

# A role of website in restaurant marketing & sales and homepage design suggestions for Restaurant Andrea

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#### **Abstract**



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Since the establishment of internet, the customer behaviour and the way they make a purchase has changed dramatically. From physically visiting the store to having abundance in options and convenience buying process from their mobile devices. In order to keep up in the continuously evolving world, companies will have to follow the trends and utilize it efficiently. In this thesis, the role of website in restaurants, suggestions for utilizing websites and lastly, wireframe designs are made for restaurant Andrea for future reference. The thesis is commissioned by St. George Hotel for their newly established restaurant, Andrea. For this research, the methods of secondary data analysis and benchmarking are used, combining books ranging from 2002 to 2017 with precedent researches from different online sources.

The key findings show that people are using internet and mobile devices for purchasing more and more, and it has a significant influence on their decision making, especially in Restaurant sector. In the meanwhile, plays the role of an interconnector between customers and the brand, providing information supporting their decision-making process and move them down the sales funnel. As the centre of a brand's online presence, the website needs to be designed to focus around customer's experience, putting them in the centre and solving the questions they have when visiting the website. When these are fulfilled, then a brand can consider about the visual design in order to make it more appealing and easier to navigate by the users.

After the research, suggestions to utilize website for increasing sales and marketing are listed to help restaurant building their online presence through website. The suggestions includes: clearly identify the website's main purposes, optimize the content, increase usability and make the website mobile-friendly through designs.

All of these suggestions are applied into the wireframe homepage designs for Restaurant Andrea in chapter 7, including both web designs and mobile designs.

#### **Keywords**

Web design, Website, Restaurant, Digital marketing, Sales

# **Table of contents**

1	Introduction			1
	1.1	Backg	round	1
	1.2	Thesis	s Objective	1
	1.3	Case	Company: Hotel St. George and Restaurant Andrea	2
		1.3.1	St. George Hotel:	2
		1.3.2	Restaurant Andrea:	4
2	The	oretical	Framework	5
	2.1	Digita	l Marketing	5
	2.2	2.2 Sales		
	2.3	Consu	umer psychology of buying	9
	2.4	Web [	Design	10
		2.4.1	Layout	10
		2.4.2	Usability	12
		2.4.3	Contents	12
		2.4.4	Visuality	13
		1.	Colours	13
		2.	Font:	14
	2.5	Searc	h Engine Optimization (SEO)	15
3	Res	earch N	Method:	16
4	The	role of	website in Restaurant sector:	18
5	How	to utili	ze website for marketing and increasing sales in Restaurant sector:	22
	5.1	Conte	nt:	22
	5.2	Techr	ology:	23
	5.3	Usabi	lity:	24
6	Web	site be	nchmark:	26
	6.1	Cosm	e NYC:	26
		6.1.1	Jack's Bar London:	27
		6.1.2	Baskeri & Basso:	29
7	Res	taurant	Andrea's homepage wireframe designs:	31
8	Con	clusion		36
Re	eferei	nces		37

#### 1 Introduction

This chapter present readers with an overview on why the thesis is conducted, what the overall situation regarding to websites in businesses is, a brief introduction on the commissioner company and a timeframe for different phases in processing the thesis.

#### 1.1 Background

Since the establishment of internet, the customer behaviour and the way they make a purchase on anything has changed dramatically. For instore purchase, before customers make a decision to visit the store, they will first look up for information of the company online. The same goes to an online purchase, where it is even more important to show-case your company and products/services in the most appealing way on the internet. For that purpose, website gives businesses an opportunity to give a great first impression through the internet without making them putting effort in going out and visit your physical location, at the same time, telling a story to the customer on why they should trust and buy your products/services.

Restaurant Andrea's website, on the other hand, hasn't proven to be effective and efficient in term of communicating with customer, gaining trust and providing a smooth, seamless and appealing access to its information. Recognizing the importance of a website, Restaurant manager together with St. George Marketing manager has launched a project aiming to optimize the website, increase its growth in Helsinki restaurant sector and retrieve more customers.

#### 1.2 Thesis Objective

The thesis objective is to examine the role of websites in restaurant market sector, how it influences the decision-making process and how we can utilize it for Marketing and increase Sales. In order to unravel those questions, this project will be conducted through Secondary data analysis and benchmarking.

The end results of this research will be dedicated to improving the current website of Restaurant Andrea, or alternatively, contribute to the creation of a new one.

In order to achieve the objective, the thesis is divided into 5 phases of actions:

- Phase 1: Building theoretical framework
- Phase 2: Secondary data research

Phase 3: BenchmarkingPhase 4: Prototype designPhase 5: Test and Evaluate

#### 1.3 Case Company: Hotel St. George and Restaurant Andrea

#### 1.3.1 St. George Hotel:

St. George is the tenth hotel of Kamp Collection Hotels, established in year 2018 in Helsinki, Finland. It is built on two connected building; one is the old printing hose of the Finnish Literature Society and the other is a seven-story Renaissance Revival stone building designed by architect Onni Tarjanne in 1840. The hotel consists of 148 rooms and 5 suites, in which have unique designs and interiors.

Talking about the establishments of St. George, we have to look back at year 2015 where the concept was built for the hotel. According to the rise of travellers' interest in Helsinki, more hotel capacity was seen to be necessary. Additionally, Helsinki is considered as the touching point between the East and the West, with multiple new flight routes to Asia and the development of Russian tourism. Hotel St. George, as the 10<sup>th</sup> hotel of KCH, was created to challenge the idea of luxury. It offers guests more moments of well-being and personal choices, a more immaterial and holistic experience. To further complimenting this concept, St. George worked with Hintsa Performance and applied its holistic philosophy as the core value of the hotel. According to Dr. Aki Hintsa, we should all thrive to live a better life tomorrow than today by making right choices in everyday life. It includes rest, good sleep, adequate exercise, healthy nutrition and mental energy.

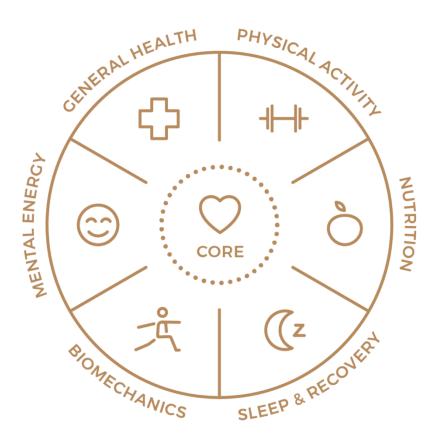


Figure 1.1. Hintsa Performance well-being wheel

St. George Hotel is a part of Design Hotels, which represents and markets a curated selection of more than 290 independent hotels across 50 different countries over the world. As a part of Design Hotels, St. George reflects the ideas of visionary hotelier, which also known as an "Original". It puts together not only the cultural authenticity, sophisticated designs and architectures but also an individually tailor-made, aesthetic and service-driven experience to the guests.

The concept of St. George based on 2 factors: digital experiences and analogue experiences. In digital experiences, the customers are provided with a seamless booking process, including the information for city experiences, curated programs for leisure travellers while providing high quality IT equipment to demanding business travellers, who want to have meetings that requires high functional facilities.

St. George's core values evolve around providing guests with personalized, local, authentic, yet luxurious experiences. Unlike other rigid and traditional luxury hotels, St. George offer a more innovative full-service luxury experience and holistic care to one of the most important part of people's life: the well-being.

#### 1.3.2 Restaurant Andrea:

As a part of St. George integral conceptual approach, Restaurant Andrea was born as an independently operated restaurant in the area of Helsinki's Old Church Park, which represents the nutrition spoke in Hintsa Performance well-being wheel and contributes to the overall holistic approach of St. George hotel.

Restaurant Andrea provides foods of the highest quality, embracing the locally sourced and genuinely fresh regional ingredients. Its concept is to be a neighbourhood restaurant which serve breakfast but not a breakfast room, lunch and dinner with locally harvested material and regional ingredients. Additionally, the food here is a crossroad between Finnish cool and calm food culture and Eastern Mediterranean rich and vibrant one.

At the moment, the restaurant is rated 4/5 stars, ranked 317/1441 Restaurant in Helsinki on TripAdvisor, have around 500 people liked the page on Facebook and 1500 followers on Instagram.

#### 2 Theoretical Framework

In order to start working on the website design and optimization aspect, first, we will need to identify and understand several concepts which will be mentioned throughout the thesis.

#### 2.1 Digital Marketing

Generally, when we heard about the word digital marketing, most people will think of e-marketing, internet marketing, web marketing, or simply, we will attach the concept to doing advertisement on social media, having a website and put content on it, so on and so forth. However, what exactly does Digital Marketing means?

According to Dr Dave Chaffey (2019, 9), Digital marketing is the utilization of the internet, using digital media, data and technology to achieve the marketing objectives, which includes increasing brand awareness, acquiring new prospects, turning prospects into actual buyers and maintaining relationships with current customers.

In practice, digital marketing is mainly targeting on the management of company's online presences, for example, company websites, social media pages, mobile apps combining with other e-communication techniques used for supporting the objective of attracting new customers like SEM (Search Engine Marketing), social media marketing, online advertising, email marketing and partnership arrangements with other websites. (Dave Chaffey, 2019, 10)

Digital marketing consists of mainly 3 different media channels, naming *Paid media*, *Owned media* and *Earned media*.

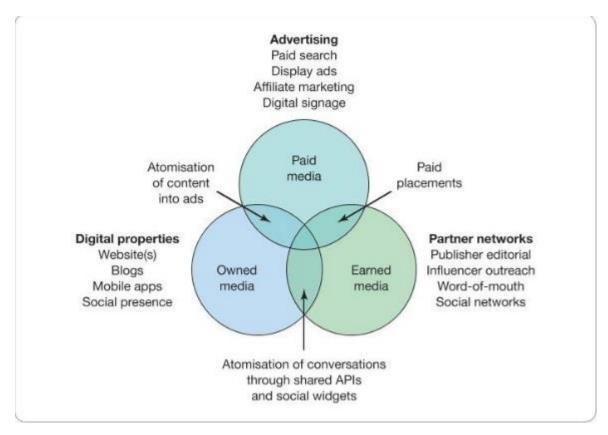


Figure 2.1. 3 keys online media types

- Paid Media: When you make an investment to acquire new visitors, getting new leads or increasing conversion through an online platform, you are using Paid Media
- **Owned Media:** this is the media owned by the brand, usually include its website, social media presences, blogs, email lists and its contents.
- Earned Media: The media that is generated by an outer source without you making an investment. Traditionally, it will be consisted of publicity that linked to your brand, but nowadays, the definition expands and include word of mouth that is stimulated by your audience through social media channels, blogs and other online platforms.

Benefit of Digital Marketing, according to Chaffey and Smith (2017, 20):

- **Identify:** It can be used to identify the needs of customers by analysing the data through different tool like Google Analytics, Facebook Insights....
- Anticipate: Nowadays, with the rise of internet usage around the world, digital
  marketing brings your brand closer to the consumers by providing a channel where
  they can access to information and make purchases without physically visit the
  company/store.
- **Satisfy:** Satisfy the customers through different online platforms and providing valuable contents.
- **Efficiently:** Using automation to make things more efficient, as it uses tailor-made technology to store information, helping the marketer to build relationship with customers, therefore, increase the value for the company.

#### 2.2 Sales

Sales is defined as the transaction between two or more parties which the buyer receive tangible or intangible goods, services or assets in exchange for money (Investopia, 2020). It includes contacting potential leads who already had some kind of interest in the goods or services you provide and match with the description of your target customer group, move them down the sales pipeline (funnel) by dealing with customers objections and concerns, then proceed to close the deal while maintaining a long-term relationship with the customers.

There are 5 commonly used sales terms (Hubspot, 2020):

- Salesperson: A salesperson, or seller/sales representative is the individual who
  directly in contact with the prospects by performing activities that involve in the
  selling of a product or service.
- Prospect: After a lead go through a process of being qualified and fit with certain criteria decided by the company, it will turn into a prospect. Usually, a prospect is determined by the company's target market, the purchase power and the authority in making decision.
- Sales Funnel or Sales Pipeline: A series of different stages which indicate where the prospects are in the sales cycle.
- **Deal**: a deal is the presentation of a product(s) or a service(s) with its associated prices.
- Sales Plan: A sales plan is a detailed outline of goals, objectives and strategies for sales operation. It can include target customer personas, Sales KPI, pricing of the products, team structure etc...

However, in the digital world, Traditionally, we have all been acquainted to the act of buying and selling products/services by physically visit the store or the merchants, exchanging physical money and getting the products/services immediately on site.

When the internet was opened for public use in 1991, the whole concept of sales or commerce has been influenced significantly, which gives birth to a whole new concept of eCommerce. Instead of purchasing and selling products and services through physical stores with physical money, sales have emerged itself into the online world and utilize the usage of virtual stores and money. In 2007, it is reported that eCommerce activities accounted for 3.4% of total retail sales in US, which was increased to 7.4% and 16.1% in 2015 and 2020 respectively. From this figure, it is clear that eCommerce has started to shift the economy exponentially and it will continue to do so as the internet is getting more accessible for people around the world every year.

So, what is eCommerce?

The most popular definition of eCommerce is the act of selling and buying product online. However, to have a deeper understanding of it, let's take a look at Shopify's, one of the most well-known eCommerce sites for entrepreneurs, definition of eCommerce. Shopify identified eCommerce as "the buying and selling of goods or service using the internet, and the transfer of money and data to execute these transactions. Ecommerce is often used to refer to the sale of physical products online, but it can also describe any kind of commercial transaction that is facilitated through the internet.". (Shopify 2020.)

eCommerce can be divided into many different sub-categories, depending on the metric you use for it. For example, if we divided eCommerce by the relationship between buyers and sellers, we got 4 different types of eCommerce, naming Business to Consumer (B2C), Business to Business (B2B), Consumer to Consumer (C2C) or Consumer to Business (C2B).

Likewise, if we divided it by different transactional relationships between buyers and sellers, there will be 5 categories for eCommerce:

- **Retail:** The act of providing the products or services directly to the customer without intermediaries.
- **Wholesales:** Mostly associated with the sales of physical products in a large amount to a retailer.
- **Dropshipping:** The act of selling a product which is manufactured and shipped to the customers through a third party.
- **Subscription:** the customer subscribe to an automatically recurring fee to a products or service on a regular basis until the subscription is cancelled.
- Crowdfunding: the seller collect money from buyers in advance, in order to raise the capital needed to start manufacturing and bringing the product into the market.

To start an eCommerce business, you have 2 different kind of platforms: Hosted and self-hosted. (Adam Sinicki, Building and Growing an Ecommerce Store: Price, Promote, and Sell Your Product Through the Internet, ebook).

Further explained by Adam Sinicki, with hosted platforms, you register your business or products on an external website, for example Facebook or Amazon, afterwards, you can exhibit your products and showcase your company within the format allowed by the website. The benefits of this is it doesn't require user to go through the head-aching process of creating and developing the website and it is tremendously easy to set up and start your business. However, its benefits can also be obstacles when it comes to creativity and flexibility. It significantly limits your ability to be creative with the presentation of your products and showcase of your company. On the other hand, self-hosted platform usually

comes in the form of your own eCommerce website, where you own 100% of the store, more room for creativity but it requires a lot more work and sometimes, budget.

To effectively choose a platform, you will have to consider a few questions: Are you selling things that entirely your own? Are you selling affiliate products that don't belong to you? Are you selling digital products or physical products? Are you selling subscription or a recurring fee?

#### 2.3 Consumer psychology of buying

There are a few misconceptions between the terms "buying" and "shopping" that first needed to be address. Shopping is referred as: "The entire process of going to the store – and its online equivalent – but this doesn't always lead to buying" (Dan Croxen-John and Johann van Tonder, 2017, 17), while buying is determined as the end-result or the action where the consumer exchange money for the product or service.

According to Paco Underrhill (2009), author of the book "Why We Buy", the reason for why people buy is not as simple as to get something they need, or else the economy would collapse. Therefore, it is valid to assumed that there are multiple reasons for why people buy and needed to be addressed, and as stated by Dan Croxen-John and Johann van Tonder, the major factor that drives people into buying things is to makes themselves feel better.

How do people make decisions? Defined and explained by Daniel Kahneman, a Nobel Prize winner, in his book "Thinking Fast and slow", our brain is divided into 2 systems of processing information, one deals with automatic and rapid thoughts, representing the unconscious mind that is responsible for 95% of our thought (System 1) and the other is rational and analytical, representing the conscious mind (System 2) which occupy only 5%. This have a significant implication on consumer psychology regarding to the buying process. Before the conscious mind start to involve, the subconscious mind has already made a decision without the consumer being aware about it so as a consequence, most business craft their messages in order to appeal System 1 instead of System 2 by targeting the emotional and subconscious needs.

There are 5 mental stages every consumer goes through when making a decision on buying:

- Need recognition
- Information search
- Evaluation of alternatives
- Purchase of product
- Post-purchase evaluation

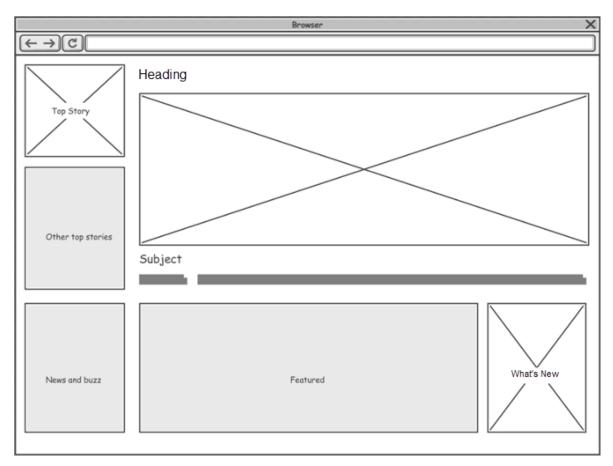
First, in order to initiate a purchase, there have to be a need. Once the need is recognized, the consumer will perform information search on how to fulfil the need through search engines like Google, Bing, asking a friend, looking up on reviews in review sites or simply recalling from previous experience. After receiving all the necessary information, consumer will make a list of possibilities and start evaluating and comparing to find out the best suited solution. Then, the purchase happens which lead to a post-purchase evaluation. Considering whether a product met their precedented expectation, consumer will decide to whether trusting the brand and therefore, increase the product sales of the brand, or if the product didn't meet their expectation, it will result in distrust and reconsideration.

#### 2.4 Web Design

#### **2.4.1 Layout**

As one of the fundamental of Web Design, a layout includes the position of different elements contained in a page. Those elements include but not limited to the position of text block, graphics and whitespaces. (Jennifer Kyrnin, 2015, 147)

To start with the layout, most designer will begin with drafting a wireframe without any texts, images or visual effect. The wireframe works as the backbone of the design, providing the overall structure of different blocks, identifying the important elements and its position.



Figures 2.2.1. An example of a wireframe layout

There are multiple methods to work on a web layout, but there are only 3 most commonly used types, naming fixed-width layout, adaptive layout and Responsive layout, according to Frick and Eyler-Werve (2015):

- **Fixed-width layout:** A fixed-width layout design has a predefined width set up front and is not changeable despite the screen resolutions. There are a few significant benefits comes with this type of layout: It's easy to create and manage, advertising can be added to a fixed-width layout with ease. This option requires the least amount of resources but provides the worst user experience.
- Adaptive layout: An adaptive layout is designed by identifying few variants of screen sizes, commonly 2 to 5, and then separate designs are created for each.
- Responsive layout: Instead of using predefined width like Fixed-width layout, Responsive layout uses a percentage-driven grid, which can adjust itself to fit perfectly on any screen sizes without losing its original visual integrity. This method is often the most time consuming and difficult to execute in exchange for a seamless and great user experience.

#### 2.4.2 Usability

In web design, usability is crucial, since it links directly to user experience and user satisfaction when surfing on the site. As listed by Frick and Eyler-Werve in Return on Engagement, website's usability design is divided into 3 parts:

- Information Architecture: How different elements are organized and labelled on the website to support usability. The most well-recognized element for this is the navigation bar. By changing the sequences, putting highlight on specific buttons can make a significant different on how the viewer will interact with the website.
- Interaction Design: The process of making it easy and intuitive for people to navigate or make decisions on the website. The most common components of this is the user flow maps, buying and checking out process, social media links and associations etc...
- Visual Design: This is the part where most people think about when hearing
  about web design. They think about adding great pictures, put on nice videos, or
  overall, make it look nice. In a nutshell, yes, it is partly that, but to be more in-depth
  and specific, it involves in building the website layouts, considering colour psychology, choosing fonts, adjusting the image and text ratio and much more.

#### 2.4.3 Contents

Content plays an extremely vital role in each and every company's strategy to expand their reach to customer. For online presence, it drives traffics into website, increasing brand awareness, building trust and relationship with the audience and customers, converting visitors into potential prospects, positioning a business or the people involving as industry leaders, therefore, gaining reputation and confirming the position in the market sector.

Content is often considered as the text written on any websites, product pages, blogs or email newsletter. However, the truth is, according to Ann Handley (2014), content includes everything that customers or prospect touches or interact with. From the online properties and web pages to what the customer experience and it also includes everything that is on the social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, YouTube, so on and so forth). An interesting analogy Ann Handley used to describe content is the reference from Lion King. The phrase Mufasa told his son, Simba, was translated and modified by Ann to fit the content as "Everything that the light touches, is content", which can be loosely translated to *everything is content*.

To further emphasize the important and how vast content is, CEO of content strategy firm Brain Traffic, Kristina Halvorson, said content to be the entire user experience, to be any

medium through which we use to communicate with the audience who potentially become our customers by using our product or services. However, the majority of time, the core of a content will be involving around writing. In order to have a great content, business/company need to be recognizable to customers not only with their branding (e.g. logo, tagline, colour) but also, from the style and the way words are put together.

#### 2.4.4 Visuality

#### 1. Colours

According to a study named "Impact of Colour on Marketing" in 2006, Satyendra Singh found out that up to 90% of the snap decisions made about a product can be based on only colour. Colour is also said to have influence on moods and feelings of the one seeing it, either negatively or positively, so in order to have a great design, the designer would need to influence the people feeling and emotions, which can be achieve by applying proper colour theories. The most popular theories used by designers are:

- **Contrast:** Every colour has an opposite that contrast far greater than any other colour. By using contrast, we can put emphasize and bring more attention to the object, either it is a text, image or a piece of graphic.
- Complementation: Colour can be used not only to contrast each other but also complement each other and lead people to establish a positive impression. Complementary colours are often colours opposing each other in the colour spectrum.
- Colour Vibrance: Different colours will trigger different moods and feelings of the viewer. Below is the table of most commonly used colours, with its positive and negative associations:

	Positive	Negative	
White	<ul> <li>Hygiene, sterility, clarity, purity, clean- ness, simplicity, so- phistication, effi- ciency</li> </ul>	Sterility, coldness, barriers, unfriendli- ness	
Grey	Psychological neutrality	<ul> <li>Lack of confidence, dampness, depres- sion, hibernation, lack of energy.</li> </ul>	
Black	<ul> <li>Sophistication, Power, Elegance</li> </ul>	Oppression, cold- ness, menace, heaviness	
Yellow	<ul> <li>Happiness, Opti- mism, Joy, Energy</li> </ul>	Caution, criticism	

Orange	<ul> <li>Happiness, Joy, Warmth, Security</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Ignorance, Frustra- tion</li> </ul>	
Red	<ul> <li>Passion, Excite- ment, Importance and stimulating en- ergy</li> </ul>	Anger, sense of emergency	
Violet	<ul> <li>Spirituality, Sophis- tication, Wealth and luxury, Creativity</li> </ul>	Introversion, Inferi- ority, gloominess	
Green	<ul> <li>Nature, Growth, Harmony, Peace</li> </ul>	Greed, Lack of experience	
Blue	<ul> <li>Trust, Serenity, Calm, Coolness</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Cold, lack of emo- tions, unfriendliness</li> </ul>	

Table 2.2.4.1. Colours and its associated feelings

#### 2. Font:

Fonts can be divided into 2 categories: serifs and sans serif font. Serif font is the family of fonts that includes letters or symbols which have a small line or stroke attached to the end of a larger stroke, while sans serif fonts does not include those small lines.



Figures 2.3.4. Differences of Serif and Sans Serif fonts

As suggested by Joe Kraynak and Ken Bluttman in book Brilliant Web Design, the serif font is used for longer portions of text since it is naturally designed to help guiding reader's eyes while reading. This kind of fonts is largely applied in printing of books and newspapers. On the other hand, Sans Serif fonts are usually more effective on computer screens and smartphone, so for designing website, Sans Serif should be the optimal choice.

For the usage of unconventional or fancy fonts, it is necessary to turn them into graphics, as it will be presented exactly as they should regardless of the loaded local fonts.

#### 2.5 Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

To understand what Search Engine Optimization is, we first need to identify what is considered as a Search engine.

Search engine is identified as a system which collects result pages from the Web, save them into their database, indexes the information and then provides a mechanism for people to search through the data (Peter Kent, Seo for Dummies). In the meanwhile, search site is referred to a web site which is used to search for information on the web. However, there are many search sites that don't use search engines but instead, having directories, which contain only basic information **about** websites rather than **from** websites.

With the development of search engine in the early 00s, SEO become undeniably important for any business who want to get more customers. Search Engine Optimization, or often known as SEO, is an online marketing strategy, which is used for the purpose of driving qualified traffics into a website by increasing its page rank in organic (unpaid) search engine listings. (Frick and Eyler-Werve, 2010, 49). In the contrary, SEM or Search Engine marketing is the marketing practice of driving traffics into a website through paying money to the search engine company to place ads on the SERPs (Search Engine Result Pages), usually for CPC (Cost per click) or CPM (Cost per 1000 impressions).

## 3 Research Method:

In this research, we will utilize the use of benchmarking to analyze different benefits and drawbacks of different web designs, therefore, apply the most useful features into the designing of new interface for Restaurant Andrea. According to Wober (2002, viii), benchmarking is one of the most recent management methodologies which is used for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of a company, pointing out the advantages of leading competitors and analyse it. The insights gained from it will be used to provide organization/business/company with a foundation to reflect on its current position and coming up with an improvement regarding to the business activities, processes, products, services and management. (Wober, 2002, viii)

There are 4 distinguished types of benchmarking:

Type of Benchmarking	Scope	Objectives
Internal Benchmarking	Functions, departments, projects, businesses in the same company or group at the same or another location	<ul> <li>Improve competitiveness</li> <li>Stimulate continuous improvement</li> </ul>
External Benchmarking/ Best Practice Benchmark- ing	Any organizations, regardless of sector or location	<ul> <li>Identifying best practice in a certain management area</li> <li>Using the best practice to produce breakthroughs</li> </ul>
Competitive Benchmarking	Competitors	<ul> <li>Identifying performance, objectives, strategies and program of competitors</li> <li>Identifying best practice in a certain management area</li> </ul>
Sector Benchmarking	Specific or similar sector or in- dustry branch	<ul> <li>Identifying sector strategies and programs</li> <li>Disseminate information on best practice</li> </ul>

Table 2.1. Types of Benchmarking

With different benchmarking method, we can reach to a different result on different goals. For this specific project where our goal is to define the key elements of a website that can help the business increase their sales, reduce bounce rate and optimizing its position on SERPs, we will use *External Benchmarking or Best practice benchmarking*. The aim of best practice benchmarking is to deliberately evaluate the comparative advantages of other top tier restaurant's website around the world to get new insights, discoveries and applicable solutions.

To start with, we have to identify the criteria that we want to compare on or use for benchmarking. According to Tim Frick and Kate Eyler-Werve (2015), there are 5 principles that influence the effectiveness of a website design:

- Content: The content on the website.
- Technology: How the website interacts on different devices.
- Information architecture: How the information is organized.
- Interaction: Sitemaps, optimization of customer journey.
- Visual Appeal: Readability, colour schemes, proportion of text vs images.

However, restaurant website usually doesn't provide a variety of content, apart from its menu and about information, so in this thesis, the content part will be excluded. We will analyse the homepage of 3 restaurant's websites:

- Cosme NYC: one of top 50 restaurants in the world nominated by 50 Best.
- Jack's Bar London: Best Restaurant website award for single page navigation by Lyfe Marketing.
- Baskeri & Basso: Top 1 Restaurant in Helsinki according to TripAdvisor.

#### 4 The role of website in Restaurant sector:

Before analysing the role that website plays in Restaurant sector, it is important to understand its relationship with businesses in general.

In a research conducted by We Are Social and Hootsuite which measures the usage of internet, social media and e-commerce over the world in 2019, the figure showed that over 57% of the world population is using internet, which account for 9% and 16% higher than the total number of users in January 2018 and 2017 respectively. Assuming the digitalization speed is maintaining itself throughout the decade, we can expect the number of internet user to reach three-fourth of the world population by the year of 2025. Furthermore, the research also measured the average time-spent for using the internet per day by users around the world. In 2019, an average person worldwide spent around 6 hours and 42 minutes using the internet, regardless of their devices. Imagine every 3 out of 4 people worldwide using internet for almost a third of their time on a daily basis. This had and would continually and increasingly have a significant implication on the importance of engaging with clients/potential customers through internet platforms.

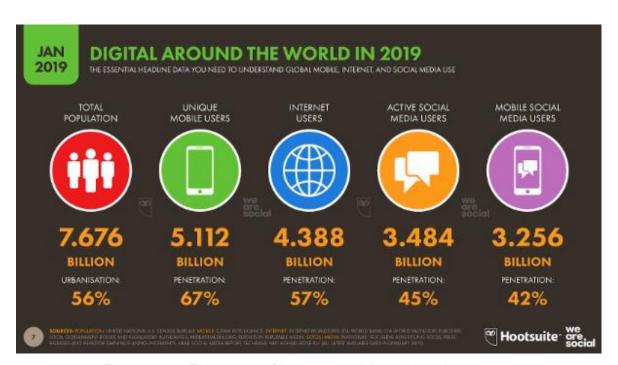


Figure 3.1.1. The usage of internet, social media and e-commerce 2019

Prior to the establishment of internet, consumers, more often than not, look for recommendations from friends for a store(s) that offer products of their interest, and proceed to phys-

ically visit the location, spending hours and hours looking through countless shelves, comparing prices from different stores before making a purchase. Same goes for the restaurants, where people also followed the same process to decide their desired dining place. This specific reason has contributed majorly into the creation of online presence for businesses, which is also demonstrated further in the survey made by Signs.com in 2018. It worked on a research group of 1000 people to identify their shopping preference and habits revealed different motivations that people have in regard to online and in-store purchasing. The majority of respondents (85%) use online platform to shop because of its convenience, while other motivators such as price comparison, time-efficient, avoidance of crowd place and reading product review before purchasing are agreed to have significant impact on their purchasing decisions by 54-72% of the total respondents (Signs.com, 2018).

To further emphasize the importance of having an online presence, there are also multiple other researches have been made regarding to answer this specific question. According to an annual study made by Fleishman-Hillard and Harris Interactive in 2012, 89% of consumers use search engine to look for information about brands and products before making decision on purchasing or using a service, disregard the purchasing methods. This number is based on an overall consumer behaviour, but how about diners looking for restaurant? Conducting a survey specifically on food enthusiasts, Angelsmith gathered more than 500 participants to identify different influences regarding to their decision making. The results showed that despite word-of-mouth accounts for nearly half of the respondent's decision, 80% of them will then continue looking for more information about the restaurant online before deciding. When asked to rank the most important places where they look for further information, restaurant's website ranked second with 27% of respondents, which is only 0,7% lower than the first ranking, which is review sites.

# When looking for a new restaurant to try, who/what influences your dining decision most? (choose one)

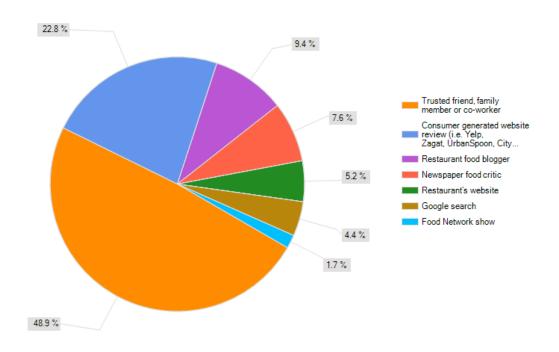


Figure 3.1.2. What influences people decision-making on choosing a new restaurant.

Additionally, disregarding whether the consumer choose to look for information through review sites, food blogs or google search, there is always a mutual touch point which is the website. Let's take a look at TripAdvisor, one of the top reviewing sites in the world. All of the restaurant has their website connected to its TripAdvisor account. From here, if the consumer finds it interesting and want to have more information about the restaurant regarding its menu and specific prices, they will have to visit the website because it is not mentioned on the review site. Likewise, in food blogs, the bloggers will be sharing stories about good or bad restaurant experiences, while also giving their recommendations. However, the specific menu and prices won't be or just briefly mentioned, which a link to the restaurant website will be attached so the potential customers can gather more information from there. This, at the same time, interconnects with the search engine like Google, as it increases the ranking of the restaurant website by getting backlinks from a variety of sources, which gives more exposure to potential diners when searching for restaurant on those platforms. We can see, all of the factors that influences their decision making mentioned above are connected with each other through website. This finding alone could already prove the importance of website in the restaurant sector, but there are still more to it.

In order to have products and information about the brand displayed in search engine, a website is required. A website works as the library that is available 24 hours per day and every day of the year, containing information about the company, products, news and update. According to Meerman Scott (2007), a great website is considered as the intersection where all of your other online presences cross, and with a content-rich website, the business can organize their online presences to entertain and more importantly, informing the buyers about the brand. From the website, different search engines can access and use bots to pull out important information and provide it to potential customers through SERP, who search for the keywords that are attached to the company's brand. The usage of website may vary depending on different businesses and different purposes. For example, for news medias, journalists and bloggers, the website is more focusing on giving information and building brand awareness. In the meanwhile, for department stores, restaurants, hotels etc..., website is not only used for sharing information and brand awareness, but also a mean of showcasing products/services to the potential customers while providing them with an integrated eCommerce tool to make a purchase, reservation or booking.

Currently, there has been existing arguments which guestions the validity of websites when social media platforms also have the same features and more critically, there has been a steep increase in the number of people who are drawn toward using these platforms. To answer this question, it is vital to understand what website provides that social media don't. Fundamentally, owning a social media page is not equal to owning a brand (Kirk Thompson, 2019). It is considered as renting space from landlord, and businesses have very limited power on what they can or cannot do, in the contrary, owning a website gives businesses full control on their own brand without following a predetermined guidelines and structures set by the "landlord". These structures or fixed layout set on social media platforms make it hard for any businesses to be unique, have their brand personality fully portraited and expressed to the targeted audience, which in return, increase the competitive level. Additionally, websites give its owner access to a vast poll of reports that normally can't be gathered or really limited on social media platform. This helps businesses with understanding their customers better, analyse the efficiency of the page and in turn, making improvement and adjustment to fit their targeted customer better and attract more potential leads. Lastly, as mentioned above, website is the hub which connect all the other digital elements which helps promoting the brand ranking on SERPs and increase its exposure.

# 5 How to utilize website for marketing and increasing sales in Restaurant sector:

In order to utilize a website, there are several steps we should go through. First, understanding the role of a website. As stated in the previous part, website play an incredibly important role in influencing potential customer's decision-making process. It is the centre of a company's online presence, storing information about the brand, helping to increase brand awareness through SEO, showcasing products, providing eCommerce tool for people to make purchases and so on. After understanding the role of website, it is important to clearly identify the main purposes of it, by asking these questions:

- Why am I putting this site up?
- What is its main purpose?
- What do I want my website to achieve?
- How is the website going to help my company with its bottom line?
   (Susan Rice Lincoln, 2009, 49)

Answering these will provide a solid base to build the website upon by aligning all the designs and content around it. For a restaurant, the main purpose of putting up a website is to provide information regarding to the brand for new customers and converting sales for the customers who have known the brand. Besides that, it can be used to increase brand awareness and promote other services. The next step will be designing the website to deliver its main purpose, in this case, it will be for marketing and increasing sales.

As stated in the theoretical framework, there are 3 core elements that contribute to the effectiveness of a website for achieving marketing goals, naming **content**, **technology** and **usability**.

#### 5.1 Content:

To successfully design content for a restaurant website, there are 2 scenarios we have to take into consideration in order to craft and organize the contents: When the customer, who already knows about the brand, visit the website, and when the customer, who doesn't know about the brand, visit the website. (Andreea Dobrila, How to structure your restaurant website content, 2017)

For the ones who already know the brand, the prioritized contents they are looking for on a restaurant website are Call-to-action button so they can make a reservation or order for delivery and the menu with its price. In the contrary, for customers who don't know about the brand, it is important to give customer understanding on what the brand about from

the front page: Brand name, Cuisine type, Location and Contacts. Both the information for first time-visit potential customers and the one who has already known about the brand should be prioritized on the front page, make it as clear and as easy to find as possible.

Additionally, to make the content easily accessed and enjoyed by the viewers, these points will need to be considered: paragraph length, white space, fonts, images, background colour and text colour (Susan Rice Lincoln, Mastering Web 2.0, 51). The paragraph length should be kept short with maximum 1 idea per paragraph and a handful of white space. This helps the reader to scan for the important information without getting intimidated by the length of the content, at the same time, giving the website a high quality and elegant look. For fonts, as suggested above, Sans Serif fonts are preferred as it suits better on computer and mobile devices. The size of fonts can be varies depending on the text. A guideline for choosing best fonts for websites made by Wix – a famous web designing platform, suggested that the font size for tittles will range from 30-70, subtitles from 22-30 and 16-20 for body texts. Images play an important role in demonstrating the atmosphere and the foods to potential customers, so having an image gallery on the website is necessary (Andreea Dobrila, How to structure your restaurant website content, 2017).

Regarding to colour, every brand has a dominant colour and a set of accent ones to portrait their brand personalities, which, then, will be used on the website in order to promote the brand. The dominant colour is suggested to be used sparingly, only where the attention of customers is wanted, for example: the brand logo, navigation bar, Call-to-Action button etc... The accent colours, which is well-mixed with the dominant one, will be used to put emphasize on information which are considered secondary (further explained in later chapter). For sites that are content intensive with lots of information, it is strongly suggested to use white or light background colour, which help readers focusing on the content.

#### 5.2 Technology:

According to statistic on percentage of all global webpages served to mobile phone from 2009 to 2018, it is stated that 52.2% of total website traffic across the globe was accessed through mobile devices (Statista, 2019) and in another research, it shows 58% of respondents have used mobile phone to look for a restaurant (Bright Local, 2015). With this statistic, it's undeniable that mobile-friendly design is essential and need to be paid attention to. From 3 types of layouts that mentioned in the theoretical framework, there are 2

types of layout that is considered mobile-friendly, which is Adaptive Layout and Responsive Layout. Both has its own pros and cons:

Adaptive Layout		Responsive Layout	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
Designed to best fit	Labour-intensive.	Good user experi-	Less control over
appropriated de-		ence.	the design on each
vices.			screen size.
2-3 times faster	Extremely difficult to	Easier to implement	Longer loading time
loading time than	design for every	due to the availabil-	than Adaptive Lay-
Responsive Layout.	screen resolution,	ity of templates.	out.
	therefore some op-		
	tions will be left out.		
Can optimize ads	Have effects on	SEO-friendly.	Might be hard to fit
based on user data	SEO ranking		advertisement for
from different smart			different screen res-
devices.			olution.

Figure 4.2. Pros and Cons of Adaptive and Responsive Layout

To choose the best-suited layout, company will need to consider all of these pros and cons before making the decisions, but despite which one is chosen, being mobile-friendly has already increased the satisfaction of customer and their likelihood of making purchase to 61% (Bright Local, 2015).

#### 5.3 Usability:

According to Lance Loveday and Sandra Niehaus in the book Web Design for ROI (2007), it is proven by a research that the experience with a brand's website will have a significant influence on the customer's purchase decision. The customer experience on the website can be increased through the improvement on information structure, a well-thought user flow map.

First, for the structure of information, it is essential to identify the Primary and Secondary one. For restaurant, the overall, most common primary information/features on the web-

site are: Call-to-action button, About section to inform new visitors about the brand, information about the menu, locations and contacts. Other services, Newsletter and others are Secondary.

After defining all the important information blocks, the restaurant needs to connect all those blocks together in a logical way while taking into account the customer journey on the website. The purpose of this is to organize and design the website structure to help customer find their desired information efficiently. Here is where a sitemap and user flow map take place. To create an effective sitemap and user flow map, the understanding on how potential users go through the website to get access to information is required. Here is a simplified example of a customer looking for a specific food on the restaurant's menu.

• Access through google:



Access through an ad on Facebook:



#### 6 Website benchmark:

#### 6.1 Cosme NYC:

On technology, Cosme NYC website is designed with a responsive layout, which can adjust itself to different device screens. A notable feature of this design is when accessed by mobile phone, there is a Call-To-Action button that run along when scrolling through the page. This reduces the number of steps needed for the customer to proceed to making a purchase or in this case, a reservation.

Additionally, when it comes to information architecture, it is cleared from the structure and how they highlight their information that their first priority is driving people to make a reservation and email signups. For the rest of the information, the priority comes as follow: About, Menu, Private Dining, Contact, Careers and Gifts.



Figure 5.1.1a. Cosme NYC website on computer screen

The sitemap is straightforward and simple since there is no subheadings, all the information needed are organized inside of all the main headings listed in the navigation bar, which is situated on the left side, underneath brand logo.

For the visuality, they used blue as their dominant colour, invoking the feeling of trust and calm, while having a white background colour to give viewer a sense of sophistication and cleanliness. The images used are with high quality, high contrast and focusing on detail, combining with a lot of white space, it further emphasizes their brand proposition.



Figure 5.1.1b. Cosme NYC website on mobile device

A drawback in their design is the lack of address and contact information on the first interaction with the website. It requires from users one more click for the customer to find out this information.

#### 6.1.1 Jack's Bar London:

Jack's Bar London apply the usage of adaptive layout on their website which helps them to include all the important information on the homepage regardless of the devices. On top of the homepage, there is a separate section with its background painted in the accent colour, having the Call-To-Action button. This make the primary purpose of the website clear, which is making sales/reservation.



Figure 5.1.2a. Jack's Bar London website on computer screen

On the navigation bar, the order of button goes as follow: About, Making a Booking, Menu and All Locations. Again, the Call-To-Action appear which emphasize its role on the website. Besides that, the About is placed as the first on the navigation bar the same as Cosme. This navigation bar is really simple yet having all the information needed for the customers. Also, just from the homepage itself, users can see already the information about their address, phone number and opening time, with all of their social media link attached to the symbol down below.

Another feature that should be mentioned is their placement of logo. Unlike Cosme putting their logo in the conventional way on top left of the screen, Jack's London Bar put its logo right at the middle with big font that captivate people attention immediately. On the background, the environment and atmosphere at the restaurant is captured and expressed through a picture, which gives viewers a future projection on how it will feel like when dining at the restaurant. In order not letting the colour of the background interfere with the

texts, they layered it with a dark colour shadow effect, which provide more contrasts for the white texts used on the site.



Figure 5.1.2b. Jack's Bar London website on mobile device

The drawback of this website is when access through the phone, the background picture will be cut out aggressively which decrease the effect of portraying the restaurant's atmosphere.

#### 6.1.2 Baskeri & Basso:

Similar to Cosme NYC, Baskeri & Basso use a responsive website layout to provide a seamless user experience for visitors. On the information architecture of the site, there are 10 elements on the navigation bar, including: Bistro, Stay Tuned, Basbas, Location, Reservation, Gallery, Wine Bar, 2 social media sites and Language. This structure, unlike the other 2 websites, is more complicated, difficult to understand or make sense out of each button. This can result in unnecessary confusion to the site visitors. At the bottom of the background picture, there is information about the address, contact numbers and opening hours.

On the visual level, the usage of a full view restaurant picture is good for captivate the atmosphere for the visitors. One drawback about this is without a dark transparent filter on top of the pic, it will interfere with the text and make it less visible.

## 7 Restaurant Andrea's homepage wireframe designs:

After learning from best practice and discussing with the commissioner, I started creating prototypes for the homepage of Restaurant Andrea Website, using a free Wireframing tool provided by Moqups.

The preliminary designs include 3 different versions with slight changes in the placement of information. The information structure was agreed with the commissioner as follow:

- Reservation
- Menu
  - o Lunch
  - Dinner
  - o Special Occasions
  - o Drinks
- Contact & Opening hours
- About
  - Story
  - Private Dining
  - o Link to St. George homepage and Wintergarden Bar
  - Career

Below are the 3 designs for computer screen and 1 for mobile devices:

- In all 3 designs, we have the logo on the left, with the navigation bar situated on top of the page. This is a typical design, created with the Gutenberg Rule in consideration, which identify the hierarchy of different area on the screen. The most important information should be placed on top left of the screen, while the secondary priorities should be situated on the top right.
- The Reservation button is coloured with a dominant colour reflecting the brand to capture the attention of the viewers
- On the top right, we have language options for different type of customers
- Move to the bottom right, social media icons are linked and attached.
- For the background picture, the options suggested are interior designs of the restaurant, chef decorating food or the food itself.
- On top of it, we add the filter effect to blur the picture out and add contrast to the text on top of it.

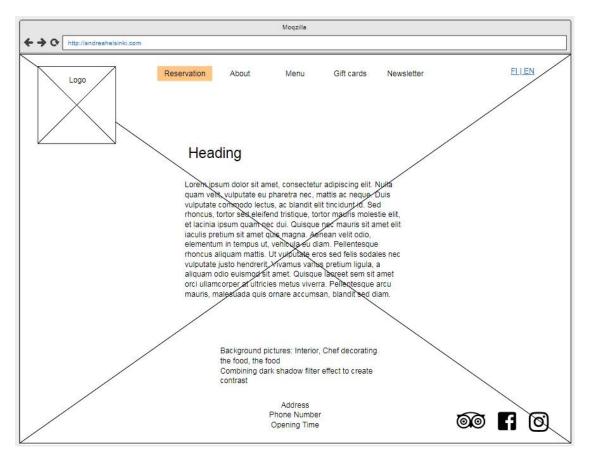


Figure 5.2a. Design 1

• Design 1: the slogan is added in the middle, with some short paragraph which give some brief information about the restaurant. This helps new customers who have not yet known about the brand got accessed to the brand proposition of the restaurant and make it easier for them to look for the information. On the centre bottom of the page, there will be contact information with opening times, as it was mentioned in the previous chapter, it is important to have this information visible right after entering the site.

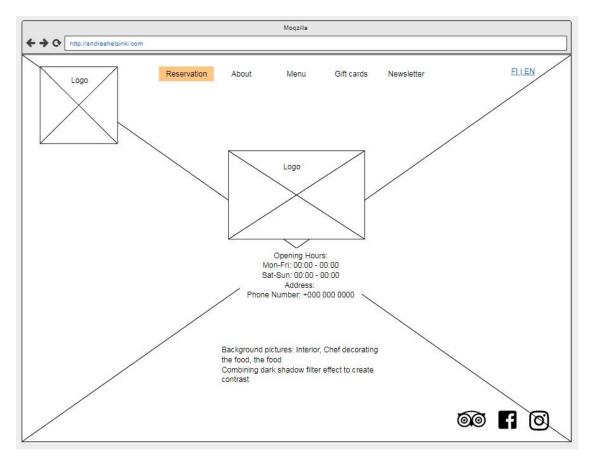


Figure 5.2b. Design 2

Design 2: Here, the logo is added into the centre of the interface together with opening hours, address and phone number right below. This approach brings more attention to the brand itself, which will increase brand awareness get people to remember about it more. Additionally, the contact information and opening hours are in the middle, therefore it is really clear for people who want to visit the site just to check the time and address before visiting.

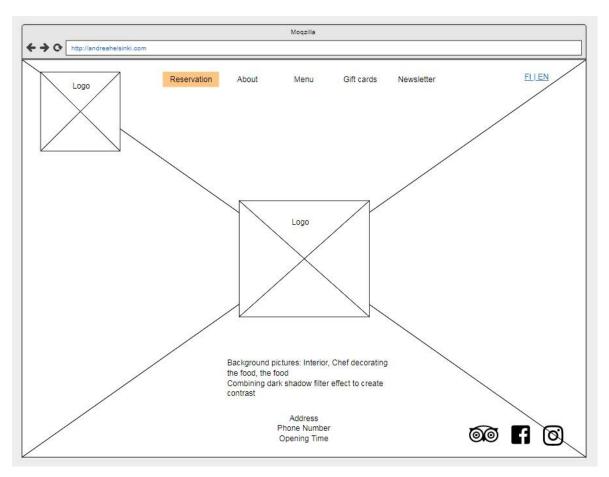


Figure 5.2c. Design 3

 Design 3: The logo is situated exactly in the centre of the page, while the contact information and opening time will be moved further down bottom. Quite similar to design 2, this helps to build up more brand awareness.

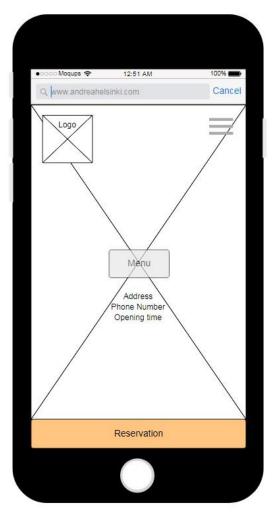


Figure 5.2d. Mobile interface design for Restaurant Andrea

As discussed with and agreed by the commissioner, the mobile version is designed to be simple and focus on important information. The navigation bar in the mobile design will be contained inside the button on the top right of the screen and will scroll out when being clicked on. The middle of the page will include a separate button for menu with contact information attached underneath it.

At the bottom of the page, the reservation button is situated, considering the position of how most people navigate on their phones. This helps reducing the friction in making reservation process and increase the usability of the website.

#### 8 Conclusion

This thesis has proven the importance of website in regard of improving sales and marketing the brand in restaurant sector. It plays the role of an interconnector between customers and the brand, providing information supporting their decision-making process and move them down the sales funnel. As the centre of a brand's online presence, the website needs to be designed to focus around customer's experience, putting them in the centre and solving the questions they have when visiting the website. When these are fulfilled, then a brand can consider about the visual design in order to make it more appealing and easier to navigate by the users.

This research is based on secondary data gathering from books, trusted websites and sources on the internet, ranging from 2007 to 2020. The desired outcome of the thesis is researching about the role website play in sales & marketing in restaurant sector, how to utilize it and finally, make a wireframe for restaurant Andrea website and test the usability through remote user testing. For the design part, it was expected to have the whole website designed. However, it was not possible due to the widespread of Corona during the thesis process, which influenced the restaurant and travel industry, causing them to close down and the project was postponed. However, the designs listed above are agreed by the commissioners as a reference for the future when the project is resumed. Additionally, since the data is mainly gathered through secondary sources, it might have some effects on the results, as it doesn't take into consideration of Finland separately and how customers behave there.

As a bachelor's degree student majoring in Tourism, specialized in Sales and Marketing, I find this project has had a significant impact on my professional and personal development. I have learned new knowledge relating to web design, which I had no or limited knowledge prior. During the project, getting a chance to work closely with the commissioner, which is the Marketing Manager of St. George and having her engaged in the process, I got a lot of insight about Restaurant Andrea's situation on Marketing, understanding the needs and expectations of the project, which gives me a clearer structure to proceeding it.

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