

THE ROLE OF VISUAL CONTENT IN PROMOTING HOTEL AND RESTAURANT ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

Martynovych Natalia
Ph.D., Associate Professor
Goryachenko Diana
higher education student
State Tax University

First of all, it should be noted that the modern hotel and restaurant industry is in a state of constant transformation. Consumer demand is shaped both by traditional advertising channels and by online communication tools, including websites, social media platforms, and digital booking services. In this context, the role of visual content is growing significantly, as it serves as a key instrument for attracting attention, creating an emotional connection with potential clients, forming a positive image, and strengthening competitive advantage. All of this confirms the relevance and timeliness of the research presented below, the purpose of which is to demonstrate the role of visual content in the digital environment as a crucial tool for promoting hotel and restaurant establishments.

The analysis of selected publications in this field allows us to assert that digital communication channels enable hospitality establishments to significantly expand their audience reach and manage their reputation more effectively than through traditional methods, as emphasized in the works of N. Martynovych, V. Hornyk, and E. Boichenko [1, 2]. Authors S. Kumar [3, pp. 177–191] and H. Mehta [4, pp. 127–150] also note in their research that digital marketing is an integral part of hotel and restaurant business models, as it ensures flexibility, dynamism, accessibility, and efficiency in interaction with clients. Additionally, the studies by O. Kotova demonstrate the practical effectiveness of visual content, such as drone videos, which help build trust, enhance emotional engagement, and stimulate booking decisions [5].

Thus, the presented review of literature shows that several key research directions currently exist regarding the use of digital technologies and content marketing in the hotel and restaurant industry. These include studies examining the role of digital marketing tools—such as social networks, online booking platforms, and interactive websites—in shaping consumer behavior, as well as research focused on the use of visual content, including photographs, videos, 3D tours, and VR/AR solutions, as instruments for increasing customers' emotional engagement and strengthening the competitive position of hospitality establishments in the digital environment.

Based on the analysis of the works of various authors, it has been established that visual content in the HoReCa sector should be understood as a set of graphic, photographic, video, and animated materials aimed at presenting an establishment, its products, and its services, creating an emotional impression, and forming a desire to

try a dish or service. This includes photographs of food and beverages, videos of the preparation process, interior and atmosphere, menu infographics, branded visual elements, social media visuals, advertising banners, and VR/AR visualizations.

In addition, it has been concluded that the term "digital environment" refers to the set of online platforms, digital communication channels, and digital tools through which HoReCa enterprises interact with potential customers. This includes websites, social networks (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook), mobile applications, online booking systems, virtual tours, content marketing, email newsletters, online reviews, and digital advertising. In the digital environment, consumers search for, compare, and evaluate establishments long before they make a booking decision, and they often make choices based primarily on digital information.

It should also be noted that demand formation in the HoReCa sphere is multifactorial and is based on the step-by-step decision-making process of the consumer (Fig. 1):

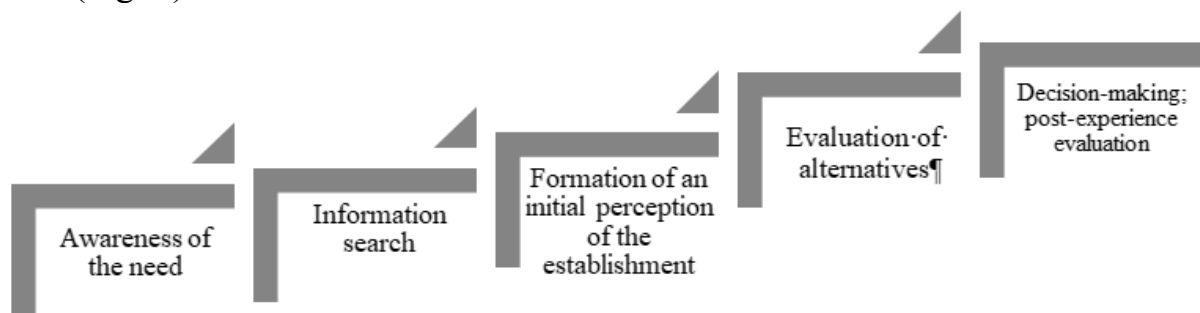


Fig. 1. Stages of demand formation in the HoReCa sector
Source: developed by the authors based on [1]

Consumers' decision-making begins, of course, with the awareness of a need, which may be physical (hunger, thirst) or social-emotional (a need for communication, rest, or new experiences). After this, the information search stage begins, and today it almost always takes place in the digital environment: through Google Maps, Instagram, social networks, recommendations from acquaintances, ratings, and reviews. Based on the information obtained, an initial perception of an establishment is formed, where visual content, interior atmosphere, brand style, and unique value proposition play a decisive role.

The consumer then proceeds to evaluate alternatives, comparing establishments by price, menu, service quality, location, and overall image. Next comes decision-making and purchase, which manifests as visiting a venue, ordering food, or booking a table. The final stage is the post-experience effect, where emotions, photos taken, social media posts, and reviews shape the overall impression and influence the likelihood of a return visit. These conclusions are based, among other sources, on the findings of A. Eser [6].

The modern consumer in the HoReCa sector demonstrates a number of characteristic behavioral features. They think primarily in visual terms, making most decisions based on photographs and videos of dishes, interiors, or overall atmosphere. The decision-making process becomes faster, with only a few seconds spent on evaluating content. A significant role is played by the desire for emotions and experiences: guests seek not only food but also impressions, stories, and ambiance. At

the same time, decisions often rely on social proof — ratings, reviews, and recommendations on Google or social networks. For the contemporary guest, the style of the brand, the convenience and speed of service, as well as the opportunity to capture unique visual content that enhances the experience and becomes an element of self-presentation, are essential.

Instagram, with its focus on imagery and visual storytelling, has become a leading platform in hotel marketing. It now serves as a global showcase where hotels can display their most appealing features and share stories that invite travelers to immerse themselves in the experiences they offer. Every image or video — whether it is a view from a room, delicious dishes served at a hotel restaurant, or stunning pools and recreation areas — has the power to influence and act as an invitation to future guests.

Thus, modern research convincingly demonstrates that visual content is the most powerful tool for promoting hotel and restaurant establishments. Users make decisions largely “with their eyes,” and high-quality photos and videos can significantly increase audience interest and influence the behavior of potential guests. Data analysis shows that video content generates approximately 2.5 times more engagement compared to static images in hotel advertising campaigns (ZipDo). Moreover, hospitality marketing experts emphasize that video marketing often outperforms other forms of digital advertising in terms of effectiveness, creating a stronger emotional connection with the audience (ZipDo) [6].

The effectiveness of visual content is further confirmed by data on media influence on booking decisions. According to statistics, a combination of high-quality photos and videos can increase the likelihood of booking by approximately 63%, which once again underscores the crucial role of visual support in presenting hotel and restaurant services (ZipDo). With the development of social networks, this trend becomes even more pronounced: in 2025, it is noted that an active social media presence can increase the number of direct bookings by up to 20%, as social platforms have become a key point of communication between an establishment and its customers [6]. These analytical findings indicate that, for the HoReCa sector, visual content in the digital environment is an effective communication tool that significantly influences the decision-making process of potential clients.

Thus, based on the systematization of research results by Ukrainian and international scholars, several approaches to digital marketing in the HoReCa sector were identified, which made it possible to reconstruct the logic of consumer behavior in the digital environment. It has been demonstrated that visual materials influence every stage of this sequence, altering the ways consumers evaluate alternatives, accelerating decision-making, and strengthening the emotional component of the customer choice process.

The presented findings have both scientific and practical significance. From a theoretical standpoint, the study deepens the understanding of digital consumer behavior in HoReCa and expands the interpretation of the concept of visual content within hospitality marketing. In the applied dimension, it offers an evidence-based foundation confirming the effectiveness of photo and video materials, enabling hospitality businesses to develop more effective promotional strategies, improve

communication campaigns, and build sustainable competitive advantages in the digital economy.

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THE IMPACT OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR ON THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN UKRAINE AND PROSPECTS FOR RECOVERY

Shevchenko Victoria

first-year student

Vinnitsia Institute of Trade and Economics

State University of Trade and Economics, Ukraine

Scientific advisor:

Maria Antonova

PhD in Philology, docent

Today, tourism plays an important role in the global economy and is one of the key sectors of the modern world market. It accounts for about 10% of the global GDP, which highlights its significance for the economic development of many countries. The tourism sector is influenced by both internal factors — demand, market segmentation, service quality, workforce, seasonality, and the effectiveness of advertising — and external ones. Among the external factors, the most influential are geopolitical,