

# **TikTok as a new marketing channel for GastroBar Saimaa**

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## Abstract

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Title of the thesis <b>TikTok as a new marketing channel for GastroBar Saimaa</b>		
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Abstract <p>Businesses in the food and beverage industry are progressively turning to social media as their primary channel of communication. Witnessing the dramatic growth in terms of new user accounts and the expansion of TikTok platform, the authors committed to work on a project that is building a TikTok channel for GastroBar Saimaa.</p> <p>GastroBar Saimaa is a practical study organization at LAB University of Applied Sciences, Lappeenranta campus, where students of the hospitality management faculty can learn about the operation of restaurants, implement, and challenge themselves in various experience. This practice-based thesis aims to explore how a valuable marketing plan for the TikTok channel can boost the development of GastroBar Saimaa and expand its current marketing profession.</p> <p>The thesis is mainly divided into two parts: theoretical and empirical, beginning with a summary of the study background, study objectives, scope of the study, and thesis structure. The authors conducted the study based on the credible foundations of digital marketing, social media marketing and its integrant to inform the development of marketing analysis and planning tools. The study was carried out utilizing qualitative research approaches, utilizing primary and secondary sources of data. Online questionnaires were the primary source of information used in this study. Following the collection and examination of relevant data, an appropriate marketing strategy for GastroBar Saimaa's TikTok channel was developed.</p> <p>During the development stage, the primary focus was placed on formulating a TikTok marketing action plan that was tailored to the requirements of GastroBar Saimaa. The authors believe that this study will offer practical knowledge on social media marketing that will benefit students at LAB University of Applied Sciences in their future academic research.</p>		
Keywords Digital marketing, social media, social media marketing, content marketing, social media content calendar, TikTok, TikTok marketing, SOSTAC model, marketing plan		

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Study background

Along with the fast advancement of information technology, the use of social media as a means of connection has become an inevitable trend. The users taking advantage of social media are diverse, with no restrictions on age or social status. With their outstanding features, social media have contributed to the promotion of the development of marketing, advertising, branding, and customer service departments, which means they have significantly contributed to the increasing efficiency of business in all fields around the world. Particularly because of benefits such as high efficiency, cost savings, and flexibility, businesses in the food and beverage industry are progressively turning to social media as their primary channel of communication. They assist companies in establishing a reputable brand by highlighting the qualities and advantages of the food products and services offered by the company.

TikTok is a social media platform that has surprised people with its dramatic growth in terms of new user accounts. According to Doyle in 2022, the number of TikTok monthly regular users has increased by more than 800% since January 2018, and the total number of app downloads has reached over 2.6 billion times worldwide. TikTok is gradually becoming an intriguing marketing channel that all brands want to own in order to reach their target customers, particularly restaurants, eateries, and bars aiming to attract the attention of young customers.

The information that was just provided demonstrates how effective social media in general and the TikTok platform in particular perform in the food and beverage industry. As a result of this information, the authors had made a decision to work on a project that is building a TikTok channel for GastroBar Saimaa in order to serve the purposes of marketing and development.

Furthermore, there has been a previous research project carried out by former students of the Hospitality and Tourism Management field at LAB University of Applied Sciences, Fadeeva and Roiz (2021), which ideally described the brand essence of GastroBar Saimaa: "*Innovating tastes for your enjoyment*". This sentence aims to emphasize the distinctiveness of each event held, where students

frequently try out new, creative ideas while also upholding the talented and experienced of the output. Additionally, it is targeted directly at the customer because the brand's main goal is to make customers happy. (Fadeeva & Roiz 2021.)

In this thesis, the authors will continue the mission of broadening and developing the brand of GastroBar Saimaa that was successfully researched and consolidated by Fadeeva and Roiz, as well as contribute to the improvement of marketing professional practice in the present and future for GastroBar Saimaa.

## 1.2 Study objectives

This study is a practice-based thesis. The principal objective of the thesis is building a TikTok account for GastroBar Saimaa and executing a marketing plan that is created for this TikTok channel. This TikTok account works as a new marketing channel for GastroBar Saimaa. The study explores how a new marketing channel can assist GastroBar Saimaa in developing and expanding its current marketing profession, how to utilize the efficacy of the TikTok platform in attracting young customers through a valuable marketing plan. Newly discovered understanding will be comprehended through actual practice and the result of that application.

This thesis focuses on answering the question: **“Why GastroBar Saimaa should utilize TikTok to effectively reach its younger clientele, and how?”**.

## 1.3 The commissioner and development assignment

GastroBar Saimaa is a practical study organization at LAB University of Applied Sciences, Lappeenranta campus. The organization is directed by the Tourism and Hospitality Management faculty's professors, who have many years of experience in this field. *“Learned, made, and served with love”* is GastroBar Saimaa's tagline. In other words, GastroBar Saimaa provides not only food and beverages but also a location for students of the hospitality management faculty to learn about the operation of restaurants, including management, kitchen work, setting, marketing, budgeting, etc.

At GastroBar Saimaa, students can implement, challenge themselves in terms of food, and experience growth. The restaurant is typically opened as a pop-up restaurant, a temporary or one-day restaurant where students, professors, and

locals can dine at an affordable price. Further, the restaurant also serves ordered services and quickly becomes a popular gathering place for LAB UAS and LUT University's staff, who want to celebrate their event via GastroBar Saimaa. Besides, the professors desire to create more different cases for their students to practice various aspects of restaurant operation. Therefore, GastroBar Saimaa needs to build a good reputation to attract more people to engage in their pop-up events and buy their services. (Bui et al. 2021.)

The authors have worked for and gained much experience from GastroBar Saimaa through several courses in the major. Therefore, the authors already had a certain understanding of this organization before conducting this thesis. Moreover, the professors of GastroBar Saimaa encouraged and gave the authors opportunities to work and develop their marketing plan with proper methods.

The authors' major commission is to effectively establish an unused social media marketing channel, specifically the TikTok channel for the commissioner. This means that GastroBar Saimaa can expand their educational offerings and restaurant offerings with the assistance of the new marketing channel. As a result, their students will have a sense of belonging to the brand and will utilize social media to promote it. Moreover, with a brand, customers will remember GastroBar Saimaa and come back again and again. Furthermore, via the thesis, the authors expect it will bring a variety of information about social media marketing that helps LAB University of Applied Science's students and can be applied to their real practice.

#### 1.4 Scope of the study

The scope of the study describes the parameters of the work. In other words, the authors will set limitations in which what elements will be performed and what elements will be left outside of the research to convey clarity to the research objectives and avoid any ambiguousness throughout the study. The scope of the study is needed to be well-defined. It cannot be excessively broad as it might be problematic in presenting justification, or it cannot be immoderately constricted as the outcomes could not be generalizable.

For this thesis to conduct a clear, targeted, and relevant research topic, several limitations have been specified. Firstly, the authors completed and implemented this

study which only targeted on the universities' staff and students. Secondly, this social media marketing plan is concentrated on the channels that have been determined by the organization to be the most beneficial and practical for them. The main social media platform that the authors focus on is TikTok. The TikTok platforms' data, efficiency, interaction, and click-throughs will be analyzed. The enormous resources needed to leverage a range of platforms must be considered when creating a successful social media marketing campaign. Since GastroBar Saimaa is a practical place of Hospitality Management students, most of the marketing tasks when having a pop-up restaurant were implemented by students. The budget proposal for social media advertising is excluded. Budget constraints can prevent certain proposals from being implemented in the future. The emphasis is on earned media and non-paid social media content as a result. This social media marketing plan excludes detailed paid campaigns.

In this thesis, readers will be exposed to how a TikTok account is created for marketing purposes at GastroBar Saimaa and the primary marketing features of the TikTok platform for boosting brand awareness in the target group. The authors will create the marketing channel evolved from the SOSTAC model that is a limited approach to maximally implementing the stated objectives. This model enables the authors to present more comprehensive, specific, and detailed insights on the thesis study. Besides, the authors will describe in detail the process of applying the SOSTAC model to build the new marketing channel for GastroBar Saimaa. Thus, it will offer readers a different perspective on TikTok's benefits for small businesses with limited marketing budgets.

## 1.5 Thesis structure

As a practice-based thesis, it is divided into six components in order to accomplish its primary objective as indicated in the process below (Figure 1).

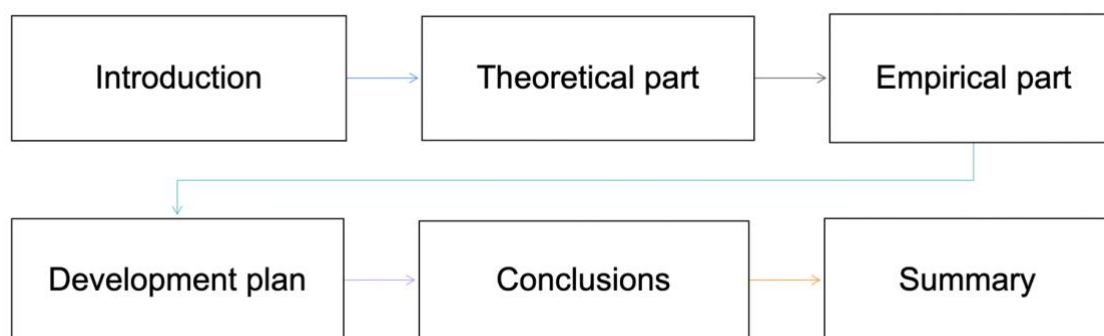


Figure 1. Thesis Structure

As presented in Figure 1, this thesis is built on a combination of theoretical and empirical components. The fundamental concepts of the thesis are covered in the first chapter, including the research's purpose, main objectives and goals, scope of the study, the commissioner, and research structure.

The theoretical part of the thesis is presented in the second chapter, which focuses on the definition and key ideas of digital marketing, social media marketing, what is TikTok and how the TikTok platform effectively works to increase restaurant's identification, and the definition of the SOSTAC model.

The third chapter describes the thesis's empirical research and data analysis. Additionally, demonstrations of the case organization's information, the data analysis process, and how the authors apply the data to their marketing strategy plan will be provided.

In Chapter 4, the case organization's development marketing plan based on the SOSTAC model is completed with a detailed outline. Specifically, the authors will concentrate on analyzing the case business's current situation in terms of the current social media marketing channel used. Correspondingly, the study will present the process of building a marketing strategy for the new Tiktok account for GastroBar Saimaa. In addition, a practical example of applying the TikTok platform to increase the effectiveness of marketing at a pop-up event at GastroBar Saimaa will be performed in the detailed action plan.

The fifth chapter brings out a conclusion about the research's main question. The key thesis' results and concepts are all briefly covered in the last chapter.

## 2 Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Digital marketing

Digital marketing refers to a range of actions that are taken on the internet by a business or an individual to build a brand image and gain more customer (Kotler 2003). In other words, digital marketing is one of the web-based marketing strategies that uses computers and mobile devices through an online or digital platform. Simply stated, digital marketing is defined as marketing action done through digital technologies that uses electronic platforms to advertise or promote products, services, or brand image. (S & Rungta 2016.)

In other words, digital marketing combines traditional marketing with the internet and all the related technologies to attain its specific goals. Further, digital marketing manages a company's online presence, such as a website, social network page, email, or other online marketing exposure (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019). The phrase of digital marketing is used by marketers to describe the process of utilizing digital platforms, media, and technology for interactions and communication between the business and its target customers (Chaffey & Smith 2017).

Another key point, digital marketing is an advanced analytics engine that can be formed inside of a brand campaign. This engine assists the organization or organization's specific product brand to quantify the campaign's performance in real time, including what is being seen, the number of times, and other activities such as product presenting, interest reliability, and consumption rates. Digital marketing not only markets products globally but also gives 24/7 online customer care, making customers feel supported and appreciated. On the other hand, digital marketing generally opens the opportunity for more significant effective contact with an organization's target audience. Moreover, it can stretch quickly to leverage lead creation and boost company conversion rates more optimally than traditional marketing. With conventional marketing, promoting a brand costs a lot of money and time. Digital marketing is a way for a business or organization to promote its brand at a lower cost. (Mankad 2019.)

Digital marketing channels are delivery techniques of digital marketing. Marketers apply a variety of digital techniques to reach consumers across digital channels for

instance social media, video marketing, pay-per-click (PPC), content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), etc. To reach attention of a brand-new product or service, a company's marketers might select one or more channels to get out their message (Lindley 2022). In this theoretical study, the authors concentrate on several digital marketing platforms listed below to acquire expertise and apply them in empirical action.

## 2.2 Social media

### 2.2.1 Social media platforms

The term of social media generally relates to online, user-generated content. Through their personal profiles on social media, users can express their views about various individuals, organizations, or brands (Dollarhide 2019). Social media is another contemporary form of communication. There are numerous formats for social media, including blogs, photos, videos, social networking channels, podcasts, and more. (Bajwa 2021.)

Given the breadth and depth of relevant content accessible on social media, along with the speed at which it is generated and consumed by users, social media may be a viable answer to the intangible nature of hospitality products and services. Therefore, it is unsurprising that there is a great deal of information on hospitality and travel items available online, as well as the efforts made by businesses to make use of this content. Importantly, social media altered the way marketing messages affected clients. (Kotler et al. 2021.)

In the past, the messages were limited to the consumer's personal and close social network. Due to social media, the message reaches beyond its immediate networks to become public and very influential. This type of public information is influential since it may affect customers about what to purchase, when to purchase, and from whom to purchase. However, most consumers believe persuasive information originated from their peers, marketing messages and objectives are rendered ineffective with them. Social media enable customers to produce and share information among themselves, whereas the majority of direct marketing tools originate from the firm and target the consumer. Thus, the marketing emphasis

switches from one-to-many to many-to-many. Further, the visibility of word-of-mouth communications is an essential feature of social media. (Tuten & Solomon 2013.)

Despite the development of targeting and segmentation techniques, it remains challenging to identify small sectors. Social media can provide access to certain consumer segments while lowering costs for businesses, which is advantageous, particularly for new market entrants. In addition, social media is particularly effective at helping smaller sectors of consumers establish an online presence, adding to its advantages for reaching larger groups of customers. Due to the high trustworthiness of such information, its power to influence the decisions of other potential buyers is also considerable. Similarly, it is essential to note that not all businesses can develop a substantial social media presence on their website. (Tuten & Solomon 2013.)

Many people use social media platforms every day to share and discuss various types of content, including videos, photos, blogs, news, interested topics and more. Social media now forms a part of marketing because of its enormous popularity, and from this perspective, it fosters communication between the client and the business. (Kotler et al. 2021.)

The rapid and extensive growth of online tools has facilitated the emergence and consolidation of numerous social media platforms. Platforms like Facebook Instagram, Twitter, Google+, and YouTube, as well as professional-driven communities like LinkedIn, are essential for online interactions between potential consumers. As a result, platforms that bring together individuals with similar demographics, preferences, etc. became crucial for marketers. These social media platforms attract customers who congregate online, engage in social interaction, and share information and perspectives. (Chaffey & Smith 2017.)

In addition, social media users' self-segment into narrow groups based on their sense of belonging to groups. Therefore, numerous businesses have devoted resources to comprehending the impact of social media and establishing an effective social media presence. (Kotler et al. 2021).

There are two ways that companies can use social media for their strategies. First, the companies can start by using the most recent social media. Optimizing current media is the simplest option, as these media amass a large amount of online

material and many potential users. It is impossible to find businesses without a presence on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, etc. nowadays. Using such standardized tools provides potential consumers with a seamless transition between the personal interactions they get from friends and the commercial communications they participate in with businesses. To achieve this effective approach, businesses need to alter their communication strategies and produce marketing messages that adhere to the requirements of these key channels. The second use of social media is the creation of online communities. Even though this method seems harder, it has changed how some brands do business today. For instance, Expedia Group (engineering company) created an online community where customers may leave comments on the purchased items. Having firsthand information regarding the quality of these items is the most importance, given that reviews are only made by those who have purchased the product. (Kenan 2022.)

### 2.2.2 Social media user culture

Regarding European users, the use of social networks such as Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram in Europe has recently increased, which is creating an opportunity for advertisers. In Europe, Portugal has the most users, followed by Romania and Poland (Eurostat 2021). According to the Digital Marketing Institute (2021), although the use of social networks appears to be lower in Europe than in other regions, the continent's high income makes it a market that brands should still target. According to Cover (2021), social networks have altered business operating trends.

As demonstrated in Figure 2, in Europe, 57% of 16- to 74-year-olds participated in social networks in the three months prior to the survey. Since the beginning of data collection in 2011, Europe's participation rate in social networks has increased steadily. Participation in social networks includes activities such as creating a user profile, posting messages, and making other contributions. Denmark had the highest participation rate in social networks (85%), followed by Belgium (79%; low reliability), Cyprus (78%), Finland (75%), and Hungary (75%). The figure below shows detailed statistics for other countries in Europe. (Eurostat 2021.)

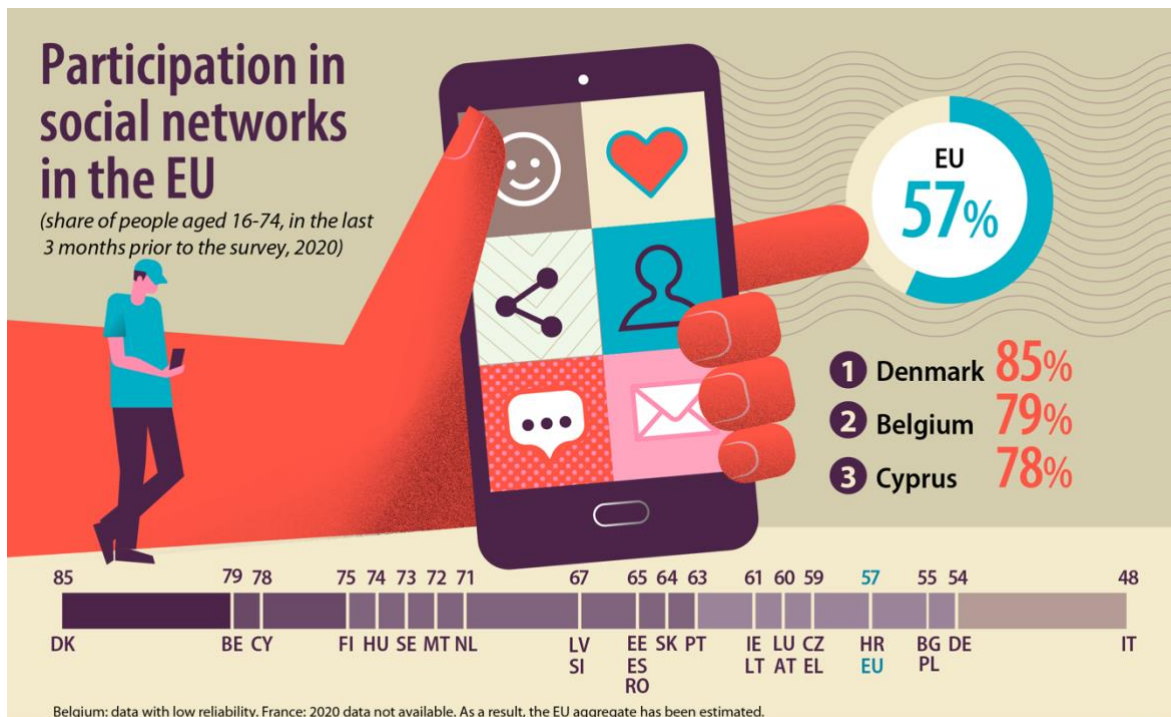


Figure 2. Europe's participation statistics in social networks (Eurostat 2021)

According to eMarketer's assessment (Figure 3), Finland is in the top 8 countries, ranked by TikTok User Growth in 2021. Byte Dance's advertising statistics show that there were 1.20 million users aged 18 and up on TikTok in Finland at the beginning of 2022. TikTok's ads reached 26.7% of all users 18 years of age and older in Finland, and 56.8% of the ad audience was female and 43.2% was male (Iqbal 2022).

## Top 10 Countries, Ranked by TikTok User Growth, 2021



Figure 3. Top 10 countries ranked by TikTok User Growth 2021 (eMarketer 2021)

### 2.2.3 Social media marketing

Social media marketing generally means a systematic tool of marketing plan in combination with specific conditions and strategies to reach objectives for the benefit of society (Jeff et al. 2009). Social marketing is the monitoring and stimulation of customer-to-customer connection, involvement, and sharing via social networks to foster positive engagement with a company's brands, resulting in monetary value. There can be interactions on a business's website, social networking sites, or some third-party platforms. (CIPR members 2011.)

As stated in business filed, social media is applied as a communication tool for the purpose of advertising and selling goods and services. Moreover, social media in public factor is frequently utilized for the purpose of disseminating information and fostering user participation. (Gruzd et al. 2018.)

Besides, social marketing provides a way to find a balance between the rights and responsibilities of individuals and the rights and responsibilities of society. This is done by letting people make choices and giving them rewards and punishments for actions that are good for themselves and for others. Effective social marketing does not consist of telling people what they should do or coercing them into doing it.

Rather it refers to the skill of recognizing what will assist individuals in making decisions and doing actions that will lead to better conditions. (Jeff et al. 2009.)

#### 2.2.4 Social media marketing advantages and challenges

There are pros and cons to using social media. Some benefits include personalized and specific targeting, connectivity, real-time communication, speed, cost-effectiveness, interactions, media sharing ability, and the opportunity to create brand communities. Marketers can build marketing materials that are matched with the means of communication, which are significant for certain demographic or psychographic groups that the firm is targeting via social media. As a result, communication is more successful since the messages are more relevant to prospective consumers. (Ameer 2018, 152–158.)

On the other hand, while participating in social media as a consumer is completely free, producing and distributing content is not. Because of this, businesses may lower their client acquisition costs by depending on existing consumer groups that cluster around customers' particular interests, affinities, or hobbies. Additionally, consumers may spread the information given to them in ways that go beyond the confines of a particular social media platform. (Ameer 2018, 152–158.)

There are several difficulties linked with social media sites. Many businesses, for instance, continue to look for innovative strategies to enhance the efficacy of moving clients from awareness to purchase and then post-purchase review. Despite the advancements in analytics and big data, such methods are tough to quantify. Furthermore, social networks are essentially user-governed. It is challenging to penetrate the framework of typical personal communication. (Kotler et al. 2021.)

### 2.3 TikTok

#### 2.3.1 TikTok channel

The Chinese technology company ByteDance is the founder of the social media platform Tiktok. The app's predecessor, Musical.ly, which shared many of the same features as TikTok today, was released in China in August 2014. ByteDance debuted a comparable service in September 2016 under the name Doyin. A year later, the company introduced TikTok to target markets outside of China. Musical.ly

was bought by ByteDance at the end of 2017, and then it was merged with TikTok in August 2018. Musical.ly came to an end when all the accounts and content that already existed were combined into one app under the name TikTok.

TikTok is an application for creating, publishing, viewing, and sharing short-form video content (15-second to 10-minute videos). The app features an in-app video editor as well as an extensive music library from which users can select music to accompany their videos.

TikTok's success since its release date has been meteoric, and it appears to be continuing to soar. As counted in Table 1, generation Z (10–25 years old) makes up the bulk of the user base, which has grown from 65 million in 2016 to 1 billion in 2021 (Iqbal 2022). Accessible in more than 150 countries, the app has become a central hub for all manner of viral trends. The majority of posts are enjoyable, ranging from short sketches and memes to dance challenges and lip-syncing, and even occasionally telling a story. The app's user interface is straightforward, and it enables users to quickly create, share, and view videos with friends and followers from anywhere in the world. It's possible to modify videos by including music, sound effects, filters, subtitles, and more. Videos on TikTok run automatically on an endlessly scrollable stream, which directs users to keep watching continually, making the app addictive in the same way that other social media apps are.

Table 1. TikTok worldwide age demographics 2021 (%) (Iqbal, 2022)

<b>Age bracket</b>	<b>Percentage of users</b>
10-19	28
20-29	35
30-39	18
40-49	16.3
49+	2.7

TikTok stands out from competing platforms is because it serves as a "virtual creative playground" for its users by offering a variety of tools for making and editing short videos.

However, the quantity of information and studies pertaining to TikTok is still minimal in comparison to other major social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, but the TikTok platform is continuously being studied.

TikTok uses an algorithm, which is a set of technical rules and a series of mathematical equations, to personalize the user experience by monitoring and adjusting the content feed based on the users' preferences. In order to personalize the content that is presented to each user, algorithms are used to rank and order posts according to relevance rather than publishing time. The system sparked widespread curiosity because it took a different tack than other social media platforms, where users are more likely to see posts from accounts they follow. One of the app's defining characteristics is the "For You Page," which displays a never-ending stream of videos, the vast majority of which come from accounts the user has not yet discovered. It's the first screen users see when they launch an app.

As stated in a press release by TikTok (2020), the FYP takes into account each individual's preferences and activity histories. Video metadata (hashtags, soundscapes, captions, genres), user preferences (language, country, device type), and user activities (likes, comments, shares, replays, followed accounts, own content) are all used to rank posts and determine the algorithm's recommendations. For instance, if a user watches a video all the way through, that is a strong indicator of interest, so it is given more weight than if the user and the producer happen to be from the same nation, which is a weak indicator. This method allows for the delivery of videos to the FYP in a ranked order based on the user's propensity to be interested in them.

TikTok's goal is to strike a balance between highly relevant, individualized suggestions and fresh, diverse recommendations from producers one might not otherwise discover, so that the user experience is not limited to homogenous video streams and repeating patterns. While accounts with larger followings tend to naturally receive more views, the recommendation algorithm does not explicitly take into account the number of followers or the success of previous posts. (TikTok 2020) Given that everyone, regardless of their accomplishments, has a chance of landing on the FYP of innumerable users, this may be one of the main facilitators of TikTok's exponential growth potential. Most social media feeds used to show posts in reverse

chronological order before the introduction of algorithms. Most modern platforms rely on algorithms, but TikTok's massive user base makes it well worth the effort to join.

### 2.3.2 Tiktok in marketing

Using TikTok as a marketing channel can assist small businesses in increasing brand awareness, selling products, and engaging customers. Companies can use TikTok to engage customers either directly or through TikTok media influencers. TikTok has recently expanded from a Gen Z sharing app to a mass social media platform.

How small businesses use Tiktok for marketing:

First, enhance brand's visibility on TikTok. TikTok is essential for small businesses seeking to expand their TikTok presence in order to generate engaging marketing material. It is pivotal to comprehend user behavior and the right information for Tiktok users.

Second, partnering with TikTok influencers to generate branded content is another TikTok marketing option for small businesses. A whopping 86% of marketers have utilized influencer marketing to either raise brand recognition or boost sales (World Federation of Advertisers 2018, according to Lin 2022). Influencer marketing has become an integral aspect of the TikTok app's ecosystem. The app's flagship generates millions of dollars in advertising income and endorsement deals from content creators. Frequently update TikTok marketplace, obtain influencer stats, and interact with TikTok's most influential users are essential features to optimize the efficiency of TikTok's influencer marketing.

Finally, advertising on TikTok. With TikTok advertising, businesses do not need to devote a great deal of effort to audience development. After setting up advertising campaigns, the businesses can reach their target demographic within twenty-four hours.

On the other side, TikTok is steadily growing in favour among important organizations as a means for them to reach people quickly and conveniently. Information quickly spread on TikTok, and users can interact directly with that

information. Hence, unique organizations become close to users when using TikTok as a marketing tool. Additionally, behind-the-scenes videos about volunteer or organization activities are often interesting content on TikTok. (Alexandra 2022.)

### Trending content on Tiktok

TikTok's content is frequently the deciding element in drawing people.

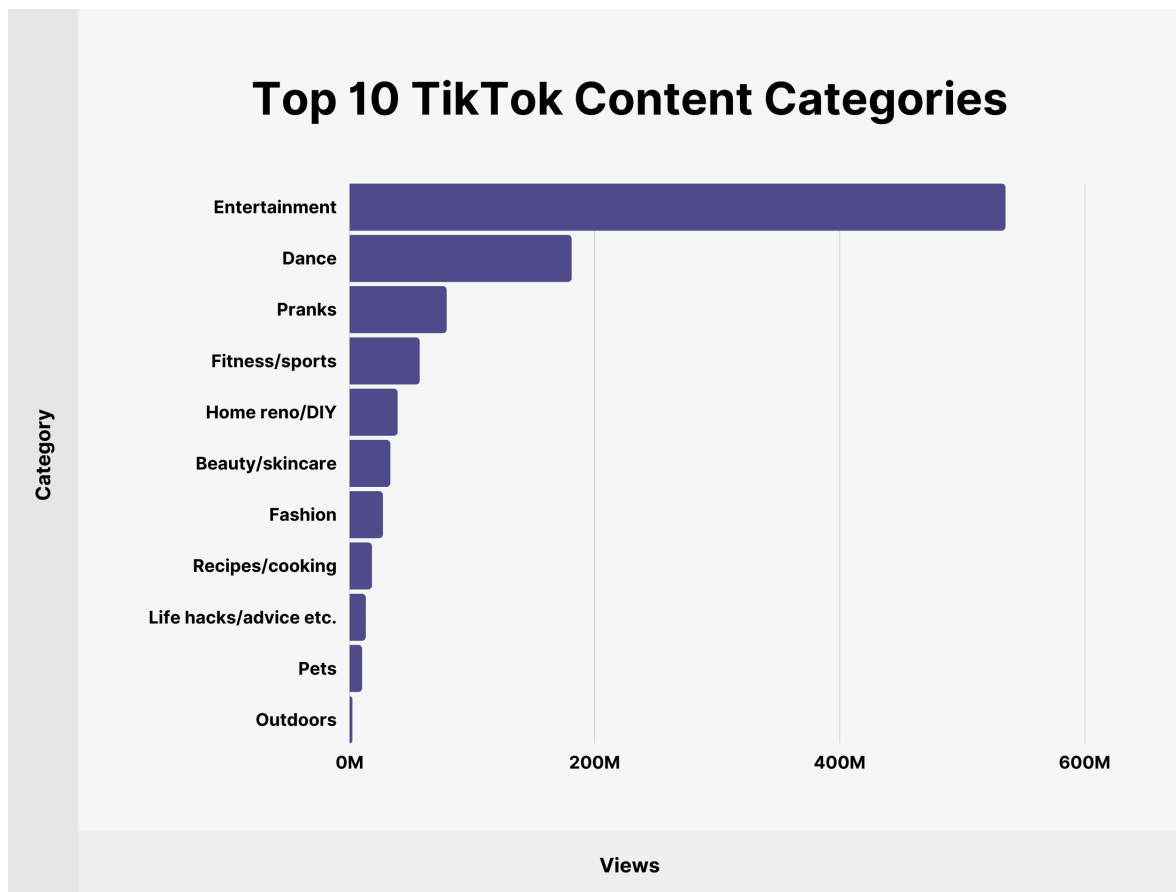


Figure 4. Top 10 TikTok content categories (Backlinko 2022)

According to pooled statistics on Backlinko (Figure 4), the most popular content categories on TikTok in 2022 is entertainment, with approximately 600 billion views globally; Finland is no exception. According to the data for the Top TikTok Influencers in Finland in 2022 (Figure 5), the top five accounts are all associated with the entertainment business, including comedy, duets, and the arts.






Name	Country	Followers	Views/Vid	Likes/Vid	Engagement
 @hpc_official	FI	8.6M	3.3M	384k	11.8%
 @sariaalto	FI	4M	3.4M	325.8k	9.5%
 @asoothesizzler	FI	3.5M	1.5M	155.1k	10.9%
 @boxlapse	FI	2.9M	2.6M	382.9k	15.2%
 @pongfinity	FI	1.2M	1.9M	124.6k	6.8%

Figure 5. Top TikTok influencers in Finland in 2022 (Influencegird 2022)

### Tiktok campaign examples - Chipotle

Chipotle, an American fast-food brand, often uses TikTok to share videos about menus, recipes, or interesting customer stories. And yet, they also launched many TikTok challenges with attractive prizes to attract interaction from both new and old diners. As a result, Chipotle's TikTok channel has reached 1.5 million followers and 28.2 million likes - helping their online sales in 2019 increase by 99% compared to 2018. (McGuire 2021.)

#### 2.3.3 TikTok content marketing

Content marketing is important at every stage of the marketing funnel when developing a digital marketing campaign (Pulizzi & Barret 2009). Blogs, white papers, eBooks, journal articles, videos, infographics, and podcasts are all examples of published content. However, content marketing is more than simply putting a company's words on display for customers to read. In the content marketing process, interactive and engaging publishing is an essential aspect of attracting potential readers to take action and give feedback across several channels. (Pulizzi 2014.)

Nowadays, content marketing has developed rapidly in the marketing sector. The success of digital marketing is largely based on content marketing, original and compelling content boosts customer engagement and business goals. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019.)

High-quality content produces value for consumers, not just for the company's products and services. Good content never focuses on sales but helps consumers

solve problems and make suggestions. The business's advertising might not even mention the company or its goods, concentrating instead on a subject in which it is an expert. Interesting and relevant content needs businesses to be conscious of their consumers' demands, which is done by gathering customer feedback and monitoring customers' user accounts. (Järvinen & Taiminen 2016.)

Content marketing performs a vital part at each level of the marketing funnel that marketers need to contemplate while developing their digital marketing campaign (Das 2020). The content marketing funnel demonstrated in Figure 6 is a complex model for aligning appropriate and timely content to buyer's journey stages and target consumer personas marketers desire to reach. The content marketing funnel leads potential customers from awareness to commitment. By developing and sharing useful, relevant, and consistent information, businesses may attract and maintain target audiences and then prompt them to long-term engage. (Sitecore 2022.)

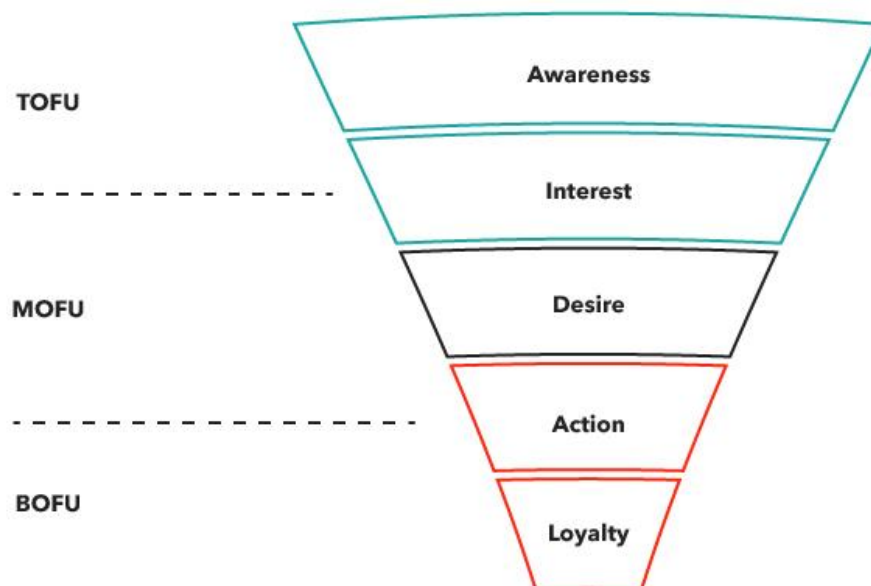


Figure 6. The content marketing funnel (Sitecore 2022)

The content marketing funnel (Figure 6) is described according to Meghna Das (2020).

### **Top-of-Funnel (TOFU)**

At the top of the funnel, customers-to-be are just starting to recognize the issues of businesses. During this stage, content may be used to instruct and inform users about the sort of solution that might be most beneficial. Content types include blogs, social sharing, graphics, pictures, digital magazines, audio, video, podcasts, etc. The majority of companies will publish content to a blog or social platforms for instance LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. (Das 2020.)

### **Middle-of-Funnel (MOFU)**

At the intermediate level of the funnel, visitors are evaluating their offer or solution possibilities. Content in this step of the sales funnel is intended to educate leads on their many possibilities so they may begin reducing their selections and move closer to making a purchase decision. Using free material as an attraction for visitors to provide their account information and engage in their future marketing communications, for example, academic materials (case studies, white papers, etc.), useful materials (swipe files, checklists, etc.), software downloads, coupons, voucher clubs, quizzes, surveys, or workshops. (Das 2020.)

### **Bottom-of-Funnel (BOFU)**

At the last stage of the funnel, when clients reach the bottom of the sales funnel, it indicates that they are ready to convert. This stage's content is meant to provide one last shove to the clients and equip them to make well-informed purchase decisions. Demos, free trials, customer stories, evaluations, spec sheets, events, and mini-classes are some of the content types. (Das 2020.)

After applying content marketing materials in marketing strategy, regular reviews and frequent measurements are necessary because the situation of the business will usually change as it grows. Metrics and upgrades will be helpful for offering customers a specific picture of the business. (CMI member 2019.)

Video marketing is used on many platforms, involves Facebook, YouTube, a business's websites, Instagram, and especially on Tiktok. The rise of Tiktok marketing is obviously evident in recent years. Other platforms that have more options for doing marketing, for example, Facebook, either have content marketing

through their status updates or image marketing through their pictures. In contrast, the main strategy used in marketing on Tiktok is video marketing, with some specific features such as short videos, appropriate hashtags, and high-quality definition. (Barone 2022.)

Online videos are digital audio-visual communication media that are becoming a crucial element of digital marketing and communications (Sedej 2019). Video marketing, a segment of digital marketing, is frequently used as a method to stimulate the interest of a specific audience via social platforms in a specific video. Marketers initially produce and publish social videos in central channels using real-time video-editing software tools, for example, rectangular videos for Instagram or vertical videos for Snapchat. (Barone 2020.)

There are several benefits to using video as a marketing tool, especially in the present business environment (Sedej 2019). According to Wyzowl's (2019) research, 91% of marketers interviewed believe that video is a vital component of their marketing strategy. This finding supports the view that video marketing now plays an important role in marketing strategy. Each year, the use of video marketing grows in popularity. Video traffic is predicted to make up 82% of all internet traffic by 2022. The future of marketing is video marketing since it gives consumers, who are accustomed to social media and have short attention spans, a more individualized experience. (Kavetski 2021.)

In the world of digital marketing, video marketing plays an essential role for many purposes. Moreover, in recent years, more and more brands have started to use video marketing with suitable and trendy strategies to help them reach and build closer relationships with their customers. Brands use video marketing to promote or inform their targeted customers about a product or service. In video marketing, there is a huge amount of creative freedom available, which enables marketers and companies to produce distinctive content that makes them unique compared to their competitors. (Kavetski 2021.)

#### 2.4 SOSTAC model

The SOSTAC model, which is illustrated in Figure 7, is a planning system which has been initially created, designed, and developed by PR Smith since 1990. SOSTAC

is a straightforward and systematic model to be applied to a wide range of professional plans such as marketing plans, digital marketing plans, business plans, advertising plans, digital transformation plans, HR plans, Health, and Safety plans and even wedding plan. SOSTAC planning system distributes confidence to businesses and individuals in applying an aggregated planning template which assists them in expanding and stimulating the effectiveness of the plan. (Smith 2020.)



Figure 7. PR Smith's SOSTAC Planning System (Smith 2020)

According to the Figure 7, the SOSTAC planning system comprises six sections represented by six initial letters, in which businesses and individuals need to profoundly understand and implement. There is a significant correlation between

elements, together with six main questions complemented with the purpose of helping planners build a proper plan. (Smith 2020.)

### **S - Situation Analysis**

According to Smith, the section of Situation Analysis accompanies by the question “Where are we know?” (Smith 2020). This stage indicates the current internal capabilities and resource situation (Strong 2014, 161). To answer this question, an extensive and radical research of the existing situation of the company is needed to be implemented by the planners, including a customer analysis (defining target customers or customer personas, and means of approaching those groups), a competitor analysis (clarifying competitive advantage, etc.), a company analysis (strengths and weaknesses) and an external analysis (using PEST or PESTEL model) trends, and movement. (Smith 2020.)

The TOWS model can be integrated into the Situation Analysis in order to succeed this part. A TOWS Analysis is similar to a SWOT Analysis in that it looks at the company's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. However, it goes a step further by trying to match up the company's Strengths with Opportunities and Threats with Weaknesses. After the planner has finished the SWOT analysis, this is a great next step because it will allow the planner to put his findings into practice. Reducing threats, capitalizing on opportunities, maximizing strengths, and eliminating weaknesses are the primary goals of a TOWS Analysis. (Weihrich 1982.)

### **O - Objectives**

The Objectives section can be explained by the question “Where do we want to be?”. In this term, planners need to determine goals to be reached and the aim of planning as well. It is recommended that planners should build SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) objectives. Besides, businesses and individuals who create the plan obviously need to illustrate the company's Mission and Vision together with the KPIs (action-orientated objectives). (Smith 2020.)

In a nutshell, this section of Objectives in SOSTAC model will support businesses' plan in terms of boosting sales, lessening expenses, improving customer satisfaction, etc. (Chaffey 2021.)

### **S - Strategy**

Strategy describes the course of action that planners need to adhere to with the aim of accomplishing the objectives. In other words, building a strategy means that planners create a road map and follow it until the plan succeeds, including meticulous marketing mix, marketing communications mix, etc., such as creating content marketing and social media marketing (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 559). Briefly, the question of "How do we get there?" is needed to be answered. Businesses and individuals should focus on elements such as segmentation, target group and positioning. A comprehensible segmentation and acknowledgement of the target customer play a pivotal role in proceeding the right advertisement and content to the right people. Furthermore, the head of department need to determine precise tools to embrace their strategy. This strategy operates as a substructure for the plan. (Smith 2020.)

There is a correlation between the strategy and the tactics as the strategy allows planners to place all the subsequent tactics. If the strategy is set improperly, all the tactics will be fallacious.

### **T - Tactics**

Tactics is a specific section that intensely digs into the company's strategies and demonstrates specific implements leading to the objectives. For instance, demonstrating the detailed marketing mix, marketing communications mix and channel mix, or showing a comprehensive way to personalize the customer journeys. There are tactics that are broadly utilized by companies nowadays, such as SEO (ameliorate the competitive advantages against their competitors), PPC campaigns and affiliate marketing, etc. (Smith 2020.)

A social media calendar can be applied to this part as a productive tool. Social media calendar is a chronological outline of an organization's planned social media activity. Content calendars are utilized by social marketers to plan campaigns, manage ads, and evaluate current tactics. Typically, a social media calendar contains the

following components for each post: the date and times it will be public; the social media platform and accounts where it will be posted; the needed text and unique assets (i.e., images or videos); keywords and tags to add. Before creating a media content calendar, marketers must have a comprehensive understanding of their current social media accounts. Determining what types of content to publish is a crucial aspect of social media strategy and an essential step in developing a good social media calendar. (Newberry & Cohen 2022.)

The social media content calendar gives a clear methodology for building a marketing plan and determining its timeline (week, month, year). The success of a business's social media calendar can be boosted with the help of ready-to-use apps and platforms for social media calendars. (Social Media Calendar member 2019.)

### **A - Actions**

In the Actions section, the planners illustrate the ability of assuring the tactics to be implemented with quality and fervor. It is important to find out a response for the question “Who does what, when and how?” (Smith 2020). Action plan is crucial since it elucidates business’s internal and external facilities and organizes the performance in stated objectives, strategy, and tactics (Chaffey 2021). Thus, it performs the effect of deliberation, insightful planning, and proper implementation. The managers or planners decide the methods and activities that are indispensable to realize the strategy, the tactics and to reach the overall objectives. Some examples of actions are establishing and optimizing a lively website/social media account, or expanding a far-reaching ad campaign, etc. The action stage is mostly disregarded, and it is a weakness to plenty of businesses. A typical difficulty in this stage is that the executive department is inclined to pay no attention to passionately and adequately communicate and inspire staff member in coordinating the actions. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 560.)

### **C - Control**

The final section of the SOSTAC model is Control that could be briefly presented through the question “How do we know we are getting there?” (Smith 2020). In this section, metrics, measurement methods and analytics instruments are exerted to explain how the planners superintend the business’s execution to control the whole plan and to ensure the successfulness or favorable outcome via statistics and data

collected. Indicators are standardly decided based on the nature of the campaign launched, and they are principally contingent on the objectives as well as are required to follow the SMART factors to acquire logical outcomes. This connection demonstrates how stated goals have been achieved or determines how the failure happens and what are the alternative solutions, etc. This Control stage is also needed to be managed in an appropriate plan that clearly assigns the responsibility to employees, such as who will oversee investigating and reporting a specified aspect. Also, it should be focused on the frequency that the control plan is reviewed and improved regularly and constantly. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 560.)

### 3 Empirical study

#### 3.1 Study context

The authors had decided the main method for collecting the primary data would be online surveys for Gastro Bar Saimaa. There were two episodes of the survey, which contains ten questions in total, has been made and delivered to students and staff from LUT University and LAB University of Applied Sciences via some academic email, online groups and communities as a Google online survey form. The survey was conducted throughout October and November 2022. After two weeks of sending the emails to these objectives, the authors received sixty-two responses in the first episode. The second episode of the survey received forty-nine respondents. Each of the responses that were collected was analyzed individually. Furthermore, the authors were given permission to collect the case company's data as well as statistics from other social media platforms, which served as secondary data for the study. The marketing observations and advertising videos used in earlier social media marketing activities provided the sources for the secondary data that was gathered. With the assistance of the two founders, all related marketing materials were gathered. Additionally, secondary data were gathered from a variety of related books, scientific articles, and online platforms. This information will clarify what social media marketing actions GastroBar Saimaa has already taken. Moreover, to build the validity and reliability of the data collection results, all data from various sources has been studied and checked to find the related information. Secondary data is retain private and out of discussion in depth in this study.

TOWS analysis and the SOSTAC model were utilized in order to perform the data analysis. As a means of executing situation analysis, the TOWS model was incorporated to the SOSTAC model as a utility instrument. The authors determined the case study's internal and external factors through observations as well as the information that was gathered from the survey. Besides, the authors can find out the current situation of GastroBar Saimaa's reputation and understand their customers' insights due to the collected data. The authors subsequently absorbed their findings in the TOWS analysis as strengths and weaknesses. In addition, by analyzing the market and related networks, the authors also identified potential opportunities and

threats. Following the presentation of all four components, the authors merged them together and formulated the SO, ST, WO, and WT strategies.

Following, the authors identified the objectives after conducting a situational analysis. The objectives were established based on the brand's core message. The grant strategy was then succeeded based on the objectives. The target clientele and the areas of TikTok marketing would be prioritized factors in the strategy. The author's development of the strategy benefited greatly from the survey results, and they were also useful in determining the necessary strategies and actions. For instance, using the respondents' peak Tiktok activity times, the author was able to create a content calendar. Eventually, the authors synthesized their findings to propose metrics for gauging the new marketing channel's efficacy and directing GastroBar Saimaa's future growth in key areas like brand positioning and marketing content creation for the TikTok platform.

The authors constructed a flowchart (Figure 8) to explain this part and show how the research's data was gathered and analyzed.

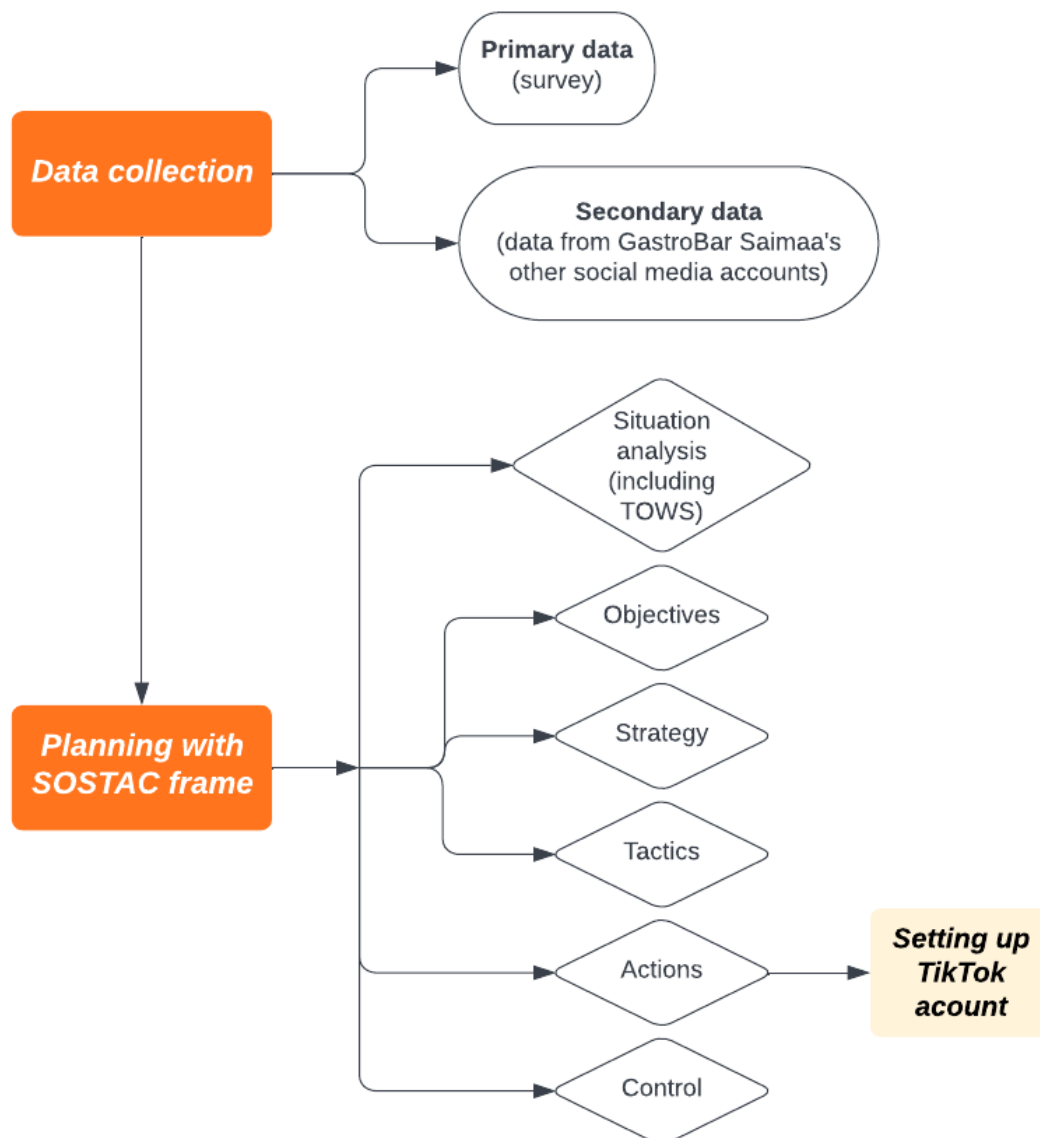


Figure 8. The procedure of collecting data and planning with SOSTAC frame

### 3.2 Survey results

Firstly, the survey results showed that the majority of those who filled out the survey are from LAB University of Applied Sciences (80%), while 16% are students from LUT University and exchange students at both universities.

Secondly, survey respondents are mainly students (72%); staff members only have 23%; and the remaining 5% are other subject, as indicated in Figure 9.

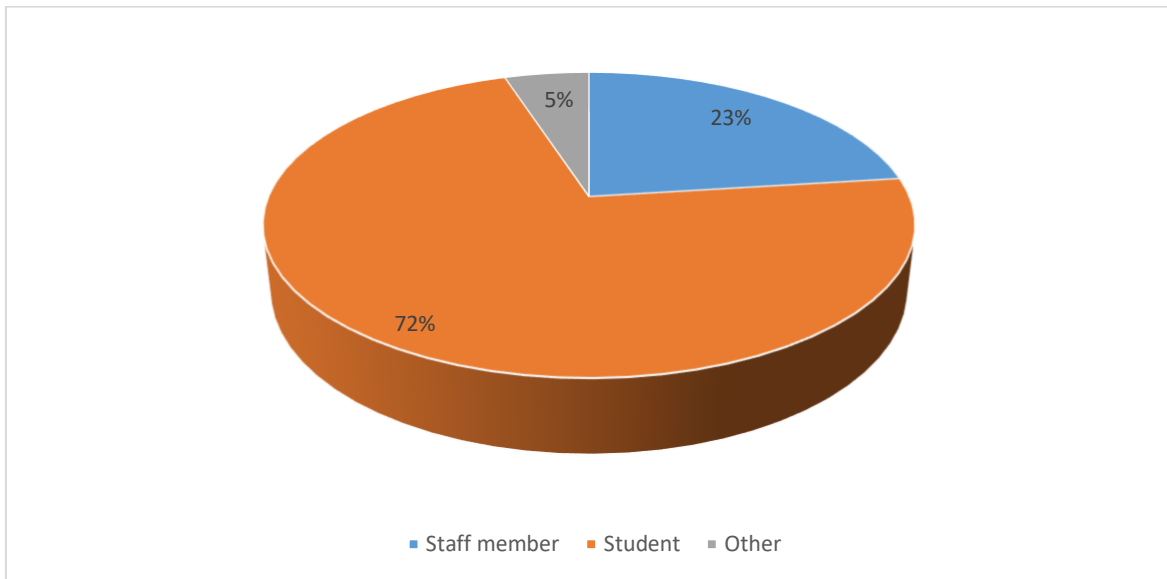


Figure 9. Respondents' occupation

Thirdly, Figure 10 illustrates that 77% of respondents are in the age range of 18 to 25 years old; this age group is called Gen Z, and this is exactly the target group that GastroBar Saimaa is aiming to attract.

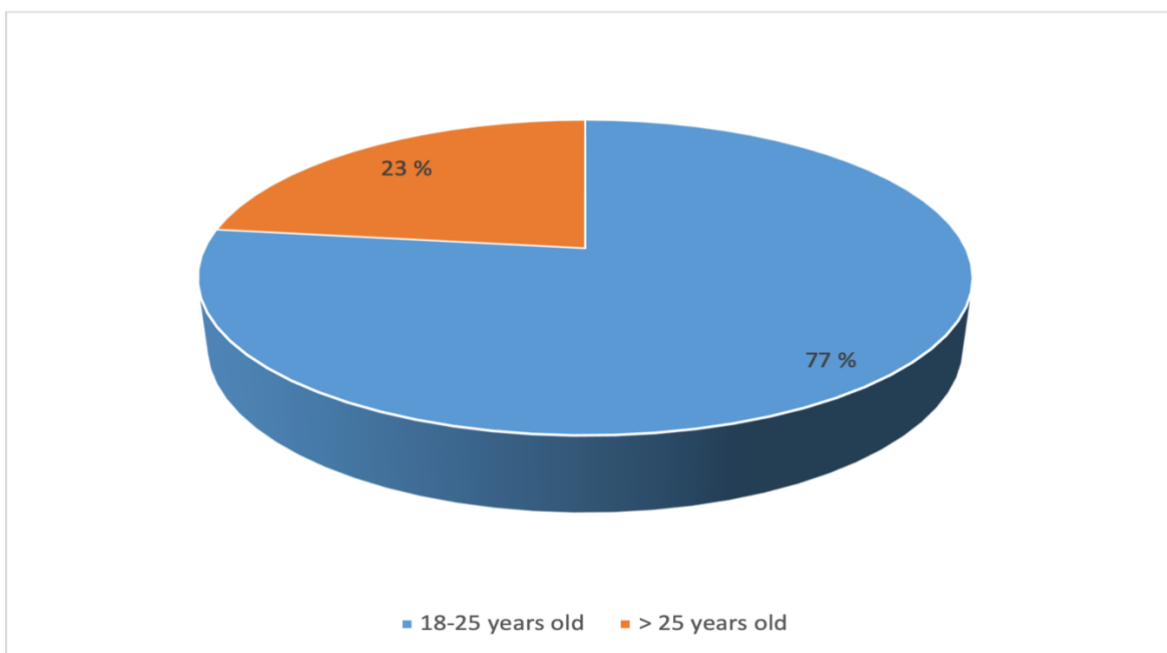


Figure 10. The age groups of respondents

According to Figure 11, among the 49 respondents in the second release of the survey, there are forty people (82%) using TikTok, and the frequency of using this

social media platform at a rate of less than one hour on a daily basis is the majority rate.

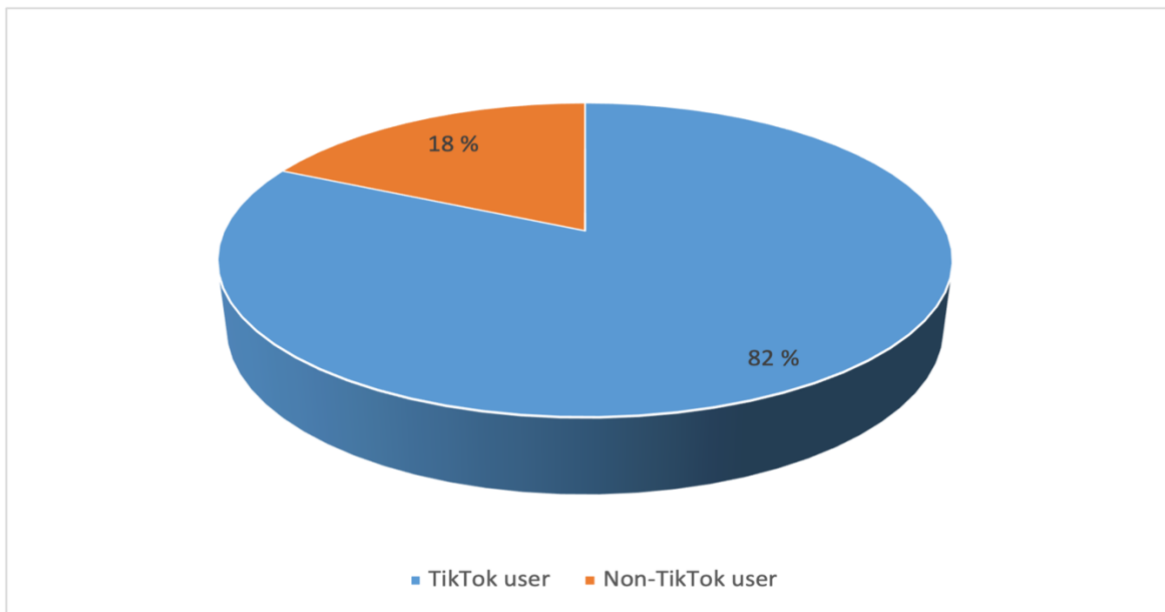


Figure 11. The percentage of respondent who are currently a TikTok user

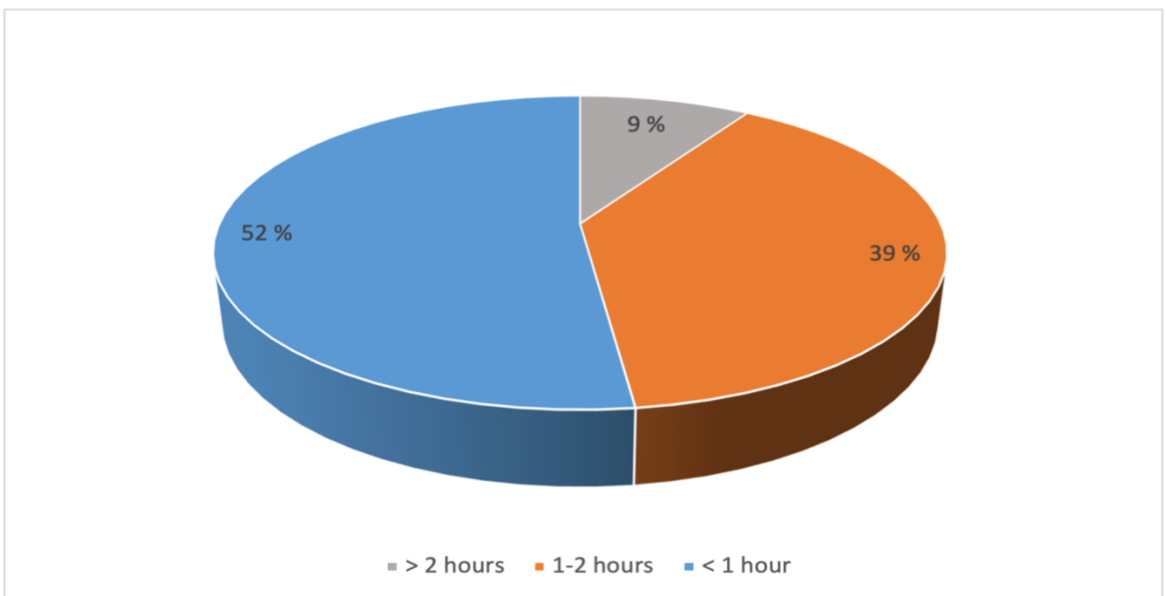


Figure 12. The average time that respondents spend on Tiktok per day

As specified by Figure 12, the average time that respondents spend on TikTok on per day is one hour per day. This amount of time of using TikTok is considered that respondents are highly engaging users.

Figure 13 indicates that the majority of respondents (70%) are aware of the restaurant channel and its events through traditional poster marketing. Because the establishment is on campus, most students find out about it from the poster. A word-of-mouth rate of 30% indicates that the restaurant's quality is highly regarded. However, social media is only at 25%, which is a shallow rate in the context of globalization and the exploding social networking platforms nowadays in social media marketing.

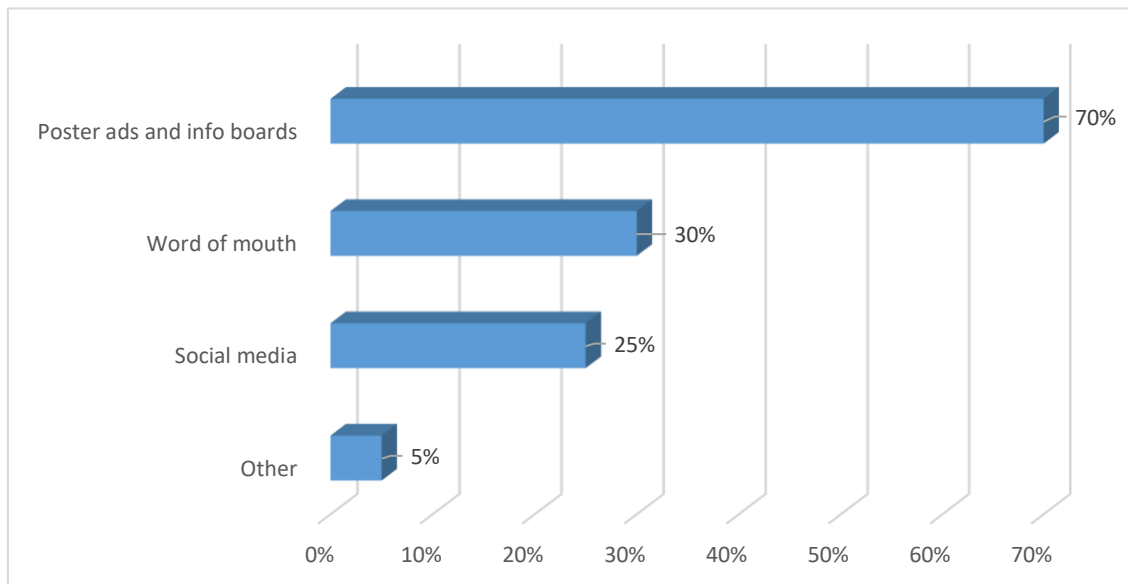


Figure 13. Information channels know about the restaurant

According to the data from the third question of the first survey (Figure 13), 25% of people are familiar with the restaurant through social media. The authors had asked them the fourth question to gather information about the channels (Figure 14) that led them to know GastroBar Saimaa through the previous response. Only 1% of the responses came from TikTok's users, while 59% of the responses came from Facebook, 35% from Instagram, and 5% from other social networks. The organization needs a strong strategy to expand the restaurant's brand recognition channels. To promote the brand more efficiently, the business must develop a suitable channel development strategy.

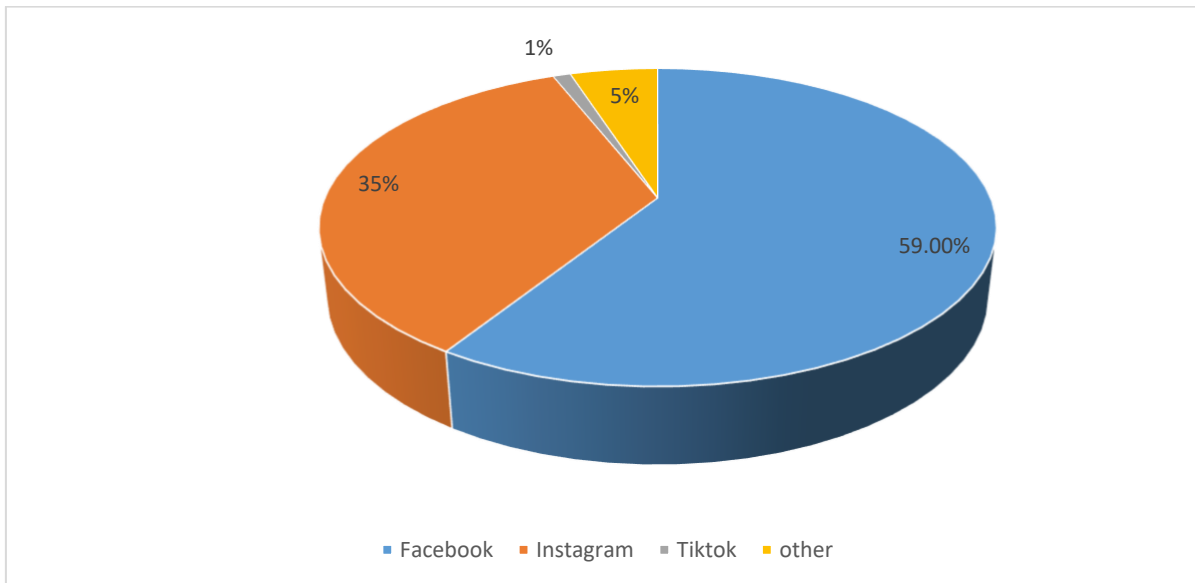


Figure 14. Percentage of social media users who know the restaurant

Next, the results of the fifth question on the reasons for coming to the event held at Gastro Bar Saima are as follows:

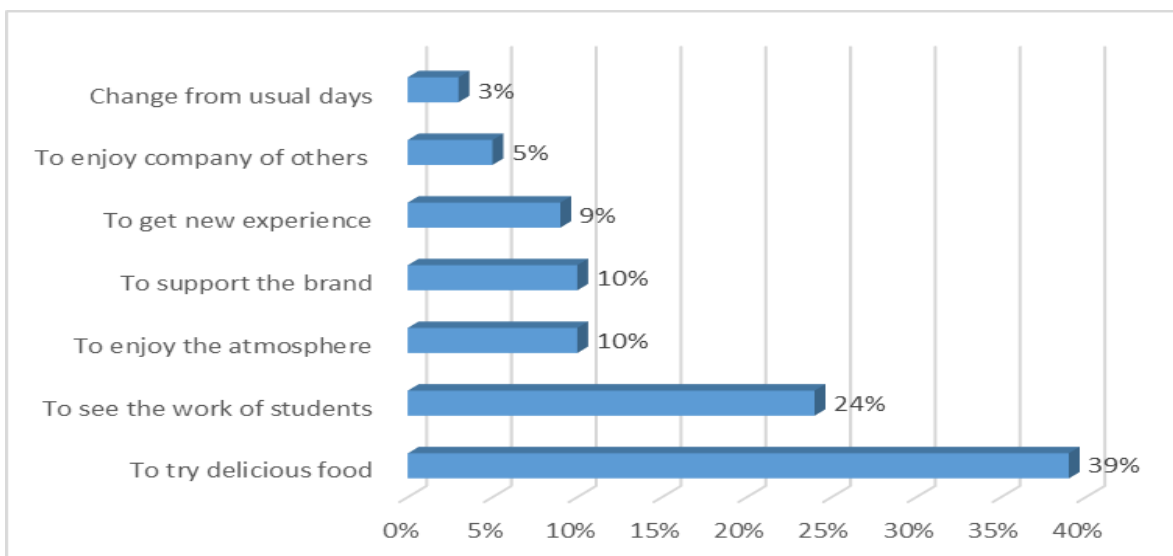


Figure 15. Most important reasons to visit GastroBar Saimaa's events

According to Figure 15, 39% of the feedback indicates that eating delicious food is the primary reason patrons visit GastroBar Saimaa. The next justification (24%) is to see what the students have accomplished in a real-world setting. Only 9–10% of respondents to the survey indicated that they attend to gain an experience and support the restaurant or get a sense of the events. The miniscule response is due to the fact that the customer wants to change their everyday lunch habit. With this

knowledge, the authors can determine the motivations behind patronage of the eatery and generate suggestions for promoting TikTok scripts.

Finally, customer experience is one of the most critical factors in launching a restaurant advertising campaign on TikTok. The Figure 16 below shows the results of the survey.

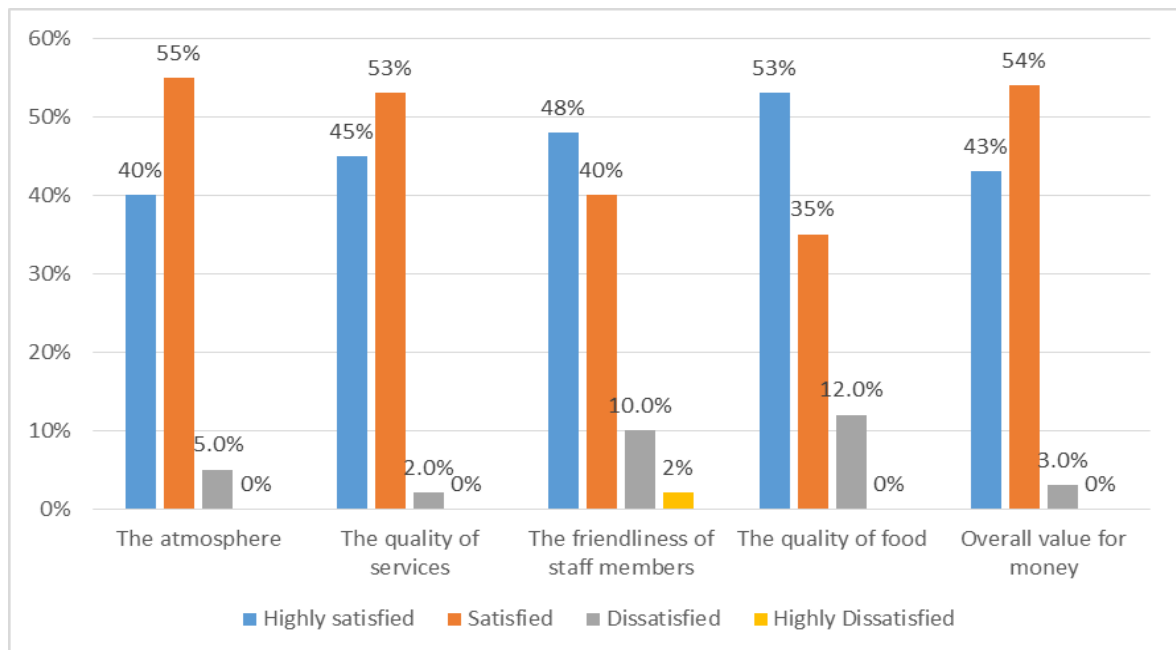


Figure 16. Overall experience with GastroBar Saimaa

The survey results indicate that customers are satisfied with the criteria. Most customers are pleased with the services, the friendliness of the staff, the food quality, and the overall value for money. However, there were still a few customers who were not satisfied with their experience at GastroBar Saimaa. Some of the respondents answered an extended question about why they were not satisfied. The answers are about these factors: the staff's attitude and skill, the food quality, and the atmosphere in the pop-up restaurant. In short, the above survey questions help the authors figure out who the event's target audience is, why people go to the event, and what they think about it. This gives ideas for advertising content on social networking sites, especially TikTok. The Figure 17 illustrates a summary of the survey results and crucial conclusions that can be used for the TikTok marketing contents that stick to GastroBar Saimaa's brand essence.

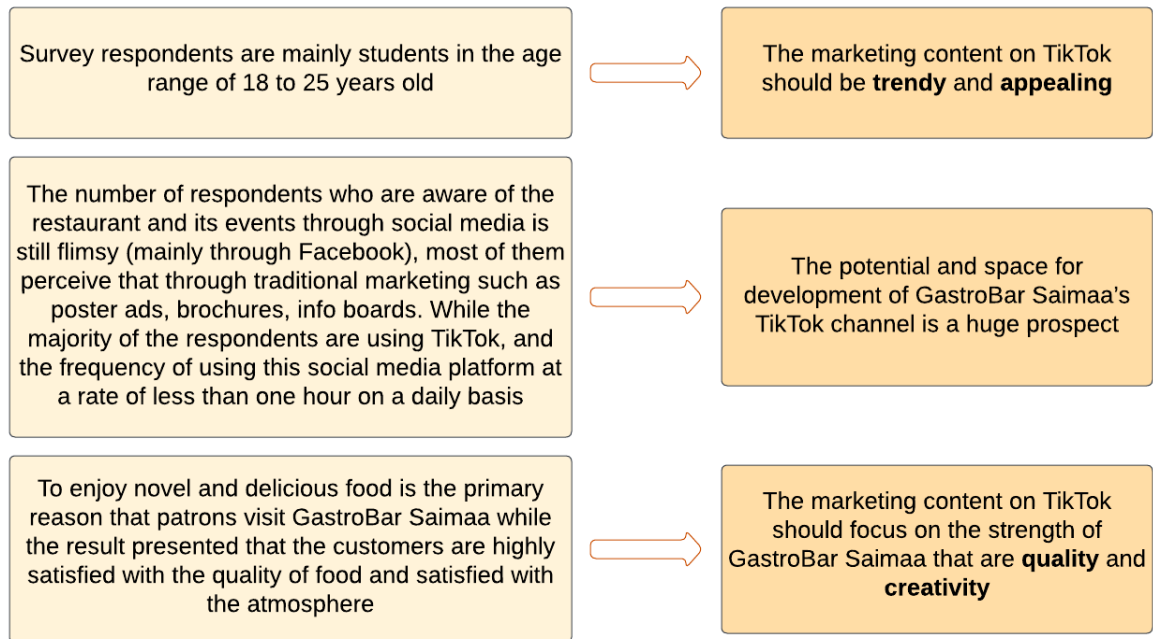


Figure 17. Summary of the survey results and crucial conclusions

## 4 Building a TikTok marketing plan for GastroBar Saimaa

### 4.1 Situation analysis

Currently, as showed in Figure 18, GastroBar Saimaa has only 307 likes and 377 followers on Facebook. Compared to other restaurants in the area, this establishment has relatively low online traffic. The visual is not particularly appealing and is kind of monotonous. There are around five or ten likes on event-related posts and rarely any interactions or comments. Minimal investment has been made in the restaurant's marketing, and there are few attractive videos on the Facebook sites.



Figure 18. Facebook profile of GastroBar Saimaa

In accordance with Figure 19, having 101 posts and 262 followers, GastroBar Saimaa's Instagram channel has a similarly low level of engagement. On average, a video or article receives between 100 and 200 views. The material is simplistic and devoid of appeal.

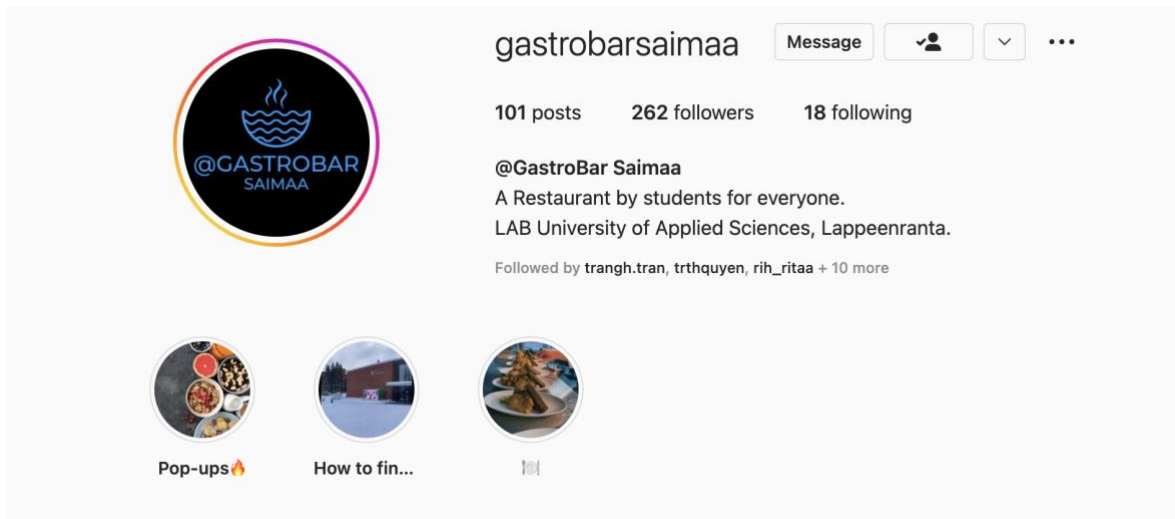


Figure 19. Instagram profile of GastroBar Saimaa

Facebook and Instagram are generally ineffective social media platforms with few views, few interactions, simple images, and poorly invested content. Moreover, at GastroBar Saimaa, currently there is no one in charge of managing and maintaining the branding job. There has not had an overall social media calendar where students can organize, synthesize and synchronize the marketing contents on various social media platforms. On one hand, this is because GastroBar Saimaa is a practical spot where students commit themselves to the organization only in a certain period of time, the change in the number of students and the quality of learning takes place every year. Thus, it is difficult to make someone engage himself to the development of the brand without benefits. On the other hand, the important and necessity of stimulating the brand is overlooked.

According to the information above as well as the survey results which showed a number of TikTok users and the time they are spending on this platform, there is a huge potential that GastroBar Saimaa should take full advantage of TikTok channel to expand its marketing professional.

As stated in the study context, the authors integrated the TOWS model into this situation analysis part in order to determine and understand a comprehensive insight of the current situation.

<p><b>Internal factors</b></p> <p><b>External factors</b></p>	<p><b>Strengths (S)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diversified business model</li> <li>- Loyal customers</li> <li>- Young and enthusiastic workforce</li> <li>- Good price</li> <li>- Great value in practice</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weakness (W)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weak brand awareness</li> <li>- Lack of specific marketing strategy</li> <li>- Lack of management</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities (O)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potential for business expansion</li> <li>- Ability to develop new services</li> <li>- Popularity of events</li> <li>- Ability to be a partner of other companies</li> </ul>	<p><b>S-O strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find potential partners to cooperate with</li> <li>- Specific plans for the development and expansion of the restaurant's business in the future</li> </ul>	<p><b>W-O strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interact with potential customers and consult customers' opinions about services</li> <li>- Develop specific marketing strategies</li> </ul>
<p><b>Threats (T)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restaurant closure due to Covid</li> <li>- Increased cost of input materials, operating costs</li> <li>- Competitors</li> </ul>	<p><b>S-T strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote plans to increase customer loyalty</li> <li>- Develop online channels such as distance learning courses</li> </ul>	<p><b>W-T strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offer solutions to deal with competitors (vouchers, promotions, etc.)</li> </ul>

Figure 20. The TOWS matrix of GastroBar Saimaa

Following Figure 20, the greatest advantage of GastroBar Saimaa is its originality and adaptability. The eatery is regarded as highly promising because it always provides brand new and unique services. GastroBar Saimaa is a relatively young brand with a distinctive business strategy, the students are accustomed to and have conducted such pop-up events in the past, and the restaurant has attracted many potential consumers. The primary weakness of the restaurant is the absence of a distinct advertising plan and the inadequacy of its services. As a result, the restaurant must design a specialized strategy to boost engagement and grow its brand.

## 4.2 Objectives

Despite the fact that numerous customers are familiar with GastroBar Saimaa's services through pop-up events, private planning, and food and beverage catering, the brand message is still faint in customers' minds. Thus, the primary objectives are to raise brand awareness, enhance visibility on TikTok platforms, influence the

target audience (young people), and generate traffic on the TikTok channel through engaging high-quality content in order to rapidly attract as many followers as feasible. In addition, developing customer relationships, establishing a more intimate interaction channel with users, converting viewers into participators, and obtaining cooperation partners are also essential goals. Nailing these intentions down, the authors will develop a strategy which capitalize on the company's contemporary success and effectively develop the TikTok channel.

In terms of objectives relating to the engagement of the audience to GastroBar Saimaa's TikTok channel, the following goals are set:

- The rate of completion or review video reaches 60 to 70 per cent.
- Each video receives around 100 to 200 hearts that TikTok users interact with.
- The number of comments and shares for the video reaches 50 per cent compared to gained heart interaction.
- The number of followers increases 300 to 400 per cent (reaches approximately 400 to 500 followers in six months).

#### 4.3 Strategy

In terms of achieving the established goals, strategy is the way to get there. The authors have already identified the target group that GastroBar Saimaa will focus on, which was determined in the Situation Analysis section (4.1). Furthermore, the strategy will serve the purpose of boosting the brand essence discovered by Fadeeva and Roiz (2021), as can be seen in Figure 21.

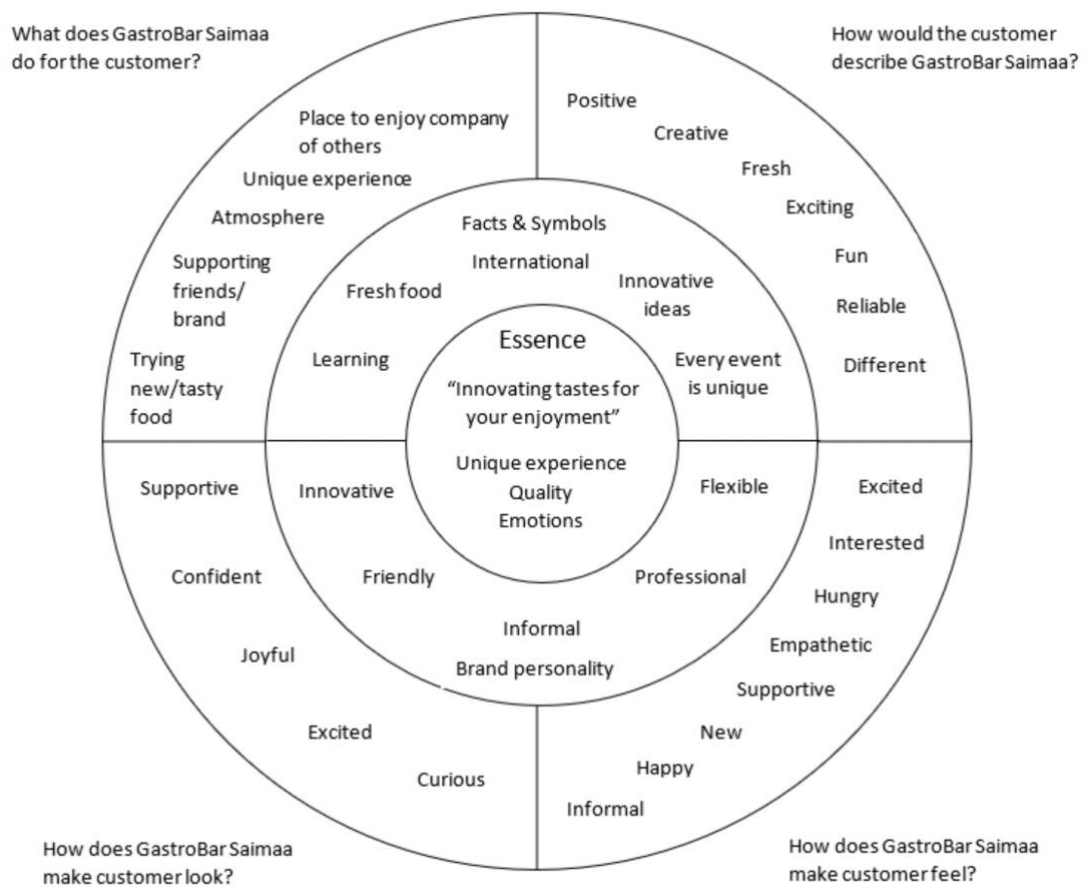


Figure 21. Brand essence wheel of GastroBar Saimaa (Fadeeva & Roiz 2021)

From the summary of the survey results and crucial conclusions showed in Figure 17, the authors generated ideas below and their justifications in term of content creating.

TikTok provides an excellent platform for restaurants to showcase new dishes and menu specials through the creation of videos, especially if the restaurant presents them in a visually appealing manner that is easy to remember. For instance, GastroBar Saimaa can decorate their dishes to resemble works of art and cut fruits and vegetables to resemble trendy characters. This is how to gain additional followers on TikTok. Then, at the conclusion of the video, the video maker can invite viewers to suggest additional challenges for future videos. This is also a strategy to encourage viewers to interact more with GastroBar Saimaa. Moreover, GastroBar Saimaa can also share excellent content, such as short videos with meaningful messages about recipes and useful kitchen tips, which will increase the number of

followers on its TikTok channel. For instance, GastroBar Saimaa can instruct viewers on how to clean the kitchen, remove stubborn stains from pots and pans, prepare delicious quick smoothies at home, etc. If the audience finds the content of the video valuable, it will compel them to share the video and engage with the restaurant directly.

Specially, once GastroBar Saimaa's TikTok account acquires more than 500 followers, they can initiate live events on the platform to share about GastroBar Saimaa's past stories and their upcoming actions. Creating content in which the chef or bartender is tasked with developing an engaging tutorial or class to teach people how to prepare specific dishes or drinks is also a strategy to create and maintain customer-brand relationships. Likewise, GastroBar Saimaa can hold a contest to create a visual identity for the brand, such as introducing the newest dish, drink, upcoming event, etc. TikTok is the ideal platform for maintaining uniqueness and brand essence.

One of the easiest and most effective ways to utilize TikTok's power is to join TikTok's challenges to expand brand recognition. GastroBar Saimaa can create a hashtag challenge that is engaging and memorable, such as posts that challenge restaurant followers to create videos with easy-to-follow songs and dances and then spread the word. Moreover, the restaurant can encourage customers to post a TikTok video about their dining experience or try to make one of the restaurant's dishes or beverages that they enjoy at GastroBar Saimaa. This idea motivates users to share the hashtag created by GastroBar Saimaa and promote the restaurant.

TikTok will evaluate the user experience through the first 5 seconds of the video. Thus, the video content should generate curiosity and stimulation for customers when they first see the video, such as the countdown effect, the first black video, etc. The video should be short so that customers will not lose patience watching it all, or if it must be long then it should be significantly attractive (however, it still should be less than 30 seconds), or it should be divided into serials to stimulate the audience to interact or follow the channel to keep track of upcoming video.

### **Target group**

Based on the information analyzed above, the authors can draw a comprehensive picture about the target customer. Customer segmentation still focuses primarily on

students and staff of LUT University and LAB University of Applied Sciences, as well as Lappeenranta residents. However, with the implementation of the new marketing channel – TikTok, GastroBar Saimaa focuses on attracting people in the age group from 18 to 25 years old, who are using the TikTok platform habitually and are attracted by lively video, interesting content and audience-friendly more than a common post or picture. If customers used to come to the restaurant just to fill their empty stomach, now they need more. Going out to eat today is also a form of emotional connection with the new generation of customers, they want to eat at places that have the same “personality” as themselves. For example, students often like to eat and drink in happy places where they can understand the restaurant’s theme, they want to enjoy the new taste, experience worldwide cuisine that is all created by energetic and creative people. With TikTok, GastroBar Saimaa now can easily show off its "personality" by producing videos that share operations or interesting daily stories. The participant for this content is diverse, from the instructors to the students, or more interestingly, the customers themselves, can join in the content marketing.

#### 4.4 Tactics

The tactic implementation plan includes a social media calendar for the TikTok account as a communication tool, which specifies how and when each piece of content will be used to reach out to targeted audiences. In terms of marketing contents, to meet the needs and desires of the customer, all content must be optimized to appeal to the tastes of young customers. They must ensure that the following essential qualities, as demonstrated in the figure below (Figure 22), are presented.

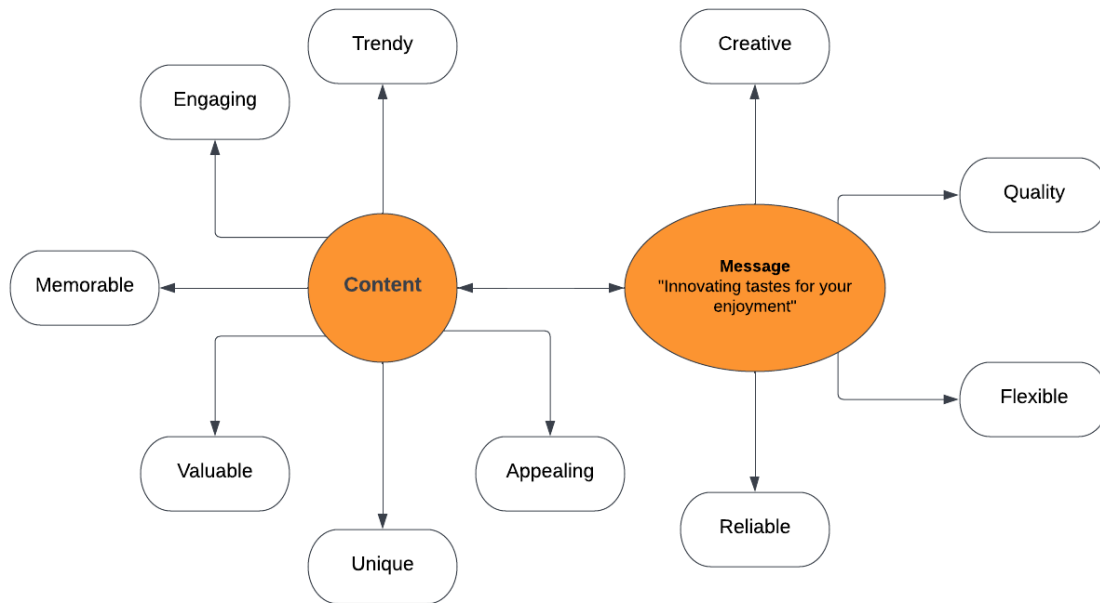


Figure 22. Elements needed to be presented in TikTok marketing content for GastroBar Saimaa

The social media calendar for specific event in GastroBar Saimaa will base on a part of the year 2022 calendar and LAB University of Applied Sciences's yearly calendar as Table 2. Year 2022 calendar and LAB University of Applied Sciences' yearly calendar below to develop one month calendar. Moreover, the yearly calendar that includes important dates can help planners create more idea content ahead of time and boost it go live when the target audiences are most active and available to receive the content. When the audience is not prepared to receive content, the organization cannot impose it.

Table 2. Year 2022 calendar and LAB University of Applied Sciences' yearly calendar

Month	First week	Second week	Third week	Fourth week
<b>January</b>	Winter-break New Year's Day	Students back to campus Epiphany		
<b>February</b>	Lunar New Year		Valentine	
<b>March</b>		International Women's Day		International Earth Day

<b>April</b>		Good Friday	Easter	
<b>May</b>	May Day	Mother's Day		Ascension Day
<b>June</b>	Summer period starts	Whit Sunday	Father's Day	Midsummer
<b>July</b>	Pride week			
<b>August</b>		New students attend	Students back to campus	
<b>September</b>				
<b>October</b>		Autumn-break		Halloween
<b>November</b>				Black Friday
<b>December</b>		Independence Day of Finland	Winter-break	Christmas

Based on the content marketing funnel, the authors have applied the TikTok channel as a tool for top-of-funnel (TOFU) and middle-of-funnel (MOFU) content. In details, the TOFU content is being used to raise the brand awareness of the target user about GastroBar Saimaa events. Therefore, on TikTok channel, the video content of this stage focuses on the introduction of a specific event, building knowledge for users about GastroBar Saimaa, and then spreading the audience to their other channels. In the MOFU content, potential customers will decide whether they should attend the GastroBar event. Thus, the content must demonstrate why the target users should come to the event. For instance, displaying how the event is superior, highlighting a unique menu or activities, or going behind the scenes to see how the event was prepared.

Videos need to be invested in content and quality; they must be consistent with the "personality" of GastroBar Saimaa, and the frequency of video posting must be regular and continuous. It is necessary to determine the "golden time" to post the proper content. For example, posting in the 10 a.m.–12 p.m. and 8 p.m.–10 p.m. timeframes will often have a chance to gain more views with content relating to food and beverage. Tiktok has hashtags and trends that often change; every time there is a new trend, there are a lot of views, so practitioners have to tag their videos with

those hashtags to be classified in the same trend. After posting video content, it is important to keeping track the success. With each piece of content posted, it should be analyzed with the following questions to know the efficiency:

- Are potential customers seeing, engaging with, and spreading the content?
- Is any of the target audience interacting with the content?
- Is there any follow-up after the interaction?

Based on tactics above the TikTok content calendar was created and presented in Appendix 3.

#### 4.5 Actions

In order to make TikTok an effective marketing channel for GastroBar Saimaa, the action plan should be primarily focused on and meticulously established. As stated in the theoretical framework, the action plan must comprehensibly point out the answer to this question: "Who does what, when, and how?".

Achieving success for this marketing channel requires sustained effort on the part of supervisors and practitioners. The supervisors need to convey the message built by the first generation to the next generation since the TikTok channel was established. In addition, supervisors should encourage practitioners to learn from experts in video recording and photography skills, while following and interacting with other TikTok users is also a way to both learn and build relationships among TikTok users as well as raise views for our channel. Last but not least, it is essential to share GastroBar Saimaa's TikTok profile on other social channels - Facebook and Instagram for instance.

Table 3. The plan to shoot promotional videos based on TikTok content calendar in November

No	Time	Idea	Content	Note
1	15s – 20s	About the events	The meaning of the events	Background: campus/ restaurant site  Music: fresh

2	45s – 60s	Interview	I Interview students of LAB campus about 4 previous events	Background: campus Voice record
3	20s – 25s	Introduction of the menu or activities	Shoot the menu dishes or activities of the events	Background: kitchen/ restaurant site  Music: vibrant
4	45s – 60s	Behind the scenes	Shoot the prepare process of the events	Background: kitchen/ restaurant site  Music/ voice record
5	15s – 20s	Countdown	Film countdown message from target customers	Background: kitchen Voice record
6	10s – 20s	Venue of the events	Event background and first guest	Background: restaurant site  Music: funky
8	7s – 10s	Cutlery cleaning tips	Mix dishwashing liquid for shining cutleries	Background: kitchen Voice record
7	10s – 15s	#Monthlychallenge	Peeling an apple in 3 seconds	Background: kitchen Voice record
8	10s – 15s	Mocktail making	How to make strawberry daiquiri	Background: bar Music: energetic
9	12s – 17s	Event dish making	Making salmon & chicken puff pastry	Background: kitchen Music: jazzy
10	15s – 20s	DIY	Makeover old decorations to guest gifts	Background: campus Voice record
11	7s – 12s	Yearly special time Black Friday	Record Black Friday time in IsoKristiina	Background: campus Music: glorious
12	5s – 10s	Quick recipe	How to make egg benedict in 5 minutes	Background: kitchen Music: inspiring

Daily video uploads on social media platforms have helped the pop-up event attract many customers. Further, garnering great comments for improving the event will

make it more successful. A posting video plan of TikTok channel mainly follows during prime-time periods as below:

- 7:00 to 9:00, people typically spend time around breakfast browsing TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram as the day begins. When publishing videos during this time, the restaurant publishes amusing or inspiring movies to generate good viewer energy about the significance of event activities.
- 11:30 to 13:30 is the lunch break; therefore, a huge number of users visit TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram during this period. Posting movies at this time will undoubtedly reach many users.
- 18:30 to 20:00 is the busiest hour of the day because everyone is resting and unwinding after a long day of work and school. Evening is when users spend the most time on TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram for news and entertainment; therefore, publishing videos at this time guarantees that the restaurant's video will receive many views.

### **Setting up a TikTok account**

In this sector, the authors outline the specific steps that are taken to implement the TikTok platform as a marketing tool.

The TikTok account of GastroBar Saimaa signed up at the beginning of November. Figure 24 illustrates the TikTok profile of GastroBar Saimaa after one week of activity. The authors have chosen a profile photo (Figure 23), which is the GastroBar Saimaa's iconic logo. Besides, the branded TikTok hashtag is named #gastrobarsaimaa. The authors believe that these two things have led to the unique reputation of GastroBar Saimaa on the TikTok channel.



Figure 23. GastroBar Saimaa profile photo

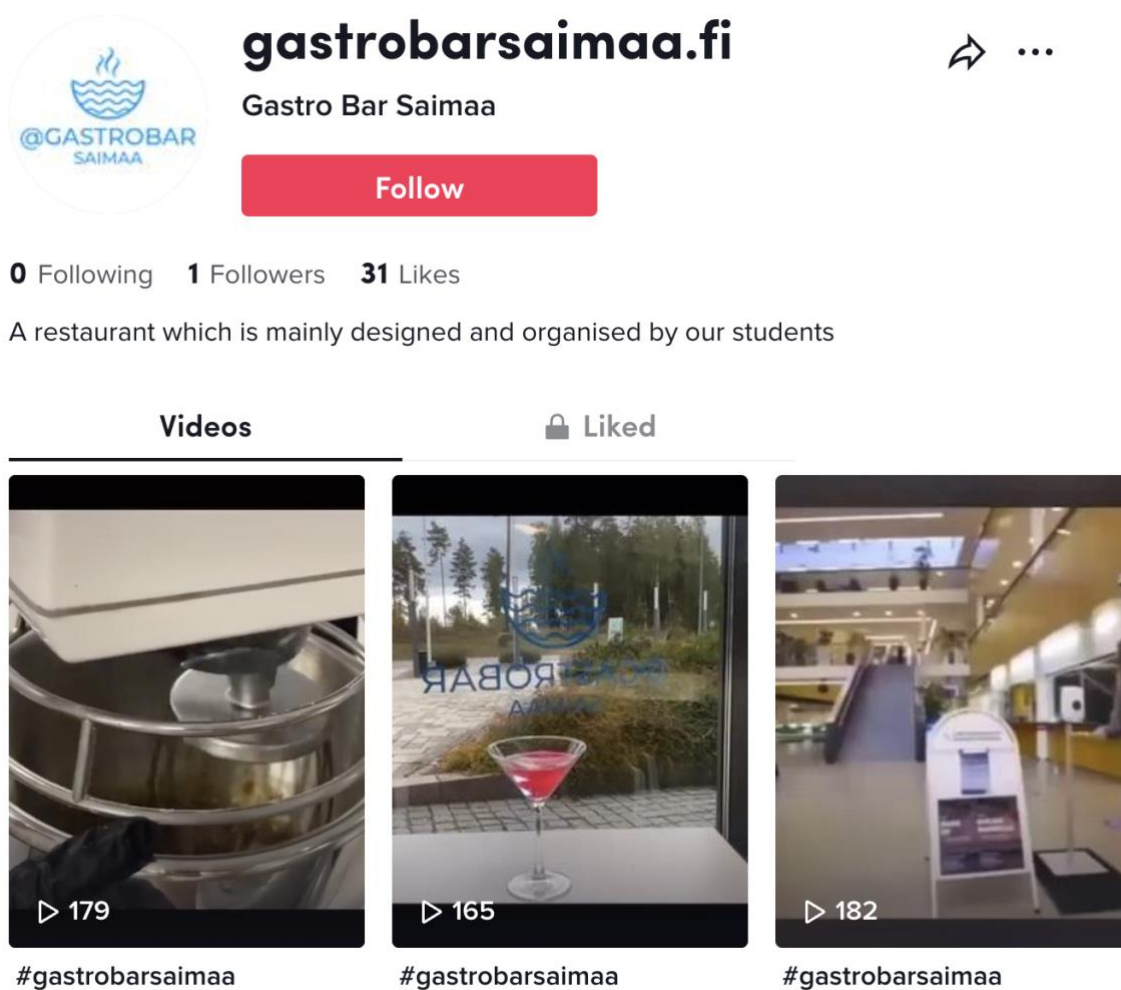


Figure 24. TikTok account of GastroBar Saimaa

Currently the GastroBar Saimaa account has been activated, the authors continued to collect information from professors about upcoming events during November. The TikTok content calendar for GastroBar Saimaa (Appendix 3) has been built based on the combination of collected information, the yearly calendar (Table 3), TikTok trending contents, and the current situation of GastroBar Saimaa. The first video was published on TikTok. Indeed, the video was made in 2020 and also posted on Facebook and Instagram channels, which is the introduction content of GastroBar Saimaa. The authors have found that the video has all the information needed so that TikTok users can get a general idea of how the organization works.

To continue following the TikTok content calendar, the authors have posted two more videos as marketing videos for the Shades of Autumn event. The ideas and contents of these two videos were made by students, who were the primary implementers of the event. The first video is an introduction to the event and describes its unique menu. The second is how to make salmon and chicken puff pastry. To produce effective videos, the process of shooting and editing the videos was done by the event implementers with the guidance of the authors. The authors believe that event implementers should conduct all the steps of video making, and the authors only give them the guide based on Table 3, comments, and suggestions. When the content videos were done, the authors posted them on TikTok according to the calendar day and time.

After three days of posting the three videos on TikTok, there are 182 views of the first video, 165 views of the second, and 179 views of the third, as shown in Figure 24. TikTok account of GastroBar Saimaa. Moreover, the account has one follower, and all of its videos have received 31 likes. In general, the data shows that GastroBar Saimaa's brand awareness is growing among TikTok users in a positive way. Subsequently, the authors have given the TikTok content calendar to the professors who are the founders of GastroBar Saimaa and the students who are studying restaurant courses in order to continuously follow the calendar and gain more success from it.

#### 4.6 Control

In the Control section, to make sure the organization is on track to achieve the set goals, it is important to establish key performance indicators (KPIs) for each tactic,

link them back to the objectives, and establish a system of dashboards to check in on a weekly or monthly basis. GastroBar Saimaa needs to monitor key performance indicators such as the number of shares, mentions, comments, and leads generated from various campaign activities. GastroBar Saimaa can upgrade its TikTok account to a Pro account to analyze Audience Insights, thereby creating valuable video content, and see TikTok's "Experience Metrics" to evaluate marketing content. Tiktok will rate the user experience according to: How high is the video completion or review rate? How many hearts do users interact with? How many comments and shares for the video? How many followers increased? and so on.

In addition, GastroBar Saimaa needs to keep track of the level of consumer proactivity, which can be defined as the intention to proactively establish communication on TikTok in order to acquire additional information regarding the products and services that are being provided. GastroBar Saimaa should control the indications of customer dissatisfaction that frequently appear during various online competitions, in addition to the aforementioned steps. It is required to make certain that the awarding of prizes is carried out in an extremely open and honest approach, and that the winners are genuine individuals who are willing to vouch for the legitimacy of the campaign. The success of the company's live events should be measured by the number of leads generated, the number of constructive reviews in traditional and digital platforms, and the intensity of customer satisfaction as expressed on TikTok.

## 5 Summary and conclusion

### 5.1 Objectives and results

In a nutshell, to answer to the study question: “Why GastroBar Saimaa should utilize TikTok to effectively reach its younger clientele, and how?”, the reason that GastroBar Saimaa should utilize TikTok’s power to effectively reach its younger clientele is because the number of TikTok’s users is tremendously growing not only in global scale, but also in local scale. In other words, based on the survey results, there is a huge prospect for the development of GastroBar Saimaa’s marketing profession as students and staff at universities are positive and enthusiastic TikTok users. In addition, the marketing plan for GastroBar Saimaa’s TikTok channel, which was established based on the SOSTAC model together with the integration of other useful models, has been prosperously executed. As a matter of fact, SOSTAC is a compelling tool to create a marketing plan. The original objective of this study is building a TikTok account for GastroBar Saimaa and executing a marketing plan that is created for this TikTok channel. When it comes to the result, the authors have successfully built a TikTok channel and implemented the plan that was specially designed for it.

### 5.2 Assessment of the implemented work

The authors have found this thesis topic related to their interest in marketing fields. Besides, through the implementation process, they have achieved plentiful new and useful materials that extend their knowledge about digital marketing. Moreover, the study is a practice-based thesis; therefore the authors have conducted the most realistic actions and obtained practical experience that benefit future profession. The combination of theories and practical actions helps the authors build up creative thinking and strong practice skills. Despite all the achievements above, this study still has limitations. Firstly, the data gathered was limited in scope and thus did not fully reflect the general market trend. Second, this study focuses on TikTok’s effectiveness without mentioning the compound effect of combining it with other social media platforms to create a synthetic social media calendar. These aspects do not have a negative meaning but are only mentioned again for the limitation of this thesis.

### 5.3 Suggestions for further development

Further development of this study can be done by expanding the amount of data collected for a more comprehensive result. Furthermore, a more complete and wide-reaching digital marketing strategy for GastroBar Saimaa could be beneficial. GastroBar Saimaa's developers as well as the authors should follow the goal of a well-thought-out digital marketing strategy. Moreover, they should frequently investigate key metrics, and the distribution of published contents on social media accounts that require constant monitoring. Through the empirical study, it is clear that the marketing channels of GastroBar Saimaa has not been working effectively, and there is rarely interaction between the organization and its social users. The developers should focus more on marketing communication to raise brand awareness among social media users and reach the goal mentioned above. The key suggestions include consistently matching the brand messages with the right strategy in future, such as channel options and content marketing; and frequently posting content marketing on social channels. The action of stop posting content on media channels for more than two months can lead the decrease of user interaction. In terms of studying suggestion, the authors encourage students who are engaging with GastroBar Saimaa as practical courses to read carefully this study as a social media marketing guide for them to use social media channels, especially TikTok, in an appropriate and effective way.

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## Appendix 1. GastroBar Saimaa survey on 29 of October 2022

Available at [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1PHDuZ1AA1ipS01WRS\\_aTVpEt-mnCkapnY4pAQM1GrLY/prefill](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1PHDuZ1AA1ipS01WRS_aTVpEt-mnCkapnY4pAQM1GrLY/prefill)

# Survey under the acceptance of GastroBar Saimaa

Dear participants,

We are working on the marketing of GastroBar Saimaa.

GastroBar Saimaa, a practical study organisation at LAB University of Applied Sciences, which is the place for students to apply the knowledge accumulated through the lessons into practice. The pop-up restaurant is under the conduction of the Tourism and Hospitality Management faculty's professors, who have many years of experience in this field. Moreover, these professors encouraged and gave us opportunities to work and develop their marketing plan with diverse methods.

We would love to ask you some questions and this survey is a part of bachelor's thesis of Tourism and Hospitality Management Faculty of LAB University of Applied and Sciences. If you have any questions about our survey, please do not hesitate to contact us through one of these emails:

hanh.dinh@student.lab.fi or anh.ng.nguyen@student.lab.fi

We really appreciate and thank you for answering!

 **dinhthiminhhanh1999@gmail.com** (not shared)  
[Switch account](#)



\* Required

To v. \_\_\_\_\_ you belong to? \*

LAB University of Applied and Sciences

LUT University

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you student or staff member \*

Student

Staff

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about GastroBar Saimaa's event? \*

- Poster
- Word of mouth
- Social media
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Which social media channel brought you to know about GastroBar Saimaa? \*

- Facebook
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Why do you visit events organized by GastroBar Saimaa? \*

- To try delicious food
- To see the work of students
- To enjoy the atmosphere
- To support the brand
- To enjoy the organization from others
- To change from usual days

How would you describe your overall experience at GastroBar Saimaa? \*

	High satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	High dissatisfied
The atmosphere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The quality of services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The friendliness of staff members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The quality of food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall value of money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Option 1

Submit

Clear form

## Appendix 2. TikTok channel survey on 17 of November 2022

Available at

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1DHwHWnUhjVfmBxtef9OnZvWjBru2UmbhT9vfdOUanqc/prefill>

# TikTok as a new marketing channel

Dear participants,

We are working on the marketing of a small organisation. We would love to ask you some questions and this survey is a part of bachelor's thesis of Tourism and Hospitality Management Faculty of LAB University of Applied and Sciences. If you have any questions about our survey, please do not hesitate to contact us through one of these emails: hanh.dinh@student.lab.fi or anh.ng.nguyen@student.lab.fi

We really appreciate and thank you for answering!

---

 **dinhthiminhhanh1999@gmail.com** (not shared)   
[Switch account](#)

\* Required

---

Which age group do you belong to? \*

- 18-25 years old
- > 25 years old

---

Are you a TikTok user? \*

- TikTok user
- Non-TikTok user

The average time that you spend on TikTok per day \*

- < 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- > 2 hours

Submit

Clear form

### Appendix 3. TikTok content calendar of November in 2022 for GastroBar Saimaa

## SOCIAL MEDIA CALENDAR FOR TIKTOK CHANNEL

NOVEMBER 2022



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Menu of Shade of Autumn event  12 p.m.	3 Making salmon & chicken puff pastry  12 p.m.	4 Venue of Shade of Autumn event & welcome first guest  11.15 a.m.	5
6 Menu of Food Gallery event  12 p.m.	7	8 Venue of Food Gallery event & introduce the event games  11.15 a.m.	9 Menu of Magical Eleven event & inform special offers  12 p.m.	10 Behind the scenes of Magical Eleven event  4 p.m.	11 Venue of Magical Eleven event & welcoming drinks  11.15 a.m.	12
13 Menu of Winter wonderland event  12 a.m.	14	15 Venue of Winter wonderland event & kitchen area  11.15 a.m.	16 Utensils cleaning tips  4 p.m.	17 How to make strawberry daiquiri  10 a.m.	18	19 Interview students of LAB campus about 4 previous events  4 p.m.
20 How to make Aurora mocktail  10 a.m.	21	22 #Monthlychallenge  Peeling an apple in 3 seconds  10 a.m.	23	24 Makeover old decorations into guest gifts  4 p.m.	25 Record Black Friday time in IsoKristina  4 p.m.	26
27 Menu of The Northern Light event  12 a.m.	28 Behind the scenes of The Northern Light event  10 a.m.	29 Venue of The Northern Light event & welcome first guest  11.15 a.m.	30	31 How to make egg benedict in 5 minutes  10 a.m.		