



Improving the customer journey in a zero waste restaurant setting: Case Restaurant Nolla

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Abstract

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<p>This product-based thesis was commissioned by Restaurant Nolla. This product-based thesis aims to improve the customer service journey in a zero-waste restaurant setting through customer journey mapping, with a sub-aim of improving the Restaurant Nolla brand memorability. The objectives have focused on improving established practices through literary research and customer feedback. The product produced in the thesis writing process will help the commissioner to spread the restaurant's mission further. The thesis process was conducted between August 2023 and December 2023.</p> <p>The author conducted a secondary analysis to collect data for the thesis, combining customer feedback and staff interviews. The author conducted literature research based on the collected data to support the findings and the final product.</p> <p>The theoretical framework created by the author combined the most appropriate topics from the literary research and is illustrated in one complete table. The framework has guided the creation of the product to its completion. The primary research, the customer feedback forms and semi-structured interviews with staff have been conducted to identify focus points for the final product.</p> <p>The final thesis product is shown in the appendix. The recommendations for improving the customer journey in a zero-waste restaurant were crafted to illustrate and suggest cost-effective and easily implementable practice changes to better match Restaurant Nolla's customer expectations. The practical guidelines can be applied in any order, enabling the commissioner to use the best judgment to develop the customer journey in Nolla further.</p> <p>The Referencing of the thesis is done using Haaga-Helia guidelines.</p>	
Keywords Customer Journey Map, Brand memorability, Zero-waste Restaurant, Customer Experience, Experience design	

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1 Introduction

This thesis was commissioned by the organising body of Restaurant Nolla, where the author has been employed for several years in various positions. Nolla is a zero-waste restaurant based on the belief that the restaurant industry can work without producing excess waste, keeping in mind the locality of ingredients, use of chemicals, and other significant contributors to climate change and environmental pollution. The restaurant has been established by three chefs who have worked in fine dining establishments and were shocked by the waste and practices in those places. The main idea is not to create a one-off restaurant but to set an example and illustrate that running an establishment with such procedures is possible and profitable.

Daniel Knapp brought a “total recycling movement” into existence in the 1980s, later named the zero waste movement, gaining wide popularity in the early 2010s (Wright 2023). The zero waste movement ideology is an intentional living and consumption practice where, as a result of practising, the person produces minimal to no waste. Between 2015 and 2017, the movement gained a broad audience when the “Year in a Jar” concept went viral online. The idea was that a person could live a year producing no more than a mason jar of trash. Due to the trend's nature, the jarring movement was destined to fall out of favour, and zero waste practice has not been an exception to the rule. By 2017, the practice has been called out for being unrealistic, setting high punishments and not being flexible, ultimately causing zero waste to lose many followers and broad appeal (Winters 2023).

Around the movement's loss of popularity, Restaurant Nolla was established and started functioning as a pop-up restaurant, later gaining permanent status. The restaurant had one mission: to illustrate that following the practice and making conscious choices is not only demanding but also profitable and possible to execute on a modest budget.

During the author's employment, he has been in multiple roles, both managerial and non-managerial. In one of the roles, as an assistant restaurant manager, the author has dealt with customer feedback, social media presence and customer service design.

As a result of that work, the author was inspired to create a comprehensive, theory-based guide to how the restaurant can better communicate with its guests, create a strong brand memorability and thus further spread the word of the practices, amplifying the mission and showcasing their success to inspire others in the industry to follow.

The author has a solid connection to the thesis topic and the restaurant's cause. He is an activist, consultant to the European Youth Green Party, and an advocate for environmental conservation. Working through several different roles in the restaurant allowed the author to observe the established practices and later improve and create new ones.

In the various roles within the company, the author has developed vital skills, such as observation and data analysis, combined with a passion for customer service, event organising, and an inclination towards complex schemes and grand plans. The author changed and improved the customer's experience and restaurant visibility in the field of gastronomic establishments in Helsinki. This experience created a perfect leeway to expand his knowledge further and create an implementable guide for the company, where they can self-assess and implement as they see fit the suggestions and practices advised.

1.1 Objectives

With the main aim of this paper being to improve the current customer journey and increase customer awareness of the brand's mission and practices, the author was able to develop the objectives of the thesis over time. The prime goal was established by creating the thesis idea - *Creating guidelines for better communicating Nolla's values through customer journey mapping*. That led to the sub-objective of *establishing a more memorable brand experience for guests*.

The project has a broad scope of marketing, service design, human resources, space design, customer psychology, et cetera. However, the author has chosen to approach the subject from the stance of the customer journey, as the hospitality industry is heavily dependent on subjective measures, such as taste, opinion, and feeling, among many others. During the literary research, the author observed that customer journey mapping is often discussed as an important yet complex issue, and more often than not, left to chance, where the experience is designed by estimate rather than research-based. Connecting that mission to every step taken is crucial for a restaurant with a zero-waste approach attempting to set an example for the industry. A carefully designed experience can improve the phenomenon of "word of mouth," which refers to customers sharing their experiences with their peers in oral or written form across various platforms (Vocabulary, C.2023). It is vital, and for the company's mission to be spread efficiently, customers must have an experience that is considered "worth telling" about. This is where the customer journey comes into the light, creating a memorable and long-lasting impression that the guests will remember.

During the author's employment, there have been apparent drops and rises in guests based on word of mouth and publications relating to the restaurant's mission in printed media. Whenever a journal or an online source publishes about the practices, the company sees a surge in customers seeking answers for less discussed measures or techniques. The author also observed a correlation between the overall dinner rating being higher when the restaurant is familiar to the guest or if the restaurant's mission is well communicated.

He became interested in creating a more rounded, thorough customer journey to increase customer experience and brand memorability, thus raising awareness and improving business. With experience in designing and managing customer relations, all of the above has served as the practical baseline for this thesis, and the goal is to map the customer journey of Nolla's guests in a way that enhances the recognition and recollection of the restaurant and its mission.

The author will rebuild the customer journey and enhance the experience by observing current practices and conducting in-depth research on customer psychology, experience design theories, and previous work experience, allowing the academic knowledge to be filtered and moulded to the specifics of Restaurant Nolla. The author will develop a customer journey map to establish an applicable and actionable plan for the restaurant to implement and further spread its mission, increasing the business and creating a pleasant environment that will be memorable to the guests, thus improving the brand's memorability.

1.2 Company and Restaurant Information

Restaurant Nolla is an establishment run by three owners from different backgrounds and countries. They have worked in various establishments abroad and in Finland and have observed sub-optimal practices for their views: unethical labour, single-use packaging and massive food waste, among others. They have decided to establish a place where the food waste is minimal, the packaging is fully reusable, and there is a "Zero-waste" approach to every aspect of operations. That applied to refurbishing, tableware, food and menu, and staff on the property. After a few months as a pop-up restaurant, they have moved to the permanent base at Fredrikinkatu 22 in Helsinki and have been operating there since. The restaurant serves a seasonally changing menu, with changes happening every 3-5 weeks, depending on the season. All the food prepared is provided by local farms and markets, sourced and grown in Finland. The menu's design is done according to that and does not include ingredients not grown locally, such as vanilla, saffron, and

others. The exceptions to this would be some discarded items, such as lemon skins, which are acquired from bars and other restaurants after those places no longer use them, and Nolla uses the skins of juiced fruits that would have otherwise been thrown away.

With the same concept in mind, the cutlery and tableware are sourced second-hand and used to their maximum ability. Some of the more difficult-to-acquire pieces have been designed with local artists from waste products, such as water glasses, cocktail glasses and carafes cut from beer and wine bottles used in other restaurants. Furniture is made by a small company that produces stylish pieces from recycled wood designed for longevity and minimal wear.

The same concept is applied to the staff working in the restaurant. As immigrants, the owners of Nolla have faced some difficulties in the labour market and vowed to simplify that process for others. The management team hires people based on their abilities rather than classic attributes like degree or experience. The employees have students from different fields with no prior background, seasoned chefs unfamiliar with cooking without plastic, and people above the industry's classic age. The management team nourishes and offers opportunities to learn and grow, teaching them new skills. The author started with no prior experience in the industry and was introduced to the role of assistant restaurant manager within a year.

The target clientele is everyone, no matter their age and identity. The approach to customers is a “relaxed atmosphere, where the staff are friends who host the customer, not serve them” (Wieberg 23 September 2023).

The idea of the restaurant experience is a visit to a friend's place, where the guests are warmly greeted at the door, taken care of in a relaxed manner, and comfortable throughout the dinner. While serving “fine-dining” level food, the owners want to create a more casual and relaxed atmosphere where the guests never feel out of place.

The team wears the same uniforms for the front and back of the house, indicating no division. Serving staff help the kitchen plate dishes and assist in ways needed, and the kitchen staff carry out dishes or help with restaurant upkeep during busier times. The restaurant has a vibrant energy and professional and relaxed staff who can communicate with guests in their own style. Staff are encouraged to be who they are, goofy or not, and enjoy their time there (Wieberg 23 September 2023).

This project is aimed at further development of the company's work in the sustainability field. The main goal of this thesis is to improve customer interaction and customer journey in the restaurant to bring all of the information mentioned above to customers, highlighting to them the value of a place like Nolla in a non-obvious way. As a project started as a mixture of a business venture and an example to the rest of the industry, the author believes the improved customer journey map will significantly assist in reaching the company's goals in both fields.

1.3 Methodology in Brief

The methodology of this paper is a compound of several different approaches, allowing for an in-depth look at the subject. The author has conducted semi-structured interviews with the staff and management of the establishment to get a clear picture of the current practices and evaluate what has been done to create an illusive customer journey. Second, a wide selection of customer feedback is used to analyse the customer feel and to determine at what points the restaurant underperforms in guests' opinions. The feedback will be taken from the online feedback form filled out by customers after the visit, Google Reviews and some questions asked by guests on the site. That will allow the author to build a better journey map and provide the base of the experience enchantment through feedback. Lastly, the author will use digital and analogue resources, publications and knowledge to draw additional information and enrich the final product with academic backing. The evaluation of all the gathered data and the final product will be conducted using customer journey mapping, using the model provided by research from researchers at Indiana University (Rosenbaum, Otolora & Ramirez 2016).

1.4 Key definitions

The terms around this discussion and the subjects of the thesis are:

- *Brand Memorability*
- *Customer Experience*
- *Customer Journey Mapping (CJM)*
- *Touchpoint*

Brand memorability is rarely discussed but is crucial for any thriving business. It can be broken down into several aspects: Brand elements, consistent communication, customer experience, marketing strategies, emotional aspects and social media presence. While all of them are equally important, the author will focus on the main aspects of the customer experience, messaging and emotional connection, and brand elements when discussing

brand memorability in this thesis. According to Li, Forest and DiPietro (2022), due to the dynamic change in customer behaviour, brand memorability helps maintain a good customer experience through familiarity with the brand, thus helping the business to stay loyal to their core values and the experience to develop at its own pace. As a unique niche restaurant, Nolla is a prime example of a restaurant with a strong brand identity. In this thesis, the author will look into improving brand memorability through customer experience, as it aims to improve customer awareness of Nolla's efforts in sustainability and further share the values through shared customer experience and word of mouth. In addition, a memorable brand attracts more customers, increases profit, and sets an example for others in the industry.

Customer experience describes the entire customer engagement with a business or a company. It is often considered a luxury sector goods and services tool and is regularly discussed in online and premium goods sectors. While it is a significant part of those sectors, customer experience is a multi-industry phenomenon seen in both online and offline services. Most scholars put positive customer experience on top of the list for the business's long-lasting success. (Li & al. 2022; Williams, Buoye, Keiningham, & Aksoy. 2020). In the hospitality industry, major players like Marriot, Starbucks, Chick-fil-A and others have been focused on customer experience design for a long time, introducing new features and polishing well-developed ones. (Williams & al. 2020; Kivela, J., Inbakaran, R. & Reece, J. 1999).

Customer Journey Mapping (CJM) is a visual representation of the events and occurrences a business customer goes through while interacting with the service provided throughout the whole period of service or purchase (Rosenbaum & al. 2016). Heavily interwoven with the customer experience, the process involves multiple stages, from analysing the steps the customer takes to discover a service, booking or experiencing it, and leaving the service behind, still remembering it. All of the steps mentioned earlier get analysed and adjusted as needed, for example, simplified or made more proactive on the customer side, and then put into a visual map with actionable descriptions. That allows us to curate the customer experience carefully, achieving long-lasting success. (Li & al. 2022; Williams & al. 2020). Some oppose customer journey design, arguing that it becomes too curated and loses its humanity and personality (Dixon, Freeman & Toman 2010). While the author disagrees with that opinion, it needs to be mentioned.

Touchpoints have been a relatively recent measure established to clarify further and bring order into the customer experience map. Touchpoint refers to one-way or two-way interaction between the customer and the service provider. During those interactions, there must be an exchange, either transactional or informational. (Rosenbaum & al. 2016; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) The touchpoints can occur in person or at a distance, for example, when the customer interacts with the restaurant's website or booking system. They are divided into three categories: pre-purchase, during-purchase and post-purchase (Rosenbaum & al. 2016; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The touchpoints are the critical element in Customer Journey Mapping, where designing how those interactions will go allows the business to improve its performance.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis will follow a classic thesis structure, where the author will start with an introduction, outline the premise of the topic, discuss the zero-waste movement and how it has impacted the restaurant Nolla's founding, and present the case this thesis addresses. After that, the author will outline the objectives of the thesis, followed by a more thorough explanation of the restaurant, establishing the premise and context of the thesis. Afterwards, the author will review critical definitions to help the reader familiarise with the theory. To follow up, the author will conduct a literature review and research to present the case of customer journey mapping and brand memorability and their interaction. After the literature overview, the author will produce an in-depth methodology outline and establish the plans and background for the thesis product. The final part of the thesis will present the product. The ideas developed, the learning outcomes and a discussion of the research and the writing process.

2. Examining customer experience, brand memorability and their use for customer journey mapping

In the chapters below, the author will briefly overview the topics at hand, illustrate the theoretical part of creating the customer journey map, create the axis needed for the journey maps and provide justifications and academic background for all identified touchpoints. The author will present the research and theoretical knowledge associated with the topics and conclude by suggesting improvements to the existing practices.

2.1 Brand memorability overview

In the continuously expanding and changing landscape of industries, brand memorability has emerged as a prominent factor influencing consumer choices. Companies across various sectors, from tech giants like Apple to luxury fashion brands like Prada and the infamous Noma restaurant, understand the significance of creating memorable brands that resonate with their target audience.

Brand memorability serves beyond simple recognition; it creates a long-lasting relationship with the customer or a guest. A great example of such in the restaurant environment is Noma. Noma started as a sustainable restaurant and continued its journey to becoming one of the most recognised restaurants in the world. At the time of writing, Noma was a household name in the industry. Many articles, books, and documentaries have been made about their approach and service. The Noma team created several books that can be found in the pantries of most chefs. Pop culture regularly references the restaurant in movies and series. All those aspects indeed influenced the public and set the image and idea of Noma in people's minds long before they considered the restaurant their destination. (Olivia, 2023; Keller, K.& Lehmann, D. 2006)

In all business spheres, where the customer is in charge of choosing the goods or services provider, scholars recognise the importance of brands in becoming a part of consumers' lifestyles (Aaker 2021). This is especially true in sectors like hospitality, where brands are not just labels but storytellers. The story that a brand creates plays a crucial role in establishing memorability. In the modern world, a casual dinner or coffee can significantly impact a person, which can be observed historically. Many famous writers, politicians, artists and others have one particular restaurant or cafe in the story of their origin that has stuck around more than others, leading the brand to fame through that person's success.

The customer journey in brand memorability begins at the awareness stage. This initial contact between the customer and the business could be through advertisements, influencers, or word of mouth. Brands that manage multiple pre-service touchpoints during this stage create a space for themselves in their potential customers. Take, for instance, the meticulous curation of a luxury fashion show. It is not merely about showcasing products but about creating an immersive experience that lingers in the audience's memory (Kapferer & Bastien 2009).

While scholars such as D. Aaker and K. Keller, two leading experts on brand memorability, have opposing views of each other in their theories of brand memorability, they have agreed on one crucial aspect: consistency. A consistent brand identity reinforces memorability, whether it is the tone of communication, visual aesthetics, or brand values. Nolla has consistently committed to its mission, illustrating its zero-waste practices and keeping its ideology throughout the whole time the restaurant has been functioning, even during hard times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the hospitality industry, creating brand memorability is as crucial as in any other business. From the design of restaurant spaces to the interaction style of staff, each element contributes to the overall brand experience. It is about crafting moments that guests remember long after the event concludes.

One approach to analysing brand memorability is through guest feedback and engagement, which aligns with best practices. Combining those insights with a deep understanding of one's brand strategy and identity will enhance memorability. Efforts for improving brand memorability are very tightly interlinked with the customer experience. The chapter below will explore the customer experience and illustrate that similar measures are needed to establish a good customer experience and a memorable brand.

Later in the thesis, the CJM process will enable Nolla to improve its memorability automatically and have a more substantial brand presence without changing the company mission.

2.2 Customer Experience Overview

The concept of experience has become increasingly mentioned and used in various industries around the globe. Companies are known to utilise this term to market their products, ranging from retail stores to luxury brands. This approach has been employed for decades to boost sales, as David Ogilvy notes in his book, citing the success of "Dove Soap". By emphasising the emotional response clients get from using the product rather than its functional features, Dove achieved immense popularity among consumers (Ogilvy 2023).

Customer Experience (CX) describes the totality of customer engagement with a business or a company throughout the process of purchasing or receiving a service.(Li & al. 2022) Scholars have noted that the global economy has shifted from just selling products to a combination of products and the experience of acquiring and using said products. With customers' focus shifting towards well-being, the experience economy was born, focusing on customer satisfaction (Rossman & Duerden 2019). The customer experience is a continuum during which the customer experiences touchpoints, and a collection of those touchpoints creates a positive or negative impression of the product. Scholars emphasise the positive customer experience, creating the setting for a successful business and loyal patronage, where every moment is memorable (Li & al. 2022; Williams & al. 2020).

In the restaurant setting, the customer starts their journey before stepping into the establishment itself. The journey includes researching where to eat, booking the table, and interacting with customer service. Then comes the actual dining experience, where every detail matters. The greeting upon arrival, light, music or noisy neighbours at the nearby table can change a positive experience into a negative one. The food plays a significant role in the dining experience, as it is one of the primary reasons to go to the restaurant. The quality of ingredients, presentation, delivery speed, and taste can affect the customer's perception of the experience. Pricing of the beverages, food and drink selection, menu design, furniture and music create the ambience that adds to the experience. Music is significant, as described by Krook (2023). Music has been shown to significantly influence customer speed, spending, feelings, and even taste.

While dictating every aspect of the customer experience is impossible, intentional care for some may help navigate a much better guest experience. The author has used his knowledge about the customer experience and analysed the feedback submitted by Nolla's customers. It has provided valuable insight into which particular areas need improving and what the guests have mentioned as highlights to carefully evaluate the need to expand, as are the efforts put forward by the Nolla team. As a unique restaurant, much of the traditional advice of selecting theme-appropriate music or spraying some citrus scent to create an ambience would not be applicable. Therefore, the author will conclude the interview with the management and restaurant brand strategy combined with the customer feedback to build the customer journey map.

While different sources outline various definitions, the author has followed the above explanation to guide the customer journey mapping chapter. The author will use the above knowledge as a baseline and combine it with customer feedback to achieve an accurate picture of customer needs and streamline developing a horizontal axis for the customer journey map.

2.3 Customer journey mapping (CJM)

In this chapter, the author will outline the areas included in the customer journey mapping process and break down the received feedback into touchpoints that will allow the reader to understand what can be done to enhance the customer experience, thus improving the memorability of the experience. The touchpoints will be based on the interview with the staff regarding the most common questions and inquiries from the guests and customer feedback provided voluntarily through the restaurant's feedback system, which sends a questionnaire after the guests' visit is complete. The author has assessed the feedback and staff interviews to find the most common issues, observations, and suggestions and has divided them into three sections. The sections correspond to pre-service, service and post-service periods of customer-establishment interactions. The specifications of those sections can be found in the following chapters, where the author expands on the theory and outlines the significance of each of those touchpoints. The author identified 23 significant touchpoints from the provided feedback in the initial analysis. After a discussion with the commissioner, the author directed the focus of the thesis product on 10 of the 23 touchpoints. The managers have selected the focus touchpoints as the areas in which they have experienced difficulties or those that customers and staff brought up regularly.

In order to create a coherent customer journey map, Rosenbaum & al. (2016) suggest creating an axis of action where the horizontal axis represents the customer actions, and the vertical axis represents establishment and management actions. While some researchers suggest using an exclusively horizontal axis, the author decided to follow the theory suggested by Rosenbaum & al. (2016), where the researchers specify that adding the vertical axis offers a more actionable and holistic picture despite the complications such an approach introduces. After establishing and justifying the touchpoints in the subchapters below, the author will illustrate them with simplified tables representing each service sector for the final product. Only the touchpoints that have received feedback or the author suggests an improvement will be added to the tables, as they are the ones that can be taken further and enhanced. This approach will help the reader better comprehend the arguments and offer a more accessible look at the theoretical work to create the final product.

The study by Rosenbaum & al. (2016) outlines a finding similar to that of the author of the thesis, where the customer journey mapping process commonly implies that every touchpoint on the map has equal importance to the customer journey. In order to counteract such an effect, the author has collaborated with the restaurant managers to outline the level of detail and significance they would like the touchpoints to be investigated. The author and restaurant managers have identified ten touchpoints and concluded that all should be evaluated equally. On a grander spectrum, a map

without such agreement and consisting of more touchpoints would require the inclusion of another field, such as marketing.

2.3.1 Developing a horizontal axis using the customer data

The author began the creation of the horizontal axis by identifying the focus touchpoints with the help of the Nolla management. Those touchpoints were categorised into three sectors: before, during, and after service. This step was included to create a product that has an applicational meaning to the commissioner and illuminates one of the CJM's limitations. CJM process often focuses on all touchpoints as equally important, regularly overlooking the factual customer experience, where not every customer gets to interact with every touchpoint. By introducing this method, the author created a more applicational and less limited product. However, such an approach may introduce an availability bias, where the management selected points might not reflect all the guests' needs (Kahneman 2011).

The identified horizontal axis touchpoints are stated below:

Pre-service touchpoints:

- Purchase| Gifting | Redeeming of gift cards
- Booking the table
- Email and phone interactions, allergy/dietary restrictions notifications
- Exciting collaborations with other people/places/producers

Service touchpoints:

- Initial contact and first impression
- Banter
- Mistakes management on the spot

Post-service touchpoints:

- Follow-up feedback questionnaire
- Social media and user-generated content
- Surprise gestures and “wow factors”

All the above touchpoints will serve as the horizontal axis for the CJM tables. The author will further develop those touchpoints in the subchapters below, offer an insight into their significance, outline what has already been done towards their smoothness, and suggest improvements.

2.3.2 Developing a vertical axis based on managerial actions

The vertical axis corresponds to what Nolla's management could do to guarantee satisfactory customer engagement at every touchpoint. The vertical axis is aimed to illustrate the co-functioning of the managerial action and the service. The vertical axis is based on several responsible branches of management and establishment whose actions impact the service directly. The author has identified several branches, listed below:

- Service team actions
- Staff support
- Customer service actions
- Marketing team actions
- Service innovation

The author has consulted with the restaurant management on creating the vertical axis and, as a result, has come up with the five branches above. In the following paragraph, the author will briefly elaborate on each branch and what they include to give context and ease the comprehension for the readers.

Service team actions are the actions that staff who interact with the customer predominantly during the service stage of the customer experience can take. Those actions can be immediate, like a direct interaction, or extended, such as in advance learning of the menu.

Staff support refers to the resources, training and materials provided to the staff of Nolla, from which they learn or use to meet customer expectations during each touchpoint. It could also include technology and online apps, wherever applicable.

Customer service actions refer to the actions that the staff members are responsible for, such as customer interactions, troubleshooting, and others, predominantly in the pre-service and post-service stages of the customer experience.

Marketing team actions refer to the actions done by the staff responsible for content creation, social media, collaborations, website upkeep and marketing initiatives.

Service innovation is an aspect adapted from the base study of Rosenbaum & al (2016). It refers to collaborative actions between the different branches of restaurant staff, where they creatively work together on each touchpoint to develop innovative methods to meet customer expectations.

The above information and branches identified are used to create the vertical axis of the CJM. The CJM process will use the vertical and horizontal axis to cross-reference the touchpoints

2.3.3 Pre-service customer journey map

Pre-service interactions and the period are defined as any interaction between the customer and the restaurant before the service begins (Rosenbaum & al. 2016). For the case of this thesis, the pre-service CJM points would include personal, brand and multichannel things like advertisements, published articles, photos, information passed by word of mouth or through reviews of the restaurant, searching and using the restaurant's website for booking the table and receiving a confirmation of reservation email (Lemon & Verhoef 2016).

Purchase | Redeeming of gift cards

Gift cards play a significant role in the restaurant business. They create a reason for the receiver of the gift to visit the restaurant and increase the likelihood of them enjoying the experience, as the willingness to spend increases and the fear of spending decreases in customers with gift cards, allowing them to focus on the service in a non-stressful manner (Lim, S & Ok, C. 2021). People buy them as gifts, as rewards and as gestures. In Nolla, gift cards have a special meaning to the brand's memorability, as they are embedded with poppy flower seeds (Wieberg 23 September 2023). Those gift cards can continue their journey with the customer even after redeeming, enabling guests to plant them in pots/gardens and grow some flowers that will serve as a long-lasting reminder of their visit. However, plantable gift cards can only be acquired on the property and are not extended to those purchased online. The staff can exchange the virtual card for a plantable one at the premises; however, it is not communicated to the broader audience and often comes up in guests' feedback.

One of the suggested improvements is adding a note to the web shop that offers the guest an option to come and exchange online gift cards for the physical ones if they prefer. They offer the guest a choice, increasing their connection with the establishment. In addition, during the visit to the premises, the purchaser of the gift card gets a chance to visit the restaurant and get familiar with the surroundings, which could increase the likelihood of booking the restaurant.

Booking the table

Upon booking the table through the restaurant website, there is a classic and straightforward process where the customer is directed to select the number of guests, followed by a calendar with colour-coded days, from which the guest can select the time or add themselves to the waiting list. After those actions are confirmed, the website offers a space for the customer to leave any special requests, dietary restrictions, and other notes and confirm the given details and the restaurant address. When the booking is done online, the guest will receive a confirmation with the same information as the email they used to reserve the table. This process generally draws no comments/feedback from the customer side; however, the staff have observed that the confirmation needs to provide more information about the booking length, which in most cases is 2,5 hours.

While on the less booked days, a more extended customer stay is encouraged, on the busier days, the staff have experienced a need to suggest the guest take their leave politely. Lack of length specification sometimes affects the service, which patrons have pointed out in the feedback. The author would suggest adding the reservation length to the confirmation email to set guests' expectations and prevent tensions during the service. In addition, the author would propose training the staff at the property to communicate the length of stay where appropriate casually. Examples include phrases like "The next two and a half hours will become the best in your dining experience" or suitable alternatives. Of course, such a suggestion requires understanding that not all guests are the same, and a personalised and involved approach is needed. Part of the suggested training could include training on time management and effective communication with the guest.

Email and phone interactions, allergy/dietary restrictions notifications

In case of any clarifications, changes, or other communications, the guest would correspond with the restaurant via email. This is one of the essential pre-service touchpoints, as this is the only point where the guest interacts directly with the staff on the premises. Available and attentive customer service shows the guests they are valued and important even before entering the venue. Notifying the restaurant about such information as allergies or dietary restrictions helps guests feel welcome and secure that they will have something to eat. It also allows the staff to prepare for their visit more thoroughly. If the message is sent but not seen by staff, the customer experience will suffer immediately.

Nolla has a designated staff member who answers all of the messages and is responsible for weekday communications, with one of the service staff members answering them during the weekend. Guest feedback has yet to identify any fault with the availability of the customer service, and the staff have highlighted that with follow-up emails, the guests have even praised the speed of response and taking time to get involved with the specifics of their requests.

Exciting collaborations with other people/places/producers

With the digital presence online and the constant novelty in the online spaces, it is hard to keep up with the demand for a stimulating experience and invention, especially with the restrictions the concept of the restaurant introduces. While the current execution is thriving and continues to impress the guests, more often than not, customer feedback suggests a demand for novelty. A few guests have responded to the feedback request positively but with a note of “missing a wow factor” or “delicious, but some dishes fell flat”. During prior collaboration events, such as the “Birthday Dinner”, the customer feedback has highlighted “unexpected tastes” and being “excited to taste another style of food, they have made zero waste”. After the event's announcement, the restaurant reached maximum seating capacity in a few days. The event brought chefs from two other zero-waste restaurants, who joined Nolla staff for one night to cook a collaborative meal to celebrate the restaurant's anniversary. This collaboration has been published online on all participating chefs' and restaurant profiles, significantly increasing the restaurant's visibility and creating a buzz. The “Birthday Dinner” and other events hosted at the premises have drawn much attention from people who have never heard about Nolla before, and the restaurant has seen several regular customers, testifying to the excitement and novelty of the event.

To enhance this touchpoint, the author suggests introducing minor celebrations, specials and one-off events on a smaller scale to keep the excitement and novelty aspects. An example of such would be a “Wine Producer Week”, hosted once a month. The author was inspired by this idea while working with wine providers for Nolla. The selection of wine in the establishment consists of organic, smaller-scale producer wines. The restaurant imports some wines that can not be found elsewhere in Finland. Organising a week dedicated to a specific producer would create some novelty and allow Nolla to expand on why they have selected said producer and how they fit in with the concept and principles of the establishment.

Another concept the author proposes is the Farmers Table. The author suggests creating a communal table with Nolla's food producers as one of the guests, where the bookings are open to everyone. The goal would be to invite people to taste food, learn about what the producer has done to grow the food served and the farming practices, and illustrate the close relationship

between the restaurant and their producers. It would be a personalised and educational experience, introducing the guest to the restaurant's mission and bringing the communities closer over a meal.

Limited-time events and one-off occasions would spark interest, give customers a reason to return over time and keep up with Nolla's news to ensure they do not miss something they could find interesting. The exclusivity and limits of such increase the customer numbers and create longer-lasting memories that people love to share due to its limited status and uniqueness (Thompson, C.P., 1982; Neusar, A., 2012)

In Table 1, illustrated in Appendix 2, the reader can find the pre-service customer journey map, built to outline the managerial actions needed to ensure each touchpoint is addressed to match the customer expectation at every given pre-service touchpoint, outlined in the paragraphs above.

2.3.4 Service customer journey map

A direct interaction between the customer and the establishment defines the service period (Rosenbaum & al. 2016). For the restaurant, that would be predominantly customer-owned and external touchpoints, such as walking through the door, being greeted at the door, sitting at the table, selecting and ordering food and drinks, conversing with the staff and paying (Lemon & Verhoef 2016).

Initial contact and first impression

This touchpoint is about the first impression. When guests walk through the door, they start their service part of the customer journey. They are greeted and warmly welcomed, made comfortable and taken care of, all of those in just a few first seconds. Everything at that moment needs to happen seemingly, with designed perfection. In the words of the restaurant staff, In Finland, the small talk culture is less advanced than in some countries (Wieberg 23 September 2023). Guests often have a feeling of grandness and urgency when making a booking in the restaurant. Nolla is about a relaxed and "homely" feeling of service and dining. The team aims to reset the seriousness and urgency during that initial service interaction (Wieberg 23 September 2023). When the staff have checked the reservation status and availability of the table, they lead the guests to the table, offer them water and ask in what language the guest prefers the menu to be. The menus are available in English and Finnish, and the staff are happy to provide either.

However, the service of the table may be conducted in a different language, as the restaurant values itself for multiculturalism and refuses the industry standard hiring process. Nolla also applies its concept of refusing waste to the staff and hires staff by their abilities rather than their credentials (Wieberg 23 September 2023). That offers a workplace for people without prior experience or knowledge of the Finnish language, who would otherwise not find work in the industry. This has appeared in guest feedback with some regularity but predominantly negative connotation. The team has noted that they are open and change tables they care for in cases where the language barrier is apparent.

As a suggestion for improvement, the author suggests a collaborative approach, where the serving staff inform the guest that the service is in English. They would continuously observe throughout the dinner if the guest was comfortable and collaborate with Finnish-speaking colleagues where needed. For that, the staff would require support from the management and some training in handling such cases. In addition, as it is one of the aspects of Nolla's mission, the author would propose the marketing team create a few posts and make the English language service one of the restaurant's features, highlighting that service in Finnish is available.

Banter

The verbal interaction between the guests and staff is another service touchpoint that creates a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. How a staff member addresses and communicates with the guest sets the dinner's expectations, atmosphere and impressions. A relaxed service with good food and pleasant staff will be more memorable to the guest than a generic, polite, but uninvolved service. The management team at Nolla encourages staff to speak freely, using their judgement to determine the level of personal involvement and the tone in which the exchange happens.

As per staff interviews and customer feedback, this approach works well, with many customers reporting a pleasant and relaxed feeling during the dinner. One common aspect of banter that could be improved is linking the conversation to the restaurant's mission. Guests often mention wanting to hear more about what the restaurant does to be zero-waste.

The author suggests staff training, where the staff get educated on all the measures the restaurant takes to produce no waste and be shown in person any processes that may be involved. In addition, the management could suggest to staff to elaborate on the practices and measure where they see appropriate, and for the marketing team to announce on the restaurant channels so that guests can inquire about any information they are curious about from the staff at the premises. This

measure will allow the restaurant to create a more transparent and welcoming image of itself to the guests, enabling a more open and friendly feeling for the guests.

Mistakes management on the spot

In the perfect scenario, the customer journey would have no mistakes or hiccups during the interaction with the guest. However, in day-to-day reality, many things can have a slight issue, resulting in various customer irritations. The degree of variance is hard to predict, as it depends on many customer expectations and the degree of mistake among many. Nolla is no exception to making mistakes, as it is part of every process. Once an error occurs, the customer might lose trust or confidence in the server or even the restaurant itself, depending on the scale of the error. According to some studies, if the error is not mended at the right moment, the customer will leave significantly less satisfied, even if the rest of the evening went according to their expectations (Min, K. S., Jung, J. M., Ryu, K., Haugtvedt, C., Mahesh, S., & Overton, J. 2020).

Currently, there is no particular procedure according to which the staff are expected to address the mistake. The situations are navigated by the atmosphere on the table and the waiter's impression of the severity. While this approach works, the author has researched the significance of the timing of an apology and will suggest a further improvement to the current process of mending errors with the customers.

The author proposes adopting a very clear schematic for the time of apology to optimise the process of mending errors and to boost service staff confidence in their ability to navigate the situation. Min & al. (2020) conducted a study that tested various timing of apology and outlined the most efficient approach, where the highest percentage of guests leave satisfied. The researchers have identified two kinds of apology. A preemptive apology happens when the server has made or observed a mistake before the customer's complaint. A responsive apology is issued as a response to the customer's complaint. The researchers have determined that the choice between the two ways of mending the error depends on how prolonged the interaction between the waitperson and the customer is. Suppose there is much interaction between the two over an extended period, for example, when a mistake is made by a person who takes care of the guest makes a mistake. In that case, a responsive apology is a better way to address the error, assuring the guest that they are heard and that the mistake will not reoccur. In cases where the interaction between the guest and the staff member is not extended, a preemptive apology is suggested, allowing the guest to have closure over the situation and move past the erroneous interaction (Min, K. S. & al. 2020).

The author proposes adapting this method as the initial way to handle mistakes and providing staff training for the whole team to normalise issuing apologies and doing it correctly. This will allow for a smoother flow of service, a more manageable work environment for the staff and better met expectations for the customer. In addition, the author would suggest introducing a social media post, acknowledging that the restaurant does make mistakes, thus admitting to imperfection and adding that humane and relaxed style that was mentioned as desirable by the management team.

In Table 2, illustrated in Appendix 2, the reader can find the service customer journey map, which outlines the managerial actions needed to ensure each touchpoint is addressed to match the customer expectation at every given service touchpoint, outlined in the paragraphs above.

2.3.5 Post-service customer journey map

The post-service period is defined by customer experiences after the customer has left the restaurant and may include a post-visit feedback request, uploading pictures and videos from the visit online, and, crucially, an incentive to return to the restaurant (Rosenbaum & al. 2016).

These post-service touchpoints regularly need to be noticed and remembered, where the business or an establishment often focuses on building up anticipation and excelling at service, leaving the customer behind after the service stage. Continuing customer interaction into the post-service stage has been studied and shown to play a significant role in memorability and customer retention (Zhou 2014; Othman, Harun, De Almeida & Sadq 2020).

The literature on post-service interactions is often written for financial gain, customer loyalty and business retention, and the author had to select several papers from various fields to draw out suitable information relevant to this thesis. While the goal of the investigation into post-service communication across the fields is vast and spread, all of the literature highlights the higher memorability of the experience when post-service interactions are conducted. Meeting customer expectations and the success of the post-service touchpoints rely on the positive experience in the pre-service and service stages of the customer journey (Lemon & Verhoef 2016; Zhou 2014; Othman & al. 2020; Li & al. 2022).

Follow-up feedback questionnaire

Post-visit feedback forms are among the most commonly used ways for businesses to look inside their operations and customer experience. Many companies simplify this process by requesting minimal information, sometimes as simple as a 0-5 scale, where 0 is negative, and 5 is a very positive impression of the service. Nolla offers a broader scale questionnaire sent to the email of

the person who reserved, where *Food; Service; Ambiance; Overall experience; Value for money and Would recommend* options are rated on a scale of 0-6 points. In addition, there is an open text window where the responder is encouraged to include anything they feel went right or wrong, any elaboration on their experience, and suggestions for improvement. The illustration of the form can be found in Appendix 3.

The feedback form is comprehensive, and the feedback is detailed and thorough. The responses from guests allow the customer service team to reach out for more information, to thank the guests for their opinions and to reach out to people who mentioned any downfalls to invite them again to showcase what Nolla has to offer. The customer service team at Nolla responds to every feedback personally and addresses any praise or issues the guest has pointed out.

The improvement for this step proposed by the author would include training customer service staff in personal communications to improve their ability to address customer needs further. In addition, they remind guests how valuable their feedback is in a way that links to the aim of improvement and cares for them rather than for marketing purposes. Lastly, the author suggests that service staff mention the possibility of leaving feedback, perhaps during the banter stage. Mentioning the server's name could further motivate the guest to respond to the questionnaire, as there is a human touch and a personal impact in responding to feedback (Seiter, J.S., Givens, K.D. & Weger, H.,2015)

Social media and user-generated content

Interactions between the guest and the venue continue after service, with guests sharing photos and videos and telling about their visit to friends and family. This user-generated content, or UGC, is a great way to interact with guests and create excitement around the restaurant for people who have yet to experience it. Some studies suggest that this type of content will be more appealing and inviting than similar content published by the restaurant's media (Swaminathan, V & al. 2020, 4-5).

The guest will share their highlights, engaging parts of the experience and provide a personal and human touch when posting for their followers. Suppose the restaurant's social media had been tagged. In that case, it invites the people engaging with the content to follow through to the restaurant's website and start considering it for themselves. Re-sharing UGC to restaurants' social media helps the human touch and engage with the guest even after the service, giving the guest a sense of importance and belonging with the restaurant. (Swaminathan, V & al. 2020, 17)

Nolla's marketing department has a semi-regular engagement with the UGC, where the restaurant's social media occasionally reposts a guest story. The staff and online review have noted this semi-regular approach as "curated and sterile". With Nolla's relaxed service style, such an impression can negatively impact the online view of the restaurant and set high expectations, impacting the customer's journey.

Based on the theory, the author would propose a more involved approach with UGC. It would require the team to create a practice of combing through social media and engaging with guests online. From the perspective of management and the staff, creating a more visually appealing environment, offering to take pictures of guests where applicable and creating a positive atmosphere in the restaurant would be required to create an appealing environment for the guests to share their content after the visit. The above aspects will benefit the restaurant's memorability through a recurring presence on their social media and the photographic keepsakes created in the process.

Surprise gestures and "wow factors"

While the ideas, menu, settings, and concepts may differ in the restaurant industry, the primary purpose stays the same. Guests come there to dine and socialise. When that sole purpose is fulfilled, the guest will move on. Researchers Reunanen, Penttinen, and Borgmeier (2016) suggest the "Wow factor" to capture the guests' attention and boost the memorability of the experience. The "wow factor" is any interaction or attribute of the experience that creates a strong reaction from the guest. That reaction can be positive or negative, but to be a "wow", the emotion evoked needs to be strong. Introducing such emotion after the initial experience will further solidify the experience's memory and provide the guest with an additional conversation point for their word-of-mouth communication with others.

One example of such a "wow" gesture would involve one of the pre-service touchpoints. When the gift card receiver is redeeming the gift, they receive the card back with a small amount of the fertiliser Nolla produces from the restaurant's food waste. Giving back to the community is part of the restaurant's philosophy. Compost symbolises food waste as something of use, where a customer can experience how waste is turned into beautiful flowers (Wieberg 23 September 2023). This process is an engaging part of how the mission of Nolla can be put into a simple-to-grasp idea, a so-called "Trash to Treasure". In this case, the pre-service act of buying the gift card turns into other guests' post-service memory, engaging with several stages of memorability and mission awareness.

While the concept of the restaurant in itself is unique to the local industry, with Nolla being the first zero waste restaurant in Finland, and has caused a “wow”-like effect on the industry, with increasing consciousness of the restaurant goers and high demand for sustainable business, the author would propose a visibility change. After the visit, a customer could receive an email regarding their dinner, with some statistics, introducing a competitive nature — for example, the average amount of waste produced per customer per night. Since Nolla is tracking its waste in digital software (Wieberg 23 September 2023), it should be easily calculated by dividing the total waste by the total amount of guests. While it is an estimate, it will allow the customer to reflect on their choices presently. It should be noted that the wording of such a message should be congratulatory, praising them for not producing more. Perhaps comparing it to the general restaurant average would help provide context for the guest and help them establish a positive image of their experience at Nolla through the feeling of adding to the efforts to reverse global warming and unnecessary food waste.

In Table 3, illustrated in Appendix 2, the reader can find the post-service customer journey map, built to outline the managerial actions needed to ensure each touchpoint is addressed to match the customer expectation at every given post-service touchpoint, outlined in the paragraphs above.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

During the writing process of the theoretical part, the author has gathered information from multiple sources, including literature research. That research led to several authors and studies that provided information and academic support to the data collected by the author. Those sources cover the areas of brand memorability, customer journey and CJM process and have allowed the author to build their coherent theoretical framework. It is illustrated in Table 1, where the author outlines the key models and studies used for the framework and product development.

Source	Framework	Focus	Usage
Rosenbaum & al, 2016	Customer journey mapping	- Customer service map creation	Guidance on effective determination of the axis, stages of service
Kivela, J., Inbakaran, R. & Reece, J. 1999; Li, J., Ma, F., & DiPietro, R. B. 2022; Kapferer & Bastien 2009; Aaker 2021;	Brand memorability	-Brand memorability -Experience design to improve recall -Link between customer journey and brand memorability	Implementation of brand memorability as an extension of customer journey; Establishment of touchpoints

Reunanen, T., Penttinen, M., & Borgmeier, A., 2016; Swaminathan, V & al., 2020; Lemon & Verhoef 2016; Zhou 2014; Othman & al. 2020; Li & al. 2022; Min, K. S., & al., 2020; Lim, S & Ok, C. 2021; Williams & al. 2020; Seiter, J.S., Givens, K.D. & Weger, H.,2015; Thompson, C.P., 1982; Neusar, A., 2012.	Supporting evidence for the touchpoint improvements	-Touchpoints -Actionable impacts on clients	To research and locate suitable improvements to the current practices Academic backing to authors improvement suggestions
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Table 1. Table of the critical models and studies for this thesis (Kolosov, 2023)

The models and studies provided in Table 1 will be used to create the product of this thesis, illustrated in Appendix 1.

The selected material permits the author to gather an in-depth inside into the CJM process and provide a detailed review of actions that could be taken to improve the overall customer experience. While other materials have been used in writing the thesis, the author selected the most significant ones to be included in the framework overview, allowing the reader more accessible information and illustrating the foundation of the theoretical part of the research.

In the following chapter, the author will provide a thorough inside into the methodology of the thesis, the gathering and analysis of data, ethical considerations and an evaluation of the thesis process.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Method

As outlined in Chapter 1.3, the primary methods in this thesis are a literature review, semi-structured interviews conducted with the management and the staff of Restaurant Nolla, own experience as an assistant restaurant manager of 2 years at the premise and structured volunteer feedback provided by the restaurant's guests.

The author conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews with Nolla's management team. The most used information was provided in the interview with the general manager, Max Wieberg, beverage manager, Luis Benalcazar, and waiter staff on the premises. The interview aimed to identify the areas where the staff are confident and what service areas they believe need improvement. The questions included the key touchpoint outlined in Chapter 2.3.1 of the thesis and overall questions regarding each person's efforts towards meeting customer expectations.

The quantitative questionnaire sent out to all guests has been used for the customer side of the thesis, as well as the testimonials of staff regarding their customer interactions. Customer feedback is used to evaluate what areas of service are lacking or underwhelming and work on aspects that require more attention. Such an approach allowed the collaboration with the management team of Nolla to streamline the identification of which areas the author should investigate and conduct the literary research.

Lastly, the author has chosen a literature review as the secondary research. The author has conducted an in-depth review of literature and material on the topics of touchpoints that were identified in the primary stage. The research included prior knowledge, books and study material provided by the university, online publications and articles. The literature and resources review has served as a fundament of the thesis and the final product.

In the following chapter, the author will elaborate on the data collection process and justify the methods used.

3.2 Data collection process

The data collection process has been carried out in several stages. The staff interview was conducted on the 23rd of September on the restaurant's premises at different times, with the participants volunteering their time to answer the questions. They have been organised and later

transcribed digitally. From the recordings, the author has selectively picked the points that made coherent sense to the research topic. The data acquired from the interview was combined with the customer data and literary review throughout the entire thesis writing.

Due to the nature of CJM and the requirement of both horizontal and vertical axes, as mentioned in Chapters 2.3.1 and 2.3.2, existing data from customer feedback has been analysed to identify a longer-term picture of the service from the customer's perspective. The author's reason for this decision is the dynamic nature of restaurants, where some days or sometimes weeks are uniquely different from the standard. Acquiring a more comprehensive time scope data eliminated some abnormalities and allowed for a more rounded, averaged-out customer perspective. While open-ended questionnaires and feedback analysis are classically considered as qualitative methods, due to the abundance of data available, the author combined the collected data and decided to process it using quantitative research methods.

One drawback of the selected method was the volume of data to be processed. The author initially intended to process all of the feedback form responses, spanning from 1 February 2022 to 1 September 2023, counting 1545 responses, but later narrowed down the selection to 8 months, starting from 1 January 2023, with a total of 721 responses. It took the author over a week to analyse the open-ended responses, where the customer expressed their thoughts in Finnish and English. An online translation tool was used for the unavailable responses in the languages the author could understand. However, the task has proven fruitful, with the author identifying areas that require improvement.

The author will elaborate on the data analysis process in the following chapter, outlining the main challenges and observations.

3.3 Data analysis process

All of the data collected from the guest feedback and the staff interview has been cross-referenced in order to identify the touchpoints in which both the customer and the staff feel the improvement is needed. The author has benchmarked the most prominent recurring answers for the CJM process.

Six people have volunteered for the staff interviews. They have provided answers of different depth and knowledge, which familiarity with the company can explain, as the majority, 4 out of 6, have been working with Nolla for under six months. The author views this as a benefit, as a combination of fresh and old perspectives provides a more diverse view of the same issue.

One of the main observations that the author has made from the staff interview data is a unanimous request for more information. The mission and practices of the restaurant were familiar to them but needed to be more detailed. Despite having a staff manual with all the necessary information, the author has suggested additional training for the service team.

Most of the responders to the customer feedback focus solemnly on the service aspect of the experience, mentioning food, atmosphere, staff attention and others. However, the pre-service and post-service commentary was available from the follow-up responses after the team had reached out to check what could have been improved or when the customer service would send a “thank you” email for the feedback the guest had left.

One of the most challenging aspects of the data analysis has been the vastness of feedback and the need for more depth of some percentage of the feedback. While the feedback form was filled, some guests only answered the rating section, leaving the open-ended field empty. Likely, with the customer service reaching out to them, most would provide some level of detail on their ratings.

To conclude the data analysis, the author has identified more touchpoints that can be improved and further developed to continue developing the customer journey. With a sharp focus on the ten touchpoints that the management team has prioritised, the author was able to dive deep into the theoretical literary knowledge to provide the best improvement suggestions. With the caring staff and willingness to evolve and continue the fast-paced development, Nolla has all the essential tools to remain a top-tier restaurant, setting an example for the rest of the industry.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

This thesis involves working for a commissioner; therefore, some ethical considerations shall be acknowledged.

Working with data provided by the customer through the restaurant's communication is a sensitive information handling. While the feedback form does not imply anonymity and nondisclosure and is voluntary, it does not state the opposite and offers the guest the option to withdraw their feedback. For such reasons, and under European data protection laws, any personal information has been withdrawn from the research, as no consent for its handling can be drawn (European Concilium 2023).

In addition, the primary research for the thesis, both the feedback and the interviews with the staff, and the findings drawn from that can not be applied to other cases due to the uniqueness of Nolla and its mission.

Lastly, the author's past employment at the case restaurant must be acknowledged. While writing this thesis, the author has faced multiple challenging cases where the knowledge acquired practically at the premises must be separated from the theoretical work. While it can be seen as beneficial to know and understand the restaurant, the familiarity with the case needs to be acknowledged. The author has conducted all the feasible measures to ensure a neutral approach to the measures and the product creation. The focus of the interviews and customer feedback data have been analysed without adding the author's opinion to avoid confirmation bias in the final product (Kahneman 2011).

3.5 Product Evaluation

With the project's aim in mind, the author considers the task well accomplished. As a result of this thesis, the product created has unambiguous guidelines for the restaurant team to implement in order to improve the customer journey using the CJM techniques and, by extension, improve the memorability of the brand, leading to the increase in customer awareness regarding the mission of Nolla.

The author created an easy to act on guidelines based on the research of the thesis. As discussed with the commissioner, the guidelines and improvement suggestions require minimal to no investment during product implementation. The final product is divided into sections, allowing the commissioners to implement the suggested improvement independently of each other within the commissioner's comfortable timeframe. As most of the suggestions are based on the staff's actions, they do not require physical changes in the restaurant space or alterations to the level of service. However, the staff training required for some of the suggested improvements may be a short-term investment, as that would require some paid time.

The objectives of the thesis have been reached on paper; however, the success of the guidelines can only be observed over time. The guidelines have suggested theoretical improvements to the current practices and projects that their implementation will be feasible and beneficial for the commissioning party. The implementation and evaluation of the guidelines's success is left to the commissioner, as well as the order and timeframe of implementing those changes.

The timeline of the thesis was maintained well during its production. The author has conducted theoretical and in-depth research and reached sufficient knowledge on the thesis topics within the planned timeframe. Part of the successful timing of the thesis is due to the author's familiarity with the commissioning party and prior knowledge of the field. The initial scope of the thesis had to be slightly simplified due to the time restriction, with the initial product including staff satisfaction as one of the aspects. The author has conducted interviews and taken staff suggestions on the theoretical aspects of the thesis and, therefore, has met his desire to involve staff perspective within the thesis.

The commissioning party has not given feedback regarding the final product; however, throughout the process of writing the thesis, the manager team has been closely involved in setting the expectations and discussions regarding the preliminary findings. The commissioning party has shown interest in the product and told the author they would want help with implementation processes and potential future research. Through the process, the commissioning party has expressed excitement and curiosity over communicating their mission further with improved service and memorability.

4. Planning and implementation of the project

4.1 Project background

Restaurant Nolla first opened its doors in 2018 with a pop-up restaurant in the Kruununhaka region of Helsinki as a test of the zero-waste restaurant concept, developed by three chefs, Albert Sunyer, Carlos Henriques and Luka Balac. They have been working in the restaurant industry worldwide, and they later met each other in Restaurant Olo, where they decided that the waste produced in the industry is unacceptable and something needs to be changed. They have developed the concept of Nolla to show other restaurateurs that one can run a great place without creating waste. The pop-up has been a booming success, attracting the attention of locals and international guests and drawing attention as the first zero-waste dining establishment in Nordics.

The concept has focused on producing food without waste, crafted from exclusively local and in-season ingredients. Produce was acquired from smaller businesses, organic farms, hunters, and fishermen. The menu was crafted to utilise every part of the ingredient, such as using fish bones for the gelatine used in sauces, fish skin in the spice mixes, and the flesh to be served to the customers. The kitchen would avoid using common ingredients not local to Finland, such as citrus fruits, olive oil or vanilla. This has been made clear to the guests, who would be excited to try what is crafted from exclusively local food (Wieberg 23 September 2023).

They received great praise from the pop-up and saw that their idea was feasible, and have moved to their current location in the heart of Helsinki. The restaurant has existed there for over four years, serving customers and continuing the legacy of the zero waste pop-up that once ran in Kruununhaka. The owners have continued their hands-on approach with the restaurant manager, Max Wieberg and the staff. Over the years, the restaurant has maintained its popularity, with guests visiting daily and international media covering their success. However, over time, the focus on the concept has remained only internal, and the guests are visiting more and more for the standard of food and service without knowing about the restaurant's mission (Wieberg 23 September 2023).

The mission and its success are the initial ideas behind opening Nolla. The owners and management wanted to investigate how zero-waste practices could be seamlessly communicated to the customers. While the restaurant's social media and website state that Nolla is a zero-waste restaurant and illustrate behind-the-scenes actions of how the mission is reached, guests do not show knowledge regarding the concept when dining. The author has worked in the restaurant over

the past two and a half years, starting in July 2021, and has witnessed this change. Over time, the mission became less questioned. The guests expected out-of-season ingredients or non-local foods, such as lemon/lime wedges for their water or olive oil. Upon receiving an explanation that it would not be possible, the author and other staff who experienced similar situations would be met with surprise and sometimes displeasure.

With such issues arising, the author, who has become an assistant restaurant manager, has proposed to the establishment's management to investigate how to communicate the restaurant's mission more clearly without sacrificing service quality. The author and the management had several meetings to ideate on what could be the main focus, and during one of those meetings, the author came up with the objectives and the topic of this thesis. While writing the outline and coming up with the thesis topic and its objectives, the author has decided to process it through the lens of customer service mapping. The author reasons this with ease of processing such information, as it is divided into actionable chunks and removes direct telling about the mission to the guest, which may interfere with their experience by introducing unnecessary disruption to their evening.

In the chapters below, the reader will find the thesis timeline of how the author has further implemented the abovementioned aspects into the thesis, the outcomes of the project and the material the author has learned in the process.

4.2 Project timeline

The project has been relatively smooth despite its constricted nature. The author had the initial idea for the thesis at the beginning of 2023, but with a full-time job and other academics, have pursued the case in August of 2023.

The author has begun writing the thesis by confirming with the commissioning party their interest in the project in the last week of August and reaching out to the thesis supervisor at the beginning of September. To the author's benefit, his familiarity with the commissioner and managerial position allowed him to probe and create a fulfilling objective and idea for the product around which the thesis has been built. To initialise the process, the author has fulfilled the thesis outline and submitted it in the third week of September.

Between August and the beginning of October, the author has been researching, fulfilling, and writing the theoretical part of the thesis, as well as discussing the focus with the commissioner and the thesis supervisor. The author has built a sufficient theoretical base and knowledge and started producing the theoretical framework of the thesis, with the process lasting several weeks until a scheduled week of holiday at the end of October.

After a week of holidays, the author has taken a week off work and organised recurring days off from a full-time job to focus on the thesis. The data analysis and production of the product and all associated processes have taken three weeks.

The product, discussion, and implementation chapters were written and processed during the last week of November. The author has produced the thesis over three months, following a rigorous timetable and writing despite occasional issues. With many other ongoing projects, such as full-time jobs and other educational needs, the author has processed the thesis writing process with a disciplined approach and has allocated sufficient time to execute the objectives of the thesis effectively. All of the difficulties and successes, as well as a deeper insight into the learning process and execution of the thesis, can be found in the following chapter, covering the thesis process and learning outcome.

5. Discussion

In the chapters below, the author will go over the process of writing the thesis, the challenges the author has encountered, and the discussion of the whole process.

5.1 The thesis process

The thesis writing has proven to be more challenging than the author initially anticipated. While over the years of studying and producing academic papers, the author has gathered experience in data analysis and writing in an academic register. However, the thesis process has been more demanding, calling for more in-depth research and a more robust theoretical base. The most challenging aspect of thesis writing was distinguishing personal and practical knowledge and research and creating appropriate citations. Due to familiarity with the field, the author has initially produced minimal referencing, leading to compilation in later stages. The author has learned that backing up practical knowledge with theoretical research allows for better practice, as some of the experiences and practical knowledge used in the initial theoretical stage have been proven incorrect by further research. Despite those challenges, the author has finished the process and believes he delivered the best outcome possible.

On the practical side, the timeframe of the thesis has proven to be narrow. The author has had other academic studies and full-time work while writing the thesis. While the time frame has been maintained and followed precisely, the author experienced difficulties upkeeping some other life functions. Despite that, the author managed to accomplish all of the goals of the thesis and create the final product within the time provided.

Collaboration with the commissioning party and thesis supervisor has proven to be an essential asset to the success of the thesis writing. The commissioning party has helped identify the focus points for the product and provided the raw data for the theoretical part. The thesis supervisor made time and was available to the author throughout the whole process of the thesis. Any inquiries and technical questions have been addressed in great detail and in good time. The author has been greatly motivated to produce the thesis and follow the timeframe given by the supervisor. The success of the thesis can be partly attributed to the supervisor's mentoring.

5.2 Learning outcomes

The thesis and the final product have been inspired by the author's involvement and work at Restaurant Nolla and the internal discussions between the company's management. As a person

passionate about sustainability and customer service, the author has been passionate about investigating the process and creating a comprehensive understanding of what is a successful experience. While writing the thesis, the author's familiarity with the topics discussed expanded dramatically, and the author learned much new information. The touchpoints and customer journey mapping have been discussed during the author's educational courses. However, it was a topic that could have been more familiar. Through the thesis writing, the author learned a lot about the creation of customer service and has already started implementing newly learned knowledge in his career in the hospitality field.

One of the most significant discoveries was the extent and multidimensionality of the customer journey. The author has discovered a new passion for customer journey design and learned of the intricate ways it intersects with other fields, such as psychology or marketing, with which the author is familiar.

The academic writing style provided another significant learning. The referencing, layout, and source discussions have not been widely used in the authors' prior education. The guidelines for report production and referencing have changed with the author starting his bachelor's degree several years before writing the thesis. The author noticed this change in the later stages of writing, and adjustments had to be made to the written material to match the current guidelines. This has given the author a great inside into academic writing, highlighting the importance of small details.

Overall, the thesis process has taught the author many valuable insights that will greatly impact his future academic and career success. The production of the final product and the thesis's creation have illustrated the author's limitations and allowed the author to gain an impact on the weaknesses of the author's experience. With those outcomes, the author believes that the thesis process will have a long-lasting impact on the author's life, spanning far beyond education.

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Appendix 1: Guidelines for better communicating Nolla's values through Customer Journey Mapping,



What to expect from the guide?

Inside into the service expectations

This guidebook is created to offer staff perspective on how to elevate their customer service and further spread the zero-waste mission of the restaurant. The guidebook provides actionable insight into how the staff can change or alter their day-to-day actions to match customer expectations. The suggestions provided by this guidebook are based on customer responses, staff insights, and theoretical literary research. Staff are advised to use their best judgment and apply the suggested steps where appropriate. The suggestions are illustrated in the tables below, with a summary available on the following page.

How to implement

The implementation of suggested improvements can be done as a whole, on the cross-department level, or sectionally, at each branch independently. The author proposes implementing changes as the whole staff crew for the best results. Still, positive changes could be observed even if the suggestions are implemented in one branch of the entire team, for example, only on waitstaff or marketing levels. Please review the theoretical part and check the suggestions regularly to ensure they are relevant to the industry's current state and restaurants position, as the dynamic nature of the business may change the relevance of advice.

Background on the guide

This guide was produced as a thesis product by an ex-assistant restaurant manager, who has worked with the company over several years. The suggestions are based on academic literature, staff and customer feedback, as well as authors own experience over the years of working in Nolla.

The guide is design to be sectional, and allows the reader to selected any number of suggestions to implement. They are independent of each other, and can be implemented at any time at the readers discretion

Pre-service Customer Journey Map

	Purchase Gifting Redeeming of gift cards	Booking the table	Email and phone interactions, allergy/dietary restrictions notifications	Exciting collaborations with other people/places/producers
Service team actions	Ensure returning gift cards with the compost soil. Advise the guest on how to plant the gift card. Highlight how important it is to repurpose items.	Assist guests with table bookings by phone and in person if needed. Highlight that the serving staff can make a booking for the guest's future visit.	Check the booking information before interacting with the guest. Be aware of restrictions and have a plan for the guest's experience, given those restrictions.	Listen to the guest's comments. Proactively suggest ideas/ companies/ people with whom the restaurant can collaborate.
Staff support	Ensure staff know where to find the tools. Educate the staff on how to sell gift cards. Ensure sufficient time is allocated for staff/guest communication.	Training in communications and providing staff with sufficient knowledge of how to use the restaurant booking system and the restaurant booking policy.	Train staff on dietary restrictions, allergies, and other customer request fulfilment. Ensure the staff are provided with up-to-date dietary information on the food served.	Encourage the staff to look for exciting collaboration opportunities. Reward successful ideas and projects. Credit the staff member responsible for the event.
Customer service actions	Upon online requests, outline the possibility of purchasing or exchanging cards for plantable ones. Provide guests with information that it is possible to purchase on-site.	Be available and responsive to customer inquiries and booking requests. Regularly update the reservation list and reach out to the waiting list reservation when the opportunity arises.	Be available and responsive to customer inquiries. Regularly update the booking information. Communicate with the service staff about any requests that are out of the ordinary.	Observe the feedback from prior collaborations and customer feedback and inquiries to collaborate. Communicate the feedback from such events.
Marketing team actions	Update the website to include the information regarding gift cards. Advertise the repurposing aspect. Show what can be grown from a repurposed gift card.	Post table reservation opportunities, ensure easy access links to book from every restaurant channel, and assist the reservations through social media.	Post about the possibility of adjusting for special restrictions. Create content showing a dietary restriction menu. Advertise restaurant awareness about it.	Reach out to influential companies and people to advertise opportunities to collaborate with the restaurant. Create and share content from past collaborations.
Service innovation	Create communication between branches to ensure the exchange of cards and card sales are seamless and informative.	Offer unique solutions, such as shorter stay tables, chef tables and others. Pay attention to times of reservation	All departments should be in sync for the communication, so that everyone is aware of the restrictions and special diets	Encourage all staff to reach to their network and offer collaborations, for example with farmers or wine producers

Pre-service stage summary

Purchase | Gifting | Redeeming of gift cards

Plantable gift cards should be used regularly and returned to the customer after use. Every card is a mini garden waiting to happen. The staff must be taught how our compost is created, what it symbolises, and how to use it. Allocate ample time for staff and guests to discuss the meaning and why we use plantable cards, creating a personalised experience. For online inquiries, inform customers about the plantable cards and the option to buy or swap them in person. Showcase the unique plantable cards to catch everyone's attention. Spread the word about the plantable cards through advertising, highlighting the incredible growth potential and the symbolic meaning of waste to treasure. Connect our branches for seamless card exchanges and sales, fostering a knowledge-sharing culture.

Booking the table

Assist guests in booking tables via phone or in person, highlighting our staff's capability to make future bookings. Prioritise staff training in communication and ensure a deep understanding of the restaurant booking system and policies. Stay readily available and responsive to customer inquiries, keeping the reservation list consistently updated. Proactively reach out to waiting list reservations when opportunities arise. Enhance online visibility by promoting reservation opportunities with easy-access links on all restaurant channels, including social media. Offer unique solutions like shorter stays and chef tables, tailoring reservations to meet individual preferences. Pay attention to reservation times to provide a personalised dining experience. This ensures a seamless and customer-centric reservation process, enhancing each guest's overall dining experience.

Email and phone interactions, allergy/dietary restrictions notifications

Check booking details before interacting with guests, considering any restrictions to plan their experience. Train staff comprehensively on dietary needs, allergies, and customer requests, providing up-to-date menu information. Stay available and responsive to customer inquiries, updating booking details regularly and communicating unique requests to service staff. Share the restaurant's flexibility for special restrictions on social media, showcasing a dedicated dietary menu, and raising awareness. Ensure seamless communication across all departments, making everyone aware of restrictions and unique nutritional needs for a synchronised customer-centric approach. This ensures a guest experience that meets and exceeds expectations, even catering to special dietary requirements.

Exciting collaborations with other people/places/producers

Listen actively to guest comments about collaborations, companies, or individuals they refer to. Encourage staff to explore collaboration opportunities, rewarding successful ideas and crediting the responsible staff member. Learn from feedback on prior collaborations and customer input, ensuring continuous improvement. Share feedback from events and collaborations within the team. Reach out to influential companies and individuals to advertise collaboration opportunities, creating and sharing content from past successful collaborations. Motivate all staff to tap into their networks and propose collaborations, such as with farmers or wine producers. By fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement, the restaurant can meet and exceed guest expectations while building strong partnerships within the community.

Pre-service stage suggested actions

Purchase| Gifting | Redeeming of gift cards

- Return gift cards with the compost made with food waste of the restaurant
- Create a post, where the staff plant their gift cards in homes, streets, gardens. It will increase the sense of community, and illustrate that a guest does not need a special place to plant their gift card
- Add the message that online cards can be exchanged for plantable once to the online shop
- Offer staff the time and resources to communicate with the guest about the waste produced, the repurposing Nolla does, and how it is reflected into the giftcards

Booking the table

- Offer the guest the opportunity to book a table at the venue, if such interest is shown
- Communicate clearly the length of the stay, in a casual manner, for example with a statement "Let's make the next 2,5 hours the best restaurant experience you have had"
- Make sure the staff are aware of the restaurant policies regarding bookings, and have an up to date information on the changes and special cases, such as private booking, larger groups and others

Email and phone interactions, allergy/dietary restrictions notifications

- Familiarise the staff with the most common dietary restrictions, and how the kitchen is able to accommodate them
- Ensure that staff know where to find the information about the customer requests and allergies, and familiarise themselves with it before service
- Make sure to bring it up with the guest, in order to acknowledge the request and create a calm sense for the guest and the staff.
- Customer service should be well aware and available for the customer inquiries, communicating them to the rest of the staff at the premises

Exciting collaborations with other people/places/producers

- Foster an inviting and encouraging setting for staff to propose collaborations
- Events, related to the restaurant functions should be considered. Author advises some options, such as
 - Wine producer weeks: that would offer a specific wines from the same vineyard, putting the producers with similar values to the from. Make them available exclusively during that time, to create an incentive for guests to visit
 - Farmers table: Offer dinners with the producers of the food, in a long communal table, focusing the discussion on the ingredient and practices, educating guests on the practices and effort the farmers do.

Service Customer Journey Map

	Initial contact and first impression	Banter	Mistakes management on the spot
Service team actions	Be welcoming and accommodating. Have an inviting tone and facial expression. Allow the guest to settle in before offering anything. Pace the communication to create a nonrushed feeling.	Communicate with the guests throughout the dinner in an appropriate way. Select moments that would benefit from communication and check regarding guest satisfaction throughout the dinner, for example, when taking empty plates off the table.	Depending on the situation, apologise as needed, swiftly mend the issue, make the shift leader aware of the situation and discuss if further action is needed. Ensure the guest is satisfied after the mistake happens.
Staff support	Training in communications and customer service. Explain the establishment's expectations to staff on how to communicate with guests.	Training staff on communication and educate them about the restaurant's mission and efforts toward zero-waste. Give staff casual knowledge of the beverages and food served.	Training in times of apology (Min & al 2020), outline what methods of mending the mistake are available. Assure no personal loss to the staff for the mistake.
Customer service actions	Communicate to the guest that any issues can be solved on-site, too. Assure that the staff will take good care of the guests. Respond to emails with the waiting staff name when the inquiry is about the experience to create a personal touch.	Encourage guests to ask questions about their visit, restaurant mission and efforts on the spot. Suggest that they double-check with the waitstaff regarding any questions or concerns. Encourage to chat with staff about menu choices.	Address the issues if it was brought up in during or post-service, analyse and adequately handle customer care. Provide the guest with sufficient closure over the issue.
Marketing team actions	Post regarding staff and their out-of-service life, interacting with providers or between each other. Share examples of service through pictures and live media. Illustrate the positive attitude of the restaurant staff online to curate a positive expectation.	Share and create knowledge about the staff working at the property and their interest zones, such as "X is a wine connoisseur, he will be happy to help you with beverage selection". Share posts about the possibility of talking with staff about the mission and what is done to achieve it.	Create content and illustrate through restaurant channels that the team is doing their best but can still make mistakes. Suggest that the guest should voice their concerns but remember that errors are part of human.
Service innovation	Collaborate between departments to outline what practices work best and what should be further improved. Ideate on the first impression creation, introduce open communication between departments.	Collaboration between restaurant branches to keep each other updated on new exciting changes, menu items and practices. Update each other on changes that can be communicated. Encourage the staff to keep personal approach to customer care	Collaboration between the restaurant branches to identify the most common mistakes and ideate on how to minimise their occurrence. Streamline conflict resolution

Service stage summary

Initial contact and first impression

Create a welcoming atmosphere by being accommodating and maintaining an inviting tone. Allow guests to settle in before offering anything and pace communication for a relaxed feel. Provide comprehensive communication and customer service training, clearly outlining expectations for staff in guest interactions. Assure guests that any issues can be resolved on-site and communicate the staff's commitment to taking good care of them. Personalise communication by responding to experience-related emails with the waiting staff's name. Share posts online showcasing staff's out-of-service life and positive service examples, fostering a positive online image. Encourage collaboration between departments to identify effective practices, improve the first impression, and promote open communication. These practices contribute to a welcoming environment and an exceptional guest experience.

Banter

Ensure ongoing communication with guests during dinner, choosing suitable moments and checking satisfaction, such as when clearing plates. Train staff in effective communication, emphasizing the restaurant's mission and zero-waste efforts, and providing casual knowledge about food and beverages. Encourage guests to ask questions and engage with staff about their visit, mission, and menu choices. Share information about staff members' interests to enhance personal connections. Collaborate between restaurant branches to stay updated on changes, menu items, and practices, promoting a personal approach to customer care. This approach aims to create an engaging and satisfying dining experience for guests.

Mistakes management on the spot

In handling mistakes, promptly apologise as needed, swiftly address the issue, and make the shift leader aware for further action if necessary. Ensure the guest is satisfied post-resolution. Provide training on apology timings and resolution methods, citing Min & al.'s (2020) study. Assure staff no personal loss for mistakes. Addresses issues during or after service, analyses, and handles customer care. Offer the guest sufficient closure over the matter. Create content through restaurant channels acknowledging team efforts but recognising mistakes. Encourage guests to voice concerns, emphasising human error. Collaborate between restaurant branches to identify common mistakes, ideating on minimising occurrences and streamlining conflict resolution. Referencing Min & al. (2020), adopting a clear schematic for apology timing optimises error resolution and boosts staff confidence. The study suggests two types of apology: preemptive for brief interactions and responsive for prolonged ones, ensuring guest satisfaction (Min & al., 2020).

Service stage suggested actions

Initial contact and first impression

- Create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere from the customer's very entrance. Follow Nolla's practice of "Hosting, not serving" the guest, coined by Luka Balac.
- Make sure to accommodate guests' needs, and allow them time to settle in before starting service to create a relaxed feeling.
- Carefully listening to the customer and assessing a need for adjustment to the regular procedure; verbal ques like "It X's Birthday" and others will allow to to customise the experience to every unique customer, improving their experience by meeting their expectations

Banter

- Staff should encourage communicating with the guests and chatting when the opportunity presents itself.
- Staff should seamlessly incorporate knowledge about the restaurant's zero-waste practices into their communication to encourage passive education of the guests about the mission and efforts.
- Staff should be provided with sufficient time to be able to unrushingly converse with the guests and offer them attention within their demand,

Mistakes management on the spot

- The waiting staff need to identify a mistake when it occurs and select an appropriate time to apologise for it. Use preemptive (before the guest issued a complaint) apologies for brief or temporary interactions and responsive (after the guest has issued their complaint) apologies if you have been taking care of the customer long term. This will ensure the success of the evening, according to the theory by Min & al (2020)
- Communicate with the shift leader regarding the best ways to address the issue if it escalates beyond inconvenience

Post-service Customer Journey Map

	Follow-up feedback questionnaire	Social media and user-generated content	Surprise gestures and "wow factors"
Service team actions	Highlight to the guest availability of the feedback form, and ask them to reflect on the questionnaire regarding their evening to help the restaurant improve. Tell the server's name to add a personal touch.	Encourage guests to take photo and videos, offer to take their photos when notice that the guests are looking for an opportunity, and create messages for content creation, such as offering to pour wine slower so it can be recorded.	Ensure to check booking information for any "birthday/anniversary/etc" message to add a candle to the dessert. Listen carefully to the customers, and be proactive in creating a wow factor, for example, talking in their native language if it is in staff vocabulary.
Staff support	Ensure the positive feedback reaches the team; encourage them to take negative feedback as development points rather than critique. Offer them ways to improve on the feedback provided.	Create a setting where the staff have sufficient time to take pictures or spend longer at the table during service. Vocalise that they do not have to be in the pictures if they do not want to. Create appealing settings and lighting in the restaurant to promote content creation.	Provide staff with methods to create a wow factor or a surprise. Have gift cards, guest notes and others printed and ready to use. Communicate to other departments how to help create a surprise or wow factor during the service and post-service stage. Provide data for the departments to use in customer communication.
Customer service actions	Reach out and clarify any points that were left unanswered. Inquire about what could have been improved and communicate it to the team.	Check inquiries about photos and additional information from people, be available to send official press photos if required	Gather information about the reservation and the guest. Make sure to record and respond to any requests that align with the restaurant's mission and practices
Marketing team actions	Create content that invites customer feedback, actively respond to the feedback online and indicate that the restaurant is open for suggestions and improvements.	Repost user-generated content, interact with customers online, and like and comment on their posts. Create promotions for best photos	Create posts and content with memorable moments and surprises. Keep the guest anticipating interesting moments by sharing wow factors, such as fully grown gift card plants
Service innovation	Collaborate with the other restaurant branches to address the feedback, take away the critical aspects and ideate on how to improve, and reflect on what caused such feedback.	Collaborate to create the best settings for content creation. Room design, food plating appeal, lighting and others. Come up with ways to encourage content creation	Collaborate with the rest of the branches to create a list of things staff can do to surprise/impress the guests. Set the environment where that list gets updated, and new ideas are created regularly to keep it fresh.

Post-service stage summary

Follow-up feedback questionnaire

Emphasise the availability of the feedback form to guests, urging them to share their thoughts on the evening to aid restaurant improvement. Add a personal touch by mentioning the server's name. Ensure positive feedback reaches the team and encourage viewing negative feedback as opportunities for development. Provide actionable ways to improve based on feedback. Reach out to clarify any unanswered points, inquire about areas for improvement, and communicate findings to the team. Create content encouraging customer feedback, actively respond online, and convey the restaurant's openness to suggestions and improvements. Collaborate with other restaurant branches to collectively address feedback, identify critical aspects, ideate on improvements, and reflect on root causes.

Social media and user-generated content

Encourage guests to capture moments with photos and videos, offering assistance and suggesting content ideas like slowing down while pouring wine for recording. Facilitate a setting where staff have ample time for photography, ensuring they don't have to be in the pictures if they prefer not to. Enhance restaurant settings and lighting for appealing content creation. Be responsive to inquiries about photos and provide official press photos when needed. Repost user-generated content and actively engage with customers online through likes and comments. Introduce promotions for the best photos, fostering appreciation for guest creativity. Collaborate on creating optimal settings for content creation, considering room design, food presentation, lighting, and other elements. Brainstorm ways to encourage further and support content generation.

Surprise gestures and "wow factors"

Check booking information for "birthday/anniversary" messages to add a candle to desserts. Listen actively and proactively to create wow factors, like speaking the guest's native language if known. Equip staff with methods for surprises, ensuring ready-to-use items like gift cards and guest notes. Communicate surprise creation to other departments, providing data for customer communication. Gather and respond to guest requests aligning with the restaurant's mission. Share memorable moments and surprises through posts and content, keeping guests anticipating exciting experiences. Collaborate with branches to create a list of staff actions for surprising/impressing guests. Establish an environment for regular updates to keep the list fresh with new ideas.

Post-service stage suggested actions

Follow-up feedback questionnaire

- Highlight to the guest the opportunity to provide feedback in the questionnaire after the evening in a non-obvious way.
- Introduce the waiting staff by their first name to introduce a personal touch and to see which areas of service can be improved for each independent staff member by reviewing personalised feedback.
- Share the feedback with the staff and highlight the positive aspects to keep up the staff morale
- Evaluate the direction of service over time using feedback, and adjust accordingly

Social media and user-generated content

- Create moments and settings for the guests to take pictures and videos.
- Encourage the staff to offer to take pictures of the guests, and suggest when to take the pictures when the guest shows interest in taking pictures.
- The marketing team should repost and interact with the guest's content about the restaurant.
- Possibly introduce awards or competitions for the best content
- Introduce guest content to the restaurant channels regularly to add a human touch to the restaurant communications.

Surprise gestures and "wow factors"

- Use unconventional opportunities to surprise guests during and after their visit.
- The team should collaborate with each other to create memorable moments, such as the proposed "Waste count" idea.
 - The "waste count" idea suggests sending the guests detailed information what is the amount waste produces by their visit
- Offer exciting opportunities for returning guests, such as in advance booking for special events, or exclusive invitations/promotions for regular guests of the restaurant

Appendix 2: Customer Journey Maps, Pre-Service, Service and Post-Service

		Touchpoint			
M a n a g e r a c t i o n s		Purchase Gifting Redeeming of gift cards	Booking the table	Email and phone interactions, allergy/dietary restrictions notifications	Exciting collaborations with other people/places/ producers
	Service team actions:	Ensure returning gift cards with the compost soil. Advise the guest on how to plant the gift card. Highlight how important it is to repurpose items.	Assist guests with table bookings by phone and in person if needed. Highlight that the serving staff can make a booking for the guest's future visit.	Check the booking information before interacting with the guest. Be aware of restrictions and have a plan for the guest's experience, given those restrictions.	Listen to the guest's comments. Proactively suggest ideas/ companies/ people with whom the restaurant can collaborate.
	Staff support:	Ensure staff know where to find the tools. Educate the staff on how to sell gift cards. Ensure sufficient time is allocated for staff/guest communication.	Training in communications and providing staff with sufficient knowledge of how to use the restaurant booking system and the restaurant booking policy.	Train staff on dietary restrictions, allergies, and other customer request fulfilment. Ensure the staff are provided with up-to-date dietary information on the food served.	Encourage the staff to look for exciting collaboration opportunities. Reward successful ideas and projects. Credit the staff member responsible for the event.
	Customer service actions:	Upon online requests, outline the possibility of purchasing or exchanging cards for plantable ones. Provide guests with information that it is possible to purchase on-site.	Be available and responsive to customer inquiries and booking requests. Regularly update the reservation list and reach out to the waiting list reservation when the opportunity arises.	Be available and responsive to customer inquiries. Regularly update the booking information. Communicate with the service staff about any requests that are out of the ordinary.	Observe the feedback from prior collaborations and customer feedback and inquiries to collaborate. Communicate the feedback from such events.
	Marketing team actions:	Update the website to include the information regarding gift cards. Advertise the repurposing aspect. Show what can be grown from a repurposed gift card.	Post table reservation opportunities, ensure easy access links to book from every restaurant channel, and assist the reservations through social media.	Post about the possibility of adjusting for special restrictions. Create content showing a dietary restriction menu. Advertise restaurant awareness about it.	Reach out to influential companies and people to advertise opportunities to collaborate with the restaurant. Create and share content from past collaborations.
	Service innovation:	Create communication between branches to ensure the exchange of cards and card sales are seamless and informative.	Offer unique solutions, such as shorter stay tables, chef tables and others. Pay attention to times of reservation	All departments should be in sync for the communication, so that everyone is aware of the restrictions and special diets	Encourage all staff to reach to their network and offer collaborations, for example with farmers or wine producers

Table 1. Improved Customer Journey Map for Pre-Service (Template adopted from Rosenbaum & al (2016). (Kolosov, 2023)

		Touchpoint		
		Initial contact and first impression	Banter	Mistakes management on the spot
M a n a g e r a c t i o n	Service team actions:	Be welcoming and accommodating. Have an inviting tone and facial expression. Allow the guest to settle in before offering anything. Pace the communication to create a nonerushed feeling.	Communicate with the guests throughout the dinner in an appropriate way. Select moments that would benefit from communication and check regarding guest satisfaction throughout the dinner, for example, when taking empty plates off the table.	Depending on the situation, apologise as needed, swiftly mend the issue, make the shift leader aware of the situation and discuss if further action is needed. Ensure the guest is satisfied after the mistake happens.
	Staff support:	Training in communications and customer service. Explain the establishment's expectations to staff on how to communicate with guests.	Training staff on communication and educate them about the restaurant's mission and efforts toward zero-waste. Give staff casual knowledge of the beverages and food served.	Training in times of apology (Min & al 2020), outline what methods of mending the mistake are available. Assure no personal loss to the staff for the mistake.
	Customer service actions:	Communicate to the guest that any issues can be solved on-site, too. Assure that the staff will take good care of the guests. Respond to emails with the waiting staff name when the inquiry is about the experience to create a personal touch.	Encourage guests to ask questions about their visit, restaurant mission and efforts on the spot. Suggest that they double-check with the waitstaff regarding any questions or concerns. Encourage to chat with staff about menu choices.	Address the issues if it was brought up in during or post-service, analyse and adequately handle customer care. Provide the guest with sufficient closure over the issue.
	Marketing team actions:	Post regarding staff and their out-of-service life, interacting with providers or between each other. Share examples of service through pictures and live media. Illustrate the positive attitude of the restaurant staff online to curate a positive expectation.	Share and create knowledge about the staff working at the property and their interest zones, such as " X is a wine connoisseur; he will be happy to help you with beverage selection". Share posts about the possibility of talking with staff about the mission and what is done to achieve it.	Create content and illustrate through restaurant channels that the team is doing their best but can still make mistakes. Suggest that the guest should voice their concerns but remember that errors are part of human.
	Service innovation:	Collaborate between departments to outline what practices work best and what should be further improved. Ideate on the first impression creation, introduce open communication between departments.	Collaboration between restaurant branches to keep each other updated on new exciting changes, menu items and practices. Update each other on changes that can be communicated. Encourage the staff to keep personal approach to customer care	Collaboration between the restaurant branches to identify the most common mistakes and ideate on how to minimise their occurrence. Streamline conflict resolution

Table 2. Improved Customer Journey Map for Service (Template adopted from Rosenbaum & al (2016). (Kolosov, 2023)

		Touchpoint		
M a n a g e r A c t i o n s		Follow-up feedback questionnaire	Social media and user-generated content	Surprise gestures and “wow factors”
	Service team actions:	Highlight to the guest availability of the feedback form, and ask them to reflect on the questionnaire regarding their evening to help the restaurant improve. Tell the server's name to add a personal touch.	Encourage guests to take photos and videos, offer to take their photos when notice that the guests are looking for an opportunity, and create messages for content creation, such as offering to pour wine slower so it can be recorded.	Ensure to check booking information for any “birthday/anniversary/etc” message to add a candle to the dessert. Listen carefully to the customers, and be proactive in creating a wow factor, for example, talking in their native language if it is in staff vocabulary.
	Staff support:	Ensure the positive feedback reaches the team; encourage them to take negative feedback as development points rather than critique. Offer them ways to improve on the feedback provided.	Create a setting where the staff have sufficient time to take pictures or spend longer at the table during service. Vocalise that they do not have to be in the pictures if they do not want to. Create appealing settings and lighting in the restaurant to promote content creation.	Provide staff with methods to create a wow factor or a surprise. Have gift cards, guest notes and others printed and ready to use. Communicate to other departments how to help create a surprise or wow factor during the service and post-service stage. Provide data for the departments to use in customer communication.
	Customer service actions:	Reach out and clarify any points that were left unanswered. Inquire about what could have been improved and communicate it to the team.	Check inquiries about photos and additional information from people; be available to send official press photos if required.	Gather information about the reservation and the guest. Make sure to record and respond to any requests that align with the restaurant's mission and practices
	Marketing team actions:	Create content that invites customer feedback, actively respond to the feedback online and indicate that the restaurant is open for suggestions and improvements.	Repost user-generated content, interact with customers online, and like and comment on their posts. Create promotions for the best photos.	Create posts and content with memorable moments and surprises. Keep the guest anticipating interesting moments by sharing wow factors, such as fully grown gift card plants
	Service innovation:	Collaborate with the other restaurant branches to address the feedback, take away the critical aspects and, ideate on how to improve, and reflect on what caused such feedback.	Collaborate to create the best settings for content creation. Room design, food plating appeal, lighting and others. Come up with ways to encourage content creation.	Collaborate with the rest of the branches to create a list of things staff can do to surprise/impress the guests. Set the environment where that list gets updated, and new ideas are created regularly to keep it fresh.

Table 3. Improved Customer Journey Map for Post-Service (Template adopted from Rosenbaum & al (2016). (Kolosov, 2023)

Appendix 3: An illustration of the questionnaire sent to the guest after their visit.

(Adopted from DinnerBooking platform, Restaurant Nolla 2023)

SURVEY: HOW WAS YOUR VISIT AT RESTAURANT NOLLA?

Please tell us what you think about your recent visit at Restaurant Nolla on Thu, 23 Nov 2023, 17:00 for 1 people. Booking Id : 46490006

1 How was:

	Outstanding	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not relevant
Food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ambiance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Value for money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2 Would recommend Yes No

3 Please enter any comment you may have about your restaurant visit. Your comment will be sent to the restaurant.

Don't show the comment at the restaurant's page at DinnerBooking.com

Appendix 4: Sample customer feedback used as raw data for the customer feedback analysis

(Adopted from DinnerBooking platform, Restaurant Nolla 2023)

Ratings

Food: ★★★★★ (5.0)
Service: ★★★★★ (5.0)
Ambiance: ★★★★★ (3.0)
Overall experience: ★★★★★ (5.0)
Would recommend: **Yes**
Value for money: ★★★★★ (6.0)
Total Average: ★★★★★ (4.8)
Rating:

Review

Reviewed: 22 November 2023
14:36

The place was fully booked, to be sure. For our evening arrival, we had to stand around til' about 15 past the hour to get seated (As there was no room to wait and there was a big rush, we were constantly in someone's way.) The table service was really quite lovely, but almost 3,5 hours for four courses plus appetizers meant over half of our time was spent waiting. Also had a mix-up in getting our food well before the wines at one point, which got fixed at the same time as I got up to go looking for them (after some 3-5 minute wait).

Two of the four courses as well as the appetizers were wonderful (oh, the sour bread pasta dish!), while the pike-perch was thoroughly tasteless and the main meat course got a mixed response. Wine selections were a great fit overall and there was enough to eat your fill. For this price range, we thought it was a great deal. Would prefer to avoid weekend prime time for the next visit.