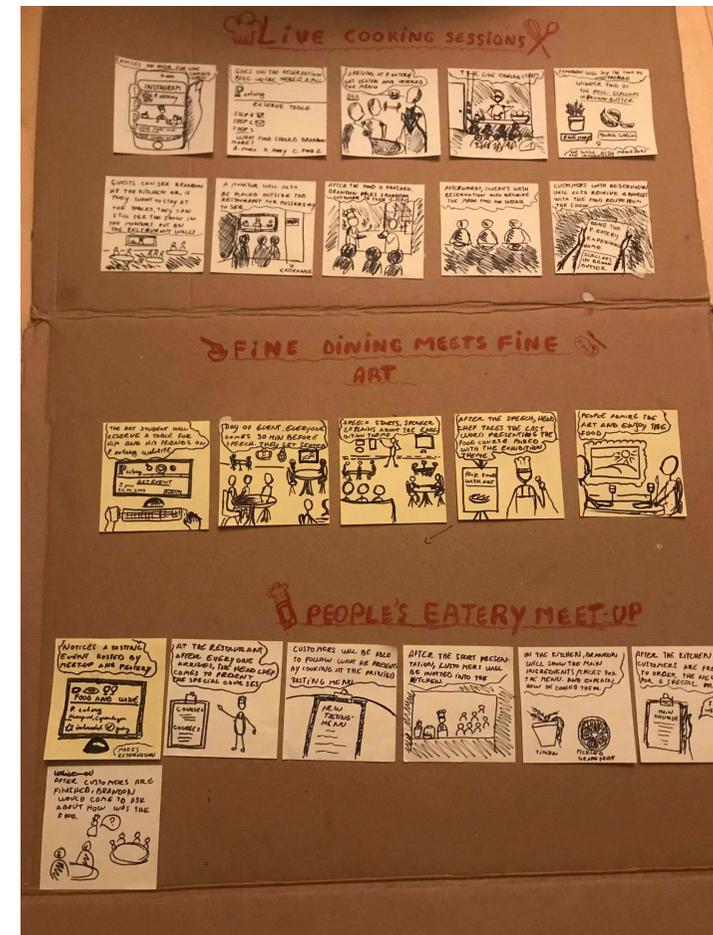


Figure 34. The idea board made to facilitate workshop discussion.

Challenges and final conclusions

The challenge of getting participants

Deciding to get participants outside the university had challenges of its own. It was very hard to attract people to come despite posting events publicly on Facebook or using word of mouth. In the end around 6-7 participants were found after moving the workshop at a cafe and promising a free brunch as a way of thanking for the participation.

The difficulties did not stop at attracting people, they continued as unforeseen circumstances. In the day of the workshop, some called in sick while others did not reply anymore. In the end just two participants showed up. It was decided to still hold the workshop and take into account the offered feedback since it came from target group representants. At the same time the results will be approached with caution since there was a limited number of people that provided them.

Workshop conclusions

Both participants were expert users that were going out regularly. Initially they were presented with “P eatery’s” concept and the conclusions from the survey aimed at locals. This provided a good chance to re-confirm research results and gave a context for the presentation. The participants were enthusiastic about the concepts. Yet that did not impede them to talk about the possible weaknesses that each could have.

“**Live cooking sessions**” was appreciated because of its entertainment qualities and the fact that it gives access to a type of knowledge that is not usually on display. They linked this to a feeling of exclusivity, of getting something special that usually it is not so easy to access (“VIP feeling”). Service transparency was another valued quality, the fact that the cooking process and its elements become visible makes the whole experience much more entertaining. It also inspires trustworthiness because the clients interact with the chef that presents the snacks. They added that such event is especially suited for romantic dates since it helps remove the awkwardness of starting a conversation.

The detail of having additional screens in the restaurant and one outside to further engage customers and passers-by was appreciated as well. One of the participants added that those screens can be used further, not just during the event, but also afterwards in showing older cooking sessions to entertain and make customers curious.

When it came to discussing weaknesses, they were questioning its frequency in relation to keeping recurrent customers. If the event repeats itself with the same snack recipe every week, it will not be as exciting and many will not come. On the other hand it could be something seasonal where for one week the event will be taking place. They concluded that, in order for this idea to be successful, this event should not occur too often in order to strengthen the feeling of exclusivity- which is a main motivator for people to visit "P eatery".

"Fine dining meets fine art" was considered an original event thanks to the fact that the art exhibition would have its own menu, inspired from it. That makes the experience both meaningful and memorable. However, one of the respondents was not sure about how relevant it would be to the majority of people since some may not have an interest for art.

The second respondent added that the concept is vague and that she would not know to expect. It needs more information in the description. They suggested to add more entertainment to it by fun games such as "draw and drink" to make it more varied and personal. The biggest weakness in their opinion was that this needed more research in regards to what is popular in regards to art in Copenhagen and what others generally prefer. If exhibitions have uninteresting/uninspiring subjects then not many will come and it will be hard to justify the whole effort in that case.

"People's Eatery Meetup" was liked because it showed a "behind the scenes" view with customers that come in the kitchen and interact with the chef and food ingredients that are to be found in their tasting menu. One participant added that it would give her more trust in regards to the conditions in which her food is made. If she will see a well kept kitchen with professional staff she will trust more the food quality. Yet in some ways, the participants found this concept to be similar with the "Live cooking sessions".

The first weakness detected was in regards to the organization of this event. First of all it had to be organized in such way so it does not disrupt the normal kitchen flow. Besides that, considerations have to be made in regards to how many customers can be there at a time. It was suggested to have around 20 participants that come and get this experience plus the tasting menu for a special price. This was linked to the positive feeling of exclusivity, one gets among the first 20 to test out a refined food menu for a special price. If there are more groups than one it was considered that it will become a “cheap”/“entertainment pak-like” event. Other weaknesses were about the types of people that this event will attract. In the participant’s opinion, this concept is mostly relevant to people who are into food/cooking and for attracting new customers not for keeping recurring ones.

Considerations and final decision

“Live cooking sessions” was preferred by both participants out of all three concepts. Even before the final vote it became clear that this idea is the most attractive since it received a lot more feedback compared to the previous. The arguments were objective in their nature and it could be seen that the participants tried to avoid offering too subjective views on the matter. It was highly appreciated that participants were judging the concepts in accordance to what user types would be interested in them. The final decision was to **work further with the “Live cooking sessions” idea and make it more complex and close to reality.**



Figure 35. Presenting and brainstorming ideas during the workshop.

Chapter learnings

Although the client abandoned their concept and the research revealed numerous inconsistencies, it was still possible to see the opportunity in the “down to Earth” gourmet. The large space and oversimplified gourmet techniques of making food were considered by the manager (he had experience in working at gourmet restaurants) the main factors that conflict with “P eatery” being a fine dining place. *However, as the restaurant business desktop research revealed, currently these kitchen concepts are not that rigid anymore and they can be combined in order to have potentially more attractive service ideas. The issue in “down to Earth” gourmet concept was that it had a vague presentation and that it was not guiding the customers trough the dinning experience.*

During SWOT, an aspect which can help ground more the old “P eatery” concept was noticed: the events which the management would try to organize. **Events are tightly connected to atmosphere, emotional enagement and social ocassions which are the main elements that form a memorable experience.** The main issues in “P eatery’s” approach to events were that it was not done consistently and that it did not have a main theme to represent the “down to Earth gourmet”.

By adapting the “Fact Fiction matrix” introduced during a workshop by Peter Vistisen (2018), it was possible to develop further on the idea of organizing events. At the same time it ensured that all ideas have strong links with the research conclusions. After a curation process, three plausible concepts were chosen and further developed into scenarios. One in particular looked promising because it framed the “down to Earth” gourmet concept, it would be possible to implement and could appeal to a larger audience.

Attempts were made to organize a workshop where these concepts would be presented and discussed. Despite the difficulties, it was still possible to get some feedback from two expert users. They were both enthusiastic and realistic about the concepts, pointing out each advantage and weakness. **The opinions were well argued and there was a tendency of trying to avoid bias. Both participants chose the “Live cooking” and since it was considered before as a plausible concept it will be considered as a final solution for this project.**

A white plate is centered on a solid pink background. The plate contains several slices of dried orange, showing the segments and the white pith. In the lower-left quadrant of the plate, there are several dried star anise pods. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent pink filter.

7

FINAL
CONCEPT

Concept description

“Live gourmet”

The main idea behind “down to Earth” gourmet was to make fine dining accessible to various categories of people that could get this experience at an affordable price and without the rigid formalism that surrounds it sometimes. “Live gourmet” takes this approach one step further by giving the clients the chance to see the head chef giving a live cooking demonstration of a gourmet snack.

Customers will get to see original cooking techniques that will make them perceive the received food in a different way. They get in touch with the culinary vision of the chef and the high level of service personalization since Brendon and his team prepare their ingredients from scratch -they grow them personally and prepare them for cooking.

At the end of the live cooking show, each customer gets a small portion of the snack to taste. The surprise element will be included as well since after finishing his demonstration, Brendon will randomly pick a table to be the first to taste and comment the snack. This also adds a feeling of exclusivity since there will be one group that gets to taste first and give feedback to the chef.

The concept will both help the restaurant, by highlighting Brendon as a personality that people can engage with and the customers by adding a more interactive element in their dining experience.

Service Value

The core value of this service will be the offering of a “down to Earth” gourmet experience. In this context, it means that customers will get an accessible and entertaining gourmet experience by participating in the live cooking events made by Brendon and his team. Moreover, the show has an inclusive character, anyone can enjoy it without having to be fine food enthusiasts or have additional knowledge about it. For some groups this show can provide a way to “break the ice” during conversations and increase social engagement.

Previously it was discovered that chefs at “P eatery” use more simplified cooking techniques. This fact can reinforce the “down to Earth” gourmet approach by having Brendon design the snack recipes in a way that people can apply them in their own households. These recipes will be printed on brochures that will be handed to all event participants.

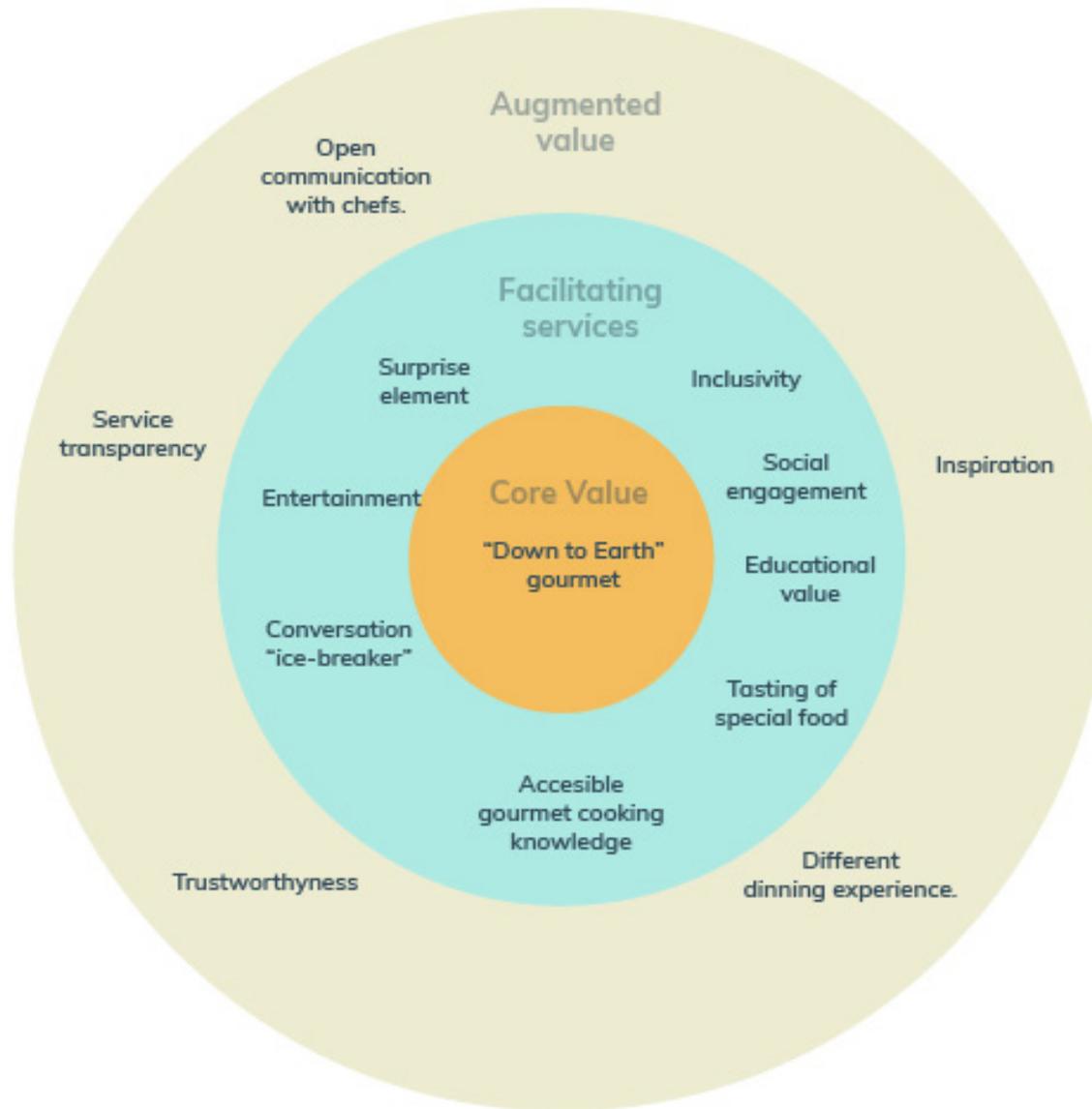


Figure 36. In this case, “down to Earth” gourmet was transformed as a core service value since it offers through “Live gourmet” a more practical side of fine cooking. Customers will get in touch with a simplified and entertaining process that will teach them at the same time, knowledge about cooking that was considered inaccessible before.

Giving the service tangibility

Although a service is not tangible in itself, it is possible to create certain touchpoints or physical proofs that preserve the same quality everytime they are accessed and that remind clients of the experience.

In “Live Gourmet” there are two elements which have this function. Firstly, there is a small dish with sample ingredients - that the chefs use in creating the snack for the show. It will be offered to clients during the cooking demonstration in order to make the part in which Brandon offers explanations about the snack ingredients more interactive. Clients will get the chance to touch, smell possibly even taste the ingredients which will add a deeper layer to the dinning experience.

The secondary element is found at the end of the experience. Customers will receive a brochure with the snack recipe. Since this is a more practical approach to gourmet where techniques are simplified and ingredients are accesible, it will offer the chance for people to try it at home. The brochure has two main functions: it reinforces the “down to Earth” approach to gourmet and it offers the chance to bring the experience home.



Figure 37. A concept photo of how would the ingredients plate would look like. Before the “Live Gourmet” demonstration, waitresses will bring such plates to every table. The idea is to have clients interact with these elements during Brendon’s explanations. A tangible element will increase the emotional engagement by adding interactivity in the presentation.

SCALLOPS IN BROWN BUTTER



*Live gourmet
session 1*

Figure 38. Booklet concept done in order to give an impression about how this touch point could be like. This recipe, offered at the end of the experience offers a way of “bringing the experience home” while being at the same time an instrument that can spread awareness about “P eatery”.

How does it work?

Customer perspective

On the customer side, the journey will start from booking a table through the EarlyBird.dk platform (figure 40). Although the survey data revealed that people generally follow word of mouth and social media when picking a place, in “P eatery’s” case the majority of locals come from EarlyBird. Therefore it was decided to put the special event offer on the respective platform for the start. After it becomes more popular it can be moved to different platforms or be promoted in other ways that connect with the existing data.

The event will occur 1-2 times a month, a few days at a time. “Live gourmet” will be featured as a part of the tasting menu. The starting hour will be at 18:30 because tables are usually booked from 18:00 or 30 minutes earlier.

Since the research revealed that customers are dissatisfied with the waiting times for food, it was decided to have the event occur after the first two courses of the tasting menu. By the time “Live gourmet” starts, customers would have had appetizers, drinks and the first courses. Therefore, it will be easier for them to follow the show since they will be at least partly satiated.

The event will last 25-30 min where Brandon will make a small demonstration by preparing a few gourmet snacks. The rest of the chefs would have prepared by then the rest of the snack portions in order to give them to every table that ordered the tasting menu.

At the end one of the customers gets to be selected randomly as the first to taste the snack and give feedback. Afterwards the waitresses come forward with the rest of snacks that chefs were preparing for everyone. Once everyone tasted the snack, the mai

Restaurant service perspective

A blueprint was developed in order to explore how the event will be organized and take place. (Bitner et al., 2007) The “Live gourmet” will be held for the start 1-2 times a month and will appear included in the special tasting menu after the first courses. By placing it in the middle of the menu delivery the case of having customers bothered by the waiting time will be reduced since they would have had food by that time.

The show will be short, 25-30 minutes where Brandon will explain the snack recipe and will give a demonstration while other chefs will prepare snacks in the background. After finishing the demonstration, Brendon will select from the audience a table to come and taste the snack. This will add an element of surprise and can potentially make people get a strong impression over the restaurant service.

Considering that it was not possible to be in the kitchen to observe how chefs work, for this case it was supposed that Brendon and the chefs team will split tasks as follows: Brendon will have as main responsibilities to cook the first two dishes of the tasting menu (being helped if needed) and to do the live demonstration. The team of chefs will prepare the ingredients plates and the snacks for the other tables. Main courses will be cooked by both Brendon and the chefs team.

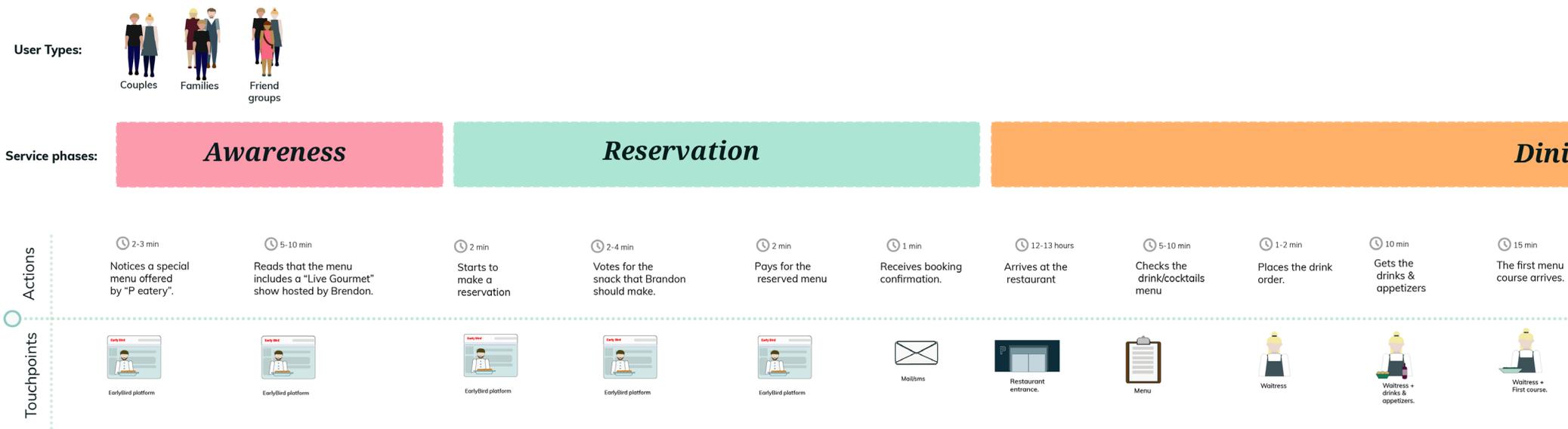


Figure 39. User journey for the "Live gourmet". The graphic depicts important phases of the journey starting from where the user finds out about this service to the last moment when the user spreads awareness about the experience by cooking and sharing the recipe. Each action has on top the estimated time to execute it. Times were approximated from personal experience during the service safari and observation sessions.

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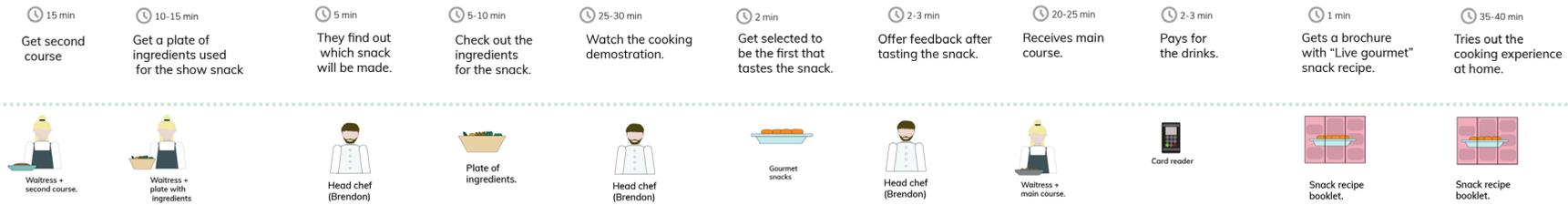
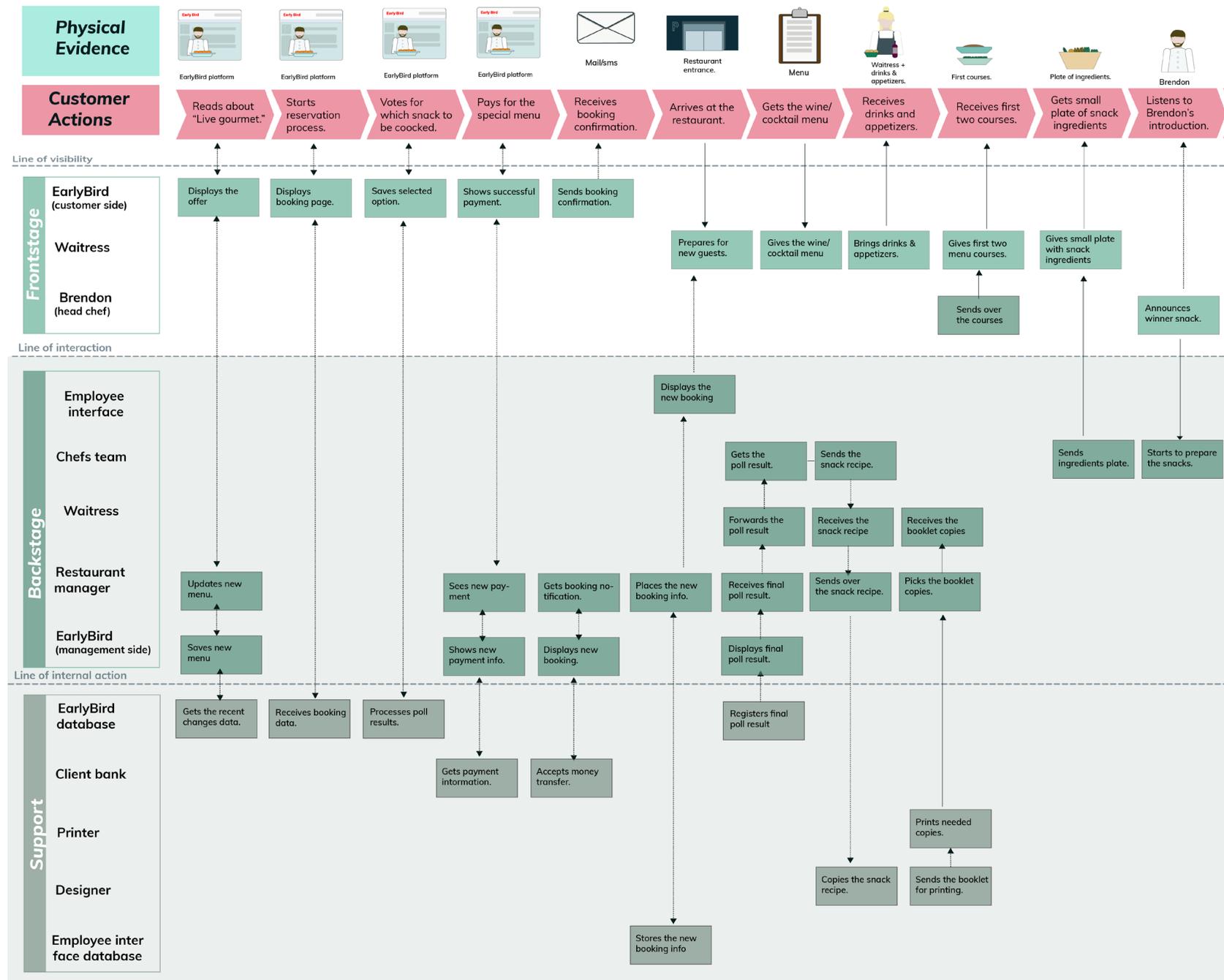
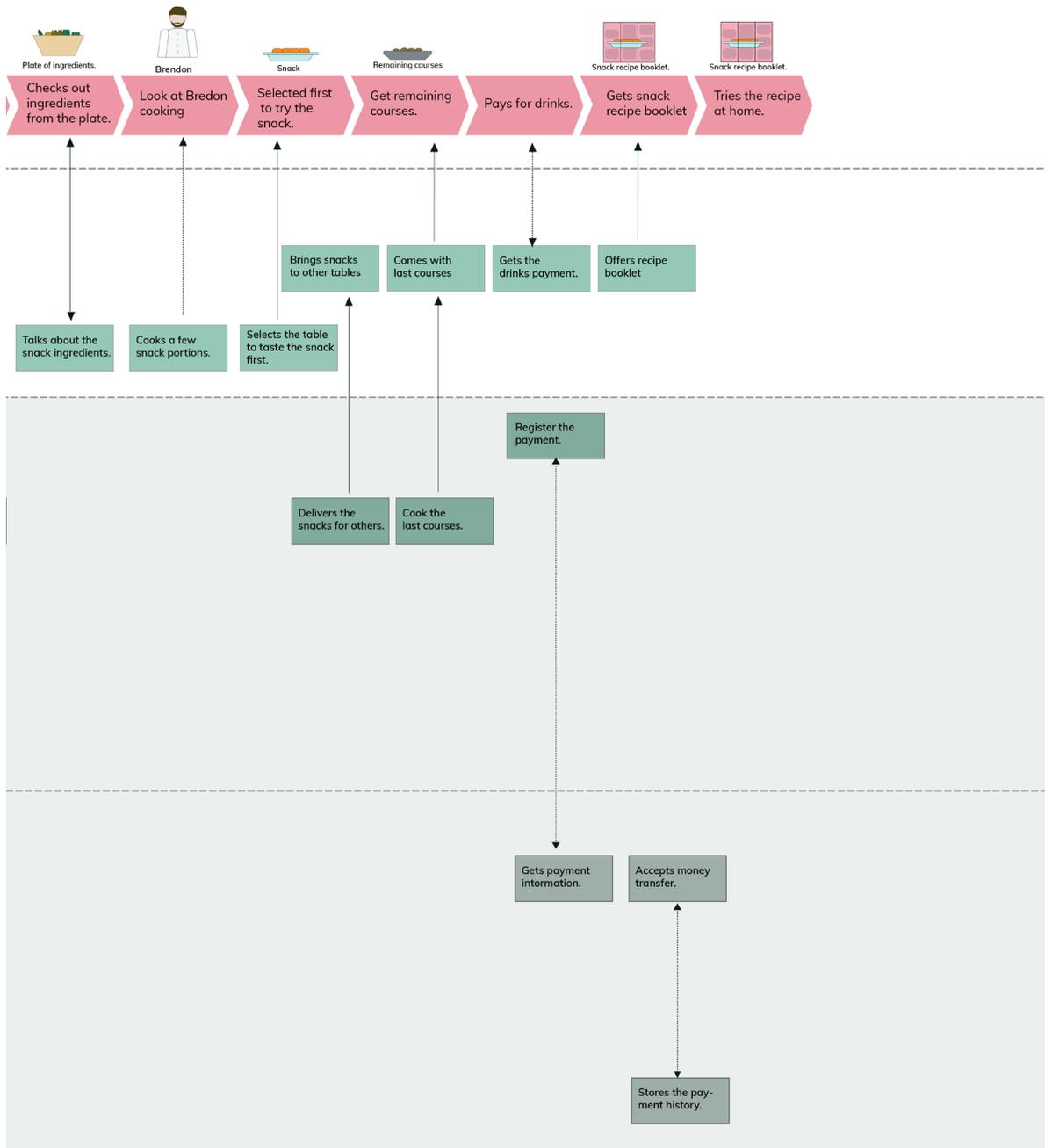


Figure 40. The service blueprint which shows how the event will be organized. It shows different periods of time, from the moment of voting for the snack to the winner snack and all the arrangements for it.





A red-tinted photograph of a restaurant interior. In the foreground, a bottle of Acqua Tonic is visible, with a glass partially filled with liquid. The background shows a person in a white shirt, possibly a waiter, and another person with long hair. The overall scene is dimly lit, suggesting an evening setting.

8

CONCLUSION

Reflections

The design process

Each part of the Double Diamond process presented its own challenges and provided new insights in regards to the studied case. In this section, each Double Diamond phase will be discussed following the main findings and challenges they revealed.

Discovery

The first phase of the process presented the current situation in regards to restaurants and their relevance in the market. It was acknowledged that a restaurant can be used in many ways, not just for satiating hunger. The food industry is highly competitive and the initial fixed business models are re-adapted to the current situation.

It was challenging at first to place “P eatery” among other restaurant types. Especially since the management presented the business profile in different ways. Initially it was presented as a fine restaurant, then in the next meetings the “down to Earth” gourmet concept emerged - vaguely presented thus making it more difficult to grasp what were the strengths and weaknesses of it. **At that time, the only reasonable solution**

was to compare “P eatery” with some approximate general restaurant models and to assess its position from relevant competitors. This angle transformed the vast problem area into a space of possibilities to work with during the next phase.

Customer reviews gave a glimpse into what people look for when it comes to dining experience; some of their conclusions were observed during the performed service safari. However, the initial discoveries did not give a more clear image about what does “P eatery” actually offer or if the “down to Earth” gourmet is relevant at all for customers.

Define

In “Define” the main focus was to understand more about “down to Earth” gourmet and compare the offering with the customers expectations. The possibility of contacting food writers was considered since it would offer expert advice. However, this was hard to realise since “P eatery” could not be mentioned directly, because it would tarnish the restaurant reputation. Contacting experts was dismissed entirely since it was not possible to find questions to ask them that could be help in the current case. “P eatery” seemed to be in its own niche that was hard to define.

Contrary to the initial belief, it was actually easier to understand the potential target group of the restaurant with the help of systematic observations and an online survey. Combining those two tools prove to be a powerful asset when defining the user categories and who forms them. The unexpected appeared when trying to define “P eatery’s” concept. The first challenge was in regards to taking staff interviews.

It was a challenge to arrange interview times with each staff/management member, there were cases when the interviews were spontaneous. During a shadowing session the manager came and wished to have the interview in that moment. It was not possible to have interviews with all the waiters. An attempt was to make it easier by releasing the interview questions as an online form. The form got 3 extra answers-one which came from the kitchen employees. The rest did not answer.

The research ended with 2 controversial aspects of the problem area. It was revealed that the “down to Earth” concept was not well defined beyond the “cheap prices and casual atmosphere aspect”. Moreover every person from staff and management. that were interviewed, had different perceptions in regards to how gourmet or casual this restaurant is. The only aspect which everyone agreed upon that is related

to fine dining was the food, yet the manager explained that the techniques are overly simplified to make it easier for the chefs to cook for many tables. The secondary aspect was that the client decided to change entirely the restaurant business model, therefore ditching the “down to Earth” gourmet. At first glance, it seemed that this phases ended up with more problematic aspects than at the beginning.

Develop

Before ideating it was necessary to check and re-order once more the data about “P eatery”, to see how the uncertain “down to Earth” concept can be reshaped to make sense from the service perspective. SWOT is normally a marketing analysis tool yet in this case it was used for inspiration. It revealed possible ways to follow during ideation. The final decision was to develop events that can reframe the “P eatery” concept. Ideas were made using the “fact-fiction matrix” (Vistisen, 2018) that helped keeping a clear link between concepts and discovered data.

“Develop” had its own struggles in regards to reaching locals. While it was possible to get 31 answers in the “Define” survey, it turned out that it was not nearly as easy to get people’s participation in a workshop in order to discuss the developed concepts.

Both online and offline channels were used to attract people. A free brunch reward was offered as well in order to motivate people more. Even with these efforts the workshop was organized late and although the initial number was of 6 participants, it was drastically reduced to 2 members the rest either not answering or invoking sickness reasons. For the author is hard to conclude what could have been done better since everything possible at that moment was tried out. In the end it can be that unfortunate circumstances occurred and the lesson here is to try and work with the current available resources.

Deliver

Since the previous phase had some difficulties, “deliver” had delays and the final concept was created in May, not April as in the initial plan. There were a series of events that influenced this outcome, starting from the fragmented communication with the client and ending with the struggle of reaching locals for a discussion in order to get an additional perspective and avoid having the last phases entirely theoretical. Although the last phases had a different evolution from what was initially estimated, the author could still keep control over the situation by completing the tasks that were possible to do at that moment. For instance, the waiting

time for replies to workshop invitations was used to write and proofread text report and on thinking about the process report layout. *This experience showed that even though the initial plans and deadlines do not get realised, it does not mean that the process is compromised. There are ways to tackle this situation such as focusing on structuring what is already there and reflecting on how to work further with the available time and resources.*

The final concept, “Live gourmet” was developed following the available knowledge about restaurants as “experience-centric” services and conclusions of the workshop. What would have made the concept more complex would have been the chance to test it again with locals but in the current circumstances it was not possible. Therefore, the solution offers a possibility to consider but it is open to future iterations.

SERVQUAL + Double Diamond approach

SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et. al, 1985) was introduced during the university lectures and applied in a small workshop. For the author, it was the first time to use this model in a more complex setting. In the beginning it was not clear how this model can help in the process, aside from naming gaps.

It soon became clear that it can be used as a map to navigate through the service. As stated before, services are intangible, thus the task of analyzing them can be very complex. By following the gap model it was possible to navigate the problem area, without getting lost in the process.

Restaurant service has a lot of complex aspects especially now since the existing models are being constantly redefined. Gap model simplifies this intricate system to its core factors making it easier to grasp. It would not have been as easy to get a structured process with the Double Diamond alone.

Double Diamond offers a way of structuring the overall design process in order to keep the same quality across phases and focus on what is essential at that moment. However, it can't offer a way to map out a service that is not visible at all times nor that maintains the same quality at all times.

For this reason Double Diamond was paired with SERVQUAL model. This combined approach helped structuring the general design process while putting in order the specific case of "P eatery"s restaurant service in both research and ideation phases.

What did this project reveal about "experience-centric" services?

In the current market there is a restaurant for any need imaginable; from places that make gourmet versions of fast-food to places that actively involve clients in the process of preparing food. *Although these are completely different approaches, they follow one common goal: to provide the customer with a memorable experience, either by preparing unique food or by the interactions that clients have with the staff.*

"P eatery"s particular case proved that building a context for customer experience involves more than just relying on good food or the staff's courtship. Besides their vague business identity, what was missing the most was a general direction to follow during the dining experience.

Customers visiting "P eatery" were not given a clear idea about what to expect from the service. If the experience was there, it was generally thanks to the guest's company not the restaurant's effort to stand out.

Case Conclusion

“P eatery” was communicating the service in vague terms by presenting a few elements of the service to the customer, such as food or friendly staff. The concept of “down to Earth” gourmet was reduced to atmosphere or good food. There was an evident lack of a general direction for customers to follow and use to form expectations of the service. The confusing way of organizing the service reflected the situation within the management, where everyone had different opinions in regards to what service they should present.

Whenever customers had a good time at the restaurant, it was thanks to the social context, not from anything special of the service. The management considered that a memorable experience is given by the fine food and staff courtship. While these elements are crucial since they are linked with a restaurant’s main function, they do not make a difference since they are considered preconditions of managing a restaurant. From this perspective, “P eatery” was only displaying the basics of a restaurant service.

The user research revealed that customers do not go primarily for food at a restaurant. Dining out means to have an experience that can be shared in a group of relevant people. For this reason, the current restaurant business models are being reinvented with the goal of providing something new, different and exciting. In order to attract potential clients, food businesses use storytelling or vivid descriptions to delight and attract. Some focus on live shows or sport events. This is a strong indicator that restaurants distance themselves from being food providers to becoming experience providers.

“Live gourmet” was developed in order to get “P eatery” more involved in offering clients a memorable experience and to frame the “down to Earth” concept. Although the management decided to change the concept with something more attractive, the author considers that the old concept had potential. With a consistent approach of organizing events around a simplified version of gourmet the old concept would have been capable of attracting local Copenhageners.

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