

Communication manual for businesses related to gastronomy tourism.

A simple guide to communicate your gastronomy
business

Gastronomy as part of the local identity

Gastronomy is part of the social, cultural, economic and environmental history of areas and their residents.

It reflects the specific way of life in different geographical areas, underpinning tradition in rural areas and modernity in urban ones as the cuisine is rooted in its own culture and traditions.

Local and regional food could give added value to the destination and contribute to the competitiveness of the area



What is this communication manual

This manual aims to support professionals in the gastronomy sector providing them guidance on how to build their brand and address different audiences using the right communication channels.

It is mainly focusing on small, local businesses, since they are the main majority in the countries of Greece, Cyprus and Spain.

Browsing around you can find step by step guidance including tips and tricks that will help you understand how to identify your needs, establish your online presence, approach Social Media and select your communication channels.



Should you communicate your business?

*Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room,
said Jeff Bezos of Amazon.*

Branding goes beyond logo, it is largely made up of non-tangible things. Your branding includes your visual identity, your product identity and your reputation, what people, say/think/feel about your business

If brand is about people's say, then better have your say on it, influence the perception of your audience.



Define **your** communication

Communication is everything, but communication is not about anything. Like in real life, you need to be concise, short, catchy and relevant. And you need to talk to the right people.

Communication is about you. What you are proud of? What is the reason for people to visit you? Why they should select you and not the restaurant next street?

Define your goals, your message, your audience.



Money first

Before starting designing your strategy, think: How much money (including time) do you want to spend for your communication campaign?

Small budget campaigns: website, social media posts, organic outreach, one-two communication channels

Medium budget campaigns: (additional to small) paid outreach, wider and more targeted audience, blog

Large budget campaigns: (additional to medium) three-four channels, wider audience, targeted adds, paid content to mass media



You need a Strategy

A strategy will tell you how to better allocate your resources, identify your audiences and address them in the most convincing way.

A good strategy creates engagement and emotional links, targeting both the eyes and the heart of the audience

Two important tips for your strategy: experiment with different approaches (media, style of writing, type of photos, etc) and do not afraid to fail. But always be honest with your audience –they will appreciate it



Visual identity

Your visual identity is the clothes that you will wear in your most important meeting: with your clients.

It includes anything visual that your brand produces such as your logo, type of fonts, style of photos, colors that link to your business, even materials that are used both in products and communication.

Trust a professional to build your visual identity, as you trust your clothes to a tailor.



Product identity

How do you make your products unique and easily recognizable? Some tips to have in mind:

- ✓ Use colors. Not just for the décor also for your dishes
- ✓ Use local products, they are unique and always appreciated
 - ✓ authentic, high quality local food production and use
- ✓ Provide short descriptions: people always want to have real food along with the local history and the knowledge



Target groups

This is a fundamental exercise: Who is your customer? Try to describe him/her a person. You can create different types: Locals, tourists, high income, backpackers, hipsters, vegetarians, liberals, book-readers, couples, women, after business etc.

Don't overdo it. 3-4 groups should be OK for you. The rest will most probably fall more or less within these categories.

Relate your characteristics with your brand. Do you see any commons? If your brand was a person, would it be one of them?



Select communication channels

Now that you know your audience (target groups) you need to know where to find them.

There are a number of social media and numerous ways to use them. You can also use traditional marketing (direct marketing, ads in mass media, posters).

The channels you will select depend much also on your experience, your budget and your capacity to manage them.



Your website

The hub for all your online communication. Every kind of campaign should lead back to that. It is therefore important that it is user friendly and up to date.

Use simple navigation. Don't overload it with information. Contacts (phone, email, address) should be easily visible

The design of the website should also align with the visual identity of your brand

The template should be responsive making the website accessible from mobile phones, tablets and desktop.



Social Media: Instagram

THE place to be for gastronomy related businesses. #food has today over 340 million posts on Instagram. #foodporn another 198 million

Keep in mind that taking photos of what you eat and posting them to social media is a global social phenomenon that seems to be growing.

Use hashtags (#) for your posts. Create one for your business and include tags of your place and other trends relevant to your audience

Hiring a professional photographer will substantially improve your outreach



Social Media: Facebook

Predominant in Europe especially on the South. 88,6% of the population in Greece, 68,3% in Spain, 88,3% in Cyprus are on Facebook

Create your page, share daily photos (also backstage), use events to invite your followers, groups if you have more regular customers.

Post in a friendly tone, positive spirit and provoke people to comment. You can also share quizzes and offers.

Consider small paid advertisement as the algorithm currently is not favoring pages



Social Media: Twitter

Use twitter to more actively engage with your audience. Hashtags are also important here. You can tweet short videos, messages, but also accept orders, bookings etc.

Invite your customers to share online their experiences and tag your business.

Post recipes and invite users to try them and post back the results.

Interact with similar businesses from around the world to increase your outreach



Travelers' websites

From tripadvisor to google maps, and from Airbnb to Yelp people read reviews, share experiences and photos. Ensure your visibility.

Create a company profile, where this is possible. In applications like Movit or Google maps make sure that your company is properly listed and information are updated. Google displays your profile on google search based on the information you share.

Reply to negative reviews and reply to the good ones. Do not afraid to challenge the media and ask for revisions



Your blog

If you can invest some more time for your communication create a blog. This can be either integrated into your website or stand alone in another blogging platform (medium, wordpress, blogger, etc)

Write short articles (not more than 500 words), give ideas, recipes, share stories of your products and their origins, introduce new products, give insights that can help readers i.e. to identify fresh vegetables.

Blog is very helpful for SEO, especially if you use links back to your website and improves your visibility on google search.



Do you speak

Your communication should be understandable not only to locals but also to tourists or anyone else searching for services like yours.

Also remember that most of the platforms and websites (Facebook, tripadvisor etc) have mainly content in English.

Try to adapt your communication also to the languages your audience might speak



Want to know more? Some readings:

<https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/socialmediaintherestaurant-industry/>

<https://www.foodingredientsfirst.com/news/social-media-instagrammable-food-millennial-influencers-a-virtual-reality.html>

<https://www.modernrestaurantmanagement.com/is-social-media-important-for-the-food-and-drink-industry/>

<https://tech.co/news/social-media-food-tourism-2016-01>

<https://econsultancy.com/five-restaurants-with-first-class-social-media-strategies/>





MedFlavors

Erasmus+, Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training, Exchange of Good Practices