

UNFORGETTABLE MEALS

Construction of a Methodology to Analyze the Eating Out Experiences

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Eating is a cultural practice full of symbols, values and meanings. Food, therefore, may become a cultural experience and an important tourist attraction capable of stimulating local development. In such context, food services should be thought through the prism of contemporary consumption trends, as symbolic consumption (Baudrillard, 1991, Douglas & Isherwood, 1988, among others), experience economy (Pine II and Gilmore, 1998) and dream society (Jensen, 1999). This article presents a methodology for evaluating the quality of experience offered by restaurants through the analysis of the elements that compose the experience of eating out. For this purpose I have performed literature review, designed a data collection instrument, such instrument has been applied by three specialized professors in three pre-selected restaurants and an interview with managers / owners of such three restaurants was performed. The results point to the multiplicity of elements vital to building the experience of eating out and helped to improve the data collection instrument and the ways for its application. The final result is an analysis tool that allows both deeper studies on the subject matter and strategic decision making by entrepreneurs willing to create and manage memorable experiences for their guests.

KEY WORDS: *analysis methodology, quality of experience, restaurants.*