

Nowadays Booking in Czech Restaurant

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Abstract: Reservation of tables in a restaurant or other gastronomic properties is elementary condition for ensuring that breakfast, lunch or dinner can begin without any complications or inconveniences. In the past and still nowadays, the only way to book a table in a restaurant was by the phone call or personal visit. Over time, the possibility of booking via e-mail has logically increased. In the context of modern approaches and in order to meet the simplicity, automaticity and comfort of the client, implementation and using of various reservation system is main goal today.

Key words: on-line, booking, e-mail, no show, POS

JEL codes: M15, M31, M37

1. Introduction

Gastronomic facilities primarily serve visitors to satisfy their physiological needs. In addition, to achieve a feeling of satiety. Needs do not evolve historically, but the ways to meet them do. Therefore, over time, these facilities have become places where we not only satisfy the feeling of hunger, but also fulfill a social and societal function. We are already choosing which cuisine we will prefer, whether we will prefer a restaurant with a view or in an interesting part of the city, and with whom we will share a culinary experience. Of course, it is not always guaranteed that it will be a pleasant lunch or dinner. Sometimes the chef may not be able to prepare food according to his ideas or the client's ideas the staff may not have "their day" or other factors, such as noise in the restaurant or unpleasant atmosphere. However, these are all circumstances that we cannot fully influence. However, what is in the client's power is to arrange so that at least the initial phase of the visit can be completely without mistakes. This tool is a timely and proper reservation of space in the restaurant. In general, reservations should always be made and definitely in advance. Even if the given gastronomic operation usually has free tables. However, on the very day we intend to visit it, they may have a private or group booking. The reservation serves not only to guarantee us a vacancy, but also to select our preferred table (if the restaurant offers it). Alternatively, at the same time communicate to the staff the special wishes that may be desirable for visiting the restaurant. It can be a wish for a hand, wedding anniversary, birthday, etc. In this case, we can order staff to provide a bouquet, special dessert, welcome drink on the roof terrace or other services that special and pleasantly complete the overall positive impression of the visit. From the above, it is clear that reservation is really an essential condition to ensure a smooth visit to restaurants, bars, or other catering establishments. The necessity of the reservation is therefore given. All that remains is to decide how we will create the required reservation.

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2. Material and Methods

As mentioned in the introduction, in order to obtain a guarantee that at least the beginning of the visit to the gastronomic establishment will take place without unnecessary complications; the best way is to make a timely and proper reservation of the required seats. As the possibilities and ways of eating have evolved over the course of history, so have the ways of booking have undergone their development. Today, we can make reservations through several channels. These are traditional personal bookings, by phone, email, and direct bookings through your own website. Finally yet importantly, these are bookings made using online booking systems or applications. Each of these options offers certain advantages and disadvantages.

2.1 Personal Reservation

This is the traditional and oldest possible way to make a reservation. Until other means of communication, such as the telephone or later the fax, were born, this was the only possible tool. Of course, this is not the perfect tool. This method of booking has many advantages, but it also has certain disadvantages.

Advantages: During a personal visit, we have the opportunity to handle anything related to the reservation of a table at the given establishment. We will establish personal contact with a competent person. We will inform them of all and special requirements (flowers for a partner, attention to the anniversary, order a birthday cake, etc.). We can tell the staff that exact restaurant location we would prefer. We can review the entire booking process on the spot and check that they have entered all the details and contacts correctly. Finally yet importantly, for a firm booking confirmation, if the company requires it, we can immediately make a guarantee deposit.

Disadvantages: The disadvantage is definitely time consuming. This method requires a personal presence. There may be complications with transport, parking, etc. There may also be a situation where we visit a restaurant when it is busy and may not be able to attend to us immediately and fully.

2.2 Telephone Reservation

The invention of the telephone was not only a milestone in the development of humankind, but its mass introduction into companies, represented a huge shift in internal communication as well as communication with clients, partners and other entities. Logically, it also had a positive impact on the booking process. Suddenly, it was no longer necessary to spend time transporting and visiting your favorite business just to reserve seats. Communication with gastronomic facilities has become more economical, efficient and faster. With the advent of mobile phones, efficiency has increased even more.

Advantages: The most important advantage is undoubtedly timesaving's. I can make a reservation from work, from the comfort of home, or during a bus ride to work. The advantage today is sending an SMS message to specify the reservation.

Disadvantages: In the past, the disadvantage was relatively expensive phone charges. At present, they are already marginal, but they do exist. We also may not understand us. As a result, they may not enter the date or time of the reservation or our name correctly, which may lead to certain inconveniences later. The possibility is that they will also not have time to answer the call or due to the occupancy of the restaurant to pay full attention to us. This disadvantage has been largely eliminated by the advent of mobile phones, which allow you to record a missed call. When the staff member responsible for the reservation has time, he can get back to the client and take care of everything in peace.

2.3 Booking by Email

In connection with the advent of digitization and the subsequent provision of access to the Internet, the possibilities of communication have also expanded. Electronic mail or email has become a very strong means of communication. In the context of the possibility to book a place in a gastronomic establishment, email is currently one of the most widely used methods for making reservations in advance.

Advantages: The advantages are similar to those of a telephone. We can make a reservation from home, on the way to work, or later at work, thanks to the possibility to write emails from our phone. Unlike the telephone, we are sure that it will understand what we require, and we will usually receive in response a summary of our requirements for a retrospective check.

Disadvantages: The main disadvantage is the availability of email. Not every restaurant uses it, and if it does, it is definitely not customary for staff to sit at a computer or other media to read e-mails at all times, waiting for them to receive a reservation. Therefore, the response time compared to the phone is lower. There is a partial possibility that the e-mail with the reservation will be lost in the flood of other work e-mails, business offers or I will send it to the spam mailbox.

2.4 Direct Booking via the Web

The e-mail is followed by the possibility of direct bookings through the company's website. This option was created by taking advantage of the advantages and partially eliminating the disadvantages of email. Few people remember their company's e-mail and usually search for it directly on the company's website. Moreover, in the contacts section. Therefore, the idea emerged that the booking form would be placed right here. (The link is often already on the home page or is placed on all by default) With one click we get to the environment where we fill in the required information, we can find out the cancellation conditions and possibly fill in special requirements. In higher category restaurants, credit card verification is also performed as a guarantee of a firm confirmation of the reservation. We will receive a booking confirmation immediately or after verification by a competent person.

Advantages: There are identical benefits that email offers. In addition to e-mail, it requires only the necessary information. Moreover, they do not have to sign into their inboxes unnecessarily. At the same time, they do not have to describe everything, but only the mandatory fields are filled in. This increases the client's comfort, when he does not have to describe in his own words what he requires, etc.

Disadvantages: Creating and managing a booking environment involves considerable financial resources. If the payment card verification tool is implemented in the form or the payment gateway is already directly, this again brings additional costs. As with e-mail, we have to wait for someone from the establishment to confirm whether they accept the reservation or not and offer a different date.

2.5 Online Booking Systems and Applications

Online booking systems are very similar to the booking forms that are part of corporate websites. However, they do not create reservations automatically, but there is a need to confirm the reservation by a competent staff. It was the absence of automaticity in the case of booking through forms on the company's website that made it necessary to come up with a tool that eliminates the human factor to a minimum. The aim was for the client not only to be able to make a reservation anytime and anywhere, but also to be able to check whether or not there is still free capacity for the required date and time. That worked.

Advantages: The advantages of these applications and online booking systems are obvious. As described above, I can check via the application or within the web interface, whether there is still free capacity for the

required number of people, time and date. It is very similar to PMS systems with a booking engine and channel manager within accommodation services. *Disadvantages:* Disadvantages, although apparent, are higher entry fees for installing a reservation system or application and other possible fees associated with individual bookings. Apparent in the context that I save not only the client's time but also the staff, who can also engage in other activities that lead to increased sales or other types of monetization of work activities. Last but not least, it can be a loss of personal contact and personalized service.

Currently, email is still a very important tool in the field of seat reservations. For short-term bookings, the telephone remains a priority tool. The peculiarity is that the way to make a reservation via SMS messages has never really developed. However, over time, the possibility of booking directly through the company's website or various online systems and applications will play a key role.

3. Results

The above facts represent a fact that in the future almost no establishment that will want to actively communicate with the client, use targeted marketing and effectively keep records of reservations and related traffic planning. Using one of the electronic booking options will be an essential part of a business success. You will have the option of choosing your own booking form, which is implemented within your own website or using one of the available booking systems or applications.

3.1 Direct Bookings Through Your Own Website

The main advantage of direct bookings is obtaining only the necessary information in connection with the booking. Comprehensibility and storability of this information. The big advantage is full customization compared to existing reservation systems, which are discussed below. And cost minimization. A booking form will be completed on your own website for a fee. No additional costs are usually generated. The reservation form for the Terasa U Zlaté studně restaurant, which has been used for more than 7 years, was chosen for a practical example of functionality. The ideal location is through a widget or link on the home page and at the same time allocation to the contacts where people go most often. The booking form (see Figure 1) should include the following information: name, surname, number of persons, date and time of booking, telephone contact, e-mail and space for expressing special requests (flower, window by the window, quiet table, etc.). Terasa U Zlaté studně requires a credit card as a guarantee to confirm the reservation. It includes cancellation conditions, the reading of which must be verified. Although it may seem like a nuisance or "harassment" of the client, they significantly eliminate "no show" with a very effective tool. That is, unrealized reservations. This tool must be securely encrypted to prevent card misuse. At the same time, the system verifies whether it is an existing and valid card. Finally, it is a good idea to verify that it is not a robot to prevent spam and abuse. Additional conditions should be included. Whether we accept children, dogs, dress code, and other restrictions or recommendations. Subsequently, the form is sent to the administrative interface. Here, the staff must manually confirm, reject or modify the reservation according to the current availability of the restaurant. Answers should be automated so that they can perform the above actions with a single click. The system also offers detailed information for booking. All reservations should be clearly arranged in the administrative interface (see Figure 2). Chronologically, according to the date for which the reservation is required.

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Rezervace

Osobní údaje

Jméno a příjmení * E-mail *

Telefon

Údaje rezervace

Rezervace na datum * Počet lidí

Od * Do *

Čas * Doba trvání *

Speciální příloha

Figure 1 Reservation Form Terasa U Zlaté studně

Správa rezervací

Dnešní rezervace

Hodina	Jméno	Počet	Stav	Poznámka	OK
18:00	Vladimír Žilka	2	Přijátá		✓

Celkové rezervace

Rezervace	Jméno	Počet	Stav	Poznámka	Vytvořeno
09.03.2022 18:00	Vladimír Žilka	2	Přijátá		01.03.2022 17:58
10.03.2022 14:00	Michal Rost	2	Přijátá	Dárkový poukaz pro 2 osoby - Soubor kuchářů, číslo SKT0355	14.02.2022 21:17
11.03.2022 20:00	Irena	2	Přijátá		26.02.2022 17:05
12.03.2022 12:00	Michal Gasparin	2	Přijátá	SKK0345	09.02.2022 20:43
12.03.2022 12:00	Petr Gryga	2	Přijátá	Soubor kuchářů SKK0342 Proším rezervovat stůlek u	13.02.2022 17:35

Figure 2 Administration System for Seat Reservations

The need for confirmation through the operator or a competent person may appear to be a disadvantage. However, it depends on the type of restaurant. For smaller businesses and higher levels, it is desirable that reservations be completely under the control of responsible staff. In the future, I would be inclined to enrich these

booking methods with a prepayment or pre-authorization request. This option will guarantee even more that the client will arrive at the restaurant or that he will cancel it in time for various reasons, so that other guests can fill the capacity. Café Louvre in Prague already uses this supplement, for example. The reservation fee of CZK 200 per person is then used as part of the payment for consumption.

3.2 Reservation Systems and Applications

The advantages or disadvantages of these systems have already been discussed here. If you are not interested in creating your own booking forms, you can choose from a range of booking systems and applications that work today to reserve a table. The first versions of these systems were too unified and relatively inflexible. However, it currently offers identical options to direct bookings. They are often placed in the form of a widget on the company's own website. When clicking on the reservation, the client is redirected to the reservation system. Here, they make a reservation for the specified day, time, and for the required number of people. The advantage is that the systems can show whether or not there is free capacity and allow you to set fully automatic capacity confirmation (without operator intervention) or partial. For example, 60% of capacity is automatically filled and confirmed to clients. The remaining capacity already requires confirmation by the operator. Clients are immediately informed of everything. However, the systems do not offer a card guarantee or prepayment as standard. However, this add-on can be implemented at an additional cost. In general, it is now possible to design almost anything according to your preferences. The systems are flexible, but they come at an additional cost. The advantage is also automatic notification for clients according to the defined time about the upcoming reservation. For those who often forget, it is possible to move or cancel the reservation. A big advantage over direct bookings on the Web is the possibility of multi-page reporting and control. Thus, the owner or manager has the ability to check the status of reservations through the application remotely or directly create reservations. As a result, there is no need to contact your subordinates, check availability and then confirm or reject booking requests. It often happens that their acquaintances, friends, regular and VIP guests, who are used to care directly from the owner or managers, contact these people. In addition to reservations, the systems now offer the option to purchase gift vouchers or food delivery, if the company offers it. Last but not least, the possibility of restaurant evaluation is a part of these systems. It is a way to get valuable feedback on the quality of services provided. The first of these systems, and still the most widespread today, is the American Open Table.

3.2.1 Open Table

The first worldwide reservation system was the Open Table. It has been available since 1998. Their services are used by restaurants of all sizes. Today it is more than 60 thousand. Companies around the world. It is constantly growing globally and, within technology, it comes up with products that anticipate the constantly evolving needs of restaurants and diners. Today, the system is compatible via mobile applications with iOS and Android. It arranges reservations for more than 1 trillion diners every year. Since 2008, it has allowed clients to write reviews for individual companies. It has had more than 100 million reviews since then. Every month there are currently a million verified reviews.

3.2.2 Dish

Founded in 2015, it is now used in the online world by more than 200,000 hospitality businesses in 16 countries, from bars to bistros, mobile snacks to fine dining restaurants. Dish is part of Hospitality Digital (HD), a wholly owned subsidiary of Metro AG. Its international team of experts is aware of the pressure and constant demands that restaurant owners and their employees are exposed to — not only to meet the demands of their

guests, but also to save money and improve their overall performance. Through the Dish system, hospitality businesses have the following digital solutions available to stay competitive:

- Fast and efficient ordering of meals online without commission
- Possibility to accept reservations online, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Automatic calculation of menu profitability
- Move to the top of the Google search rankings
- Increasing visibility on the Internet on more than 20 social networks

3.2.3 Choice QR

A relatively widespread system is Choice QR. It offers a range of features from digital menus to table orders, take-away, food delivery, hotel room orders, and feedback collection. It offers a solution that helps the HoReCa segment with the digitization of individual companies. He comprehensively assists with marketing, service, and communication with the customer. The aim of this system is to provide companies with an adequate tool to increase sales. Today, Choice QR is used by more than 6,000 restaurants in 25 countries around the world. Client turnover is greater than USD 10 million. Statistically, this system reduces costs by up to 17% and provides more than 20 million menu views per year.

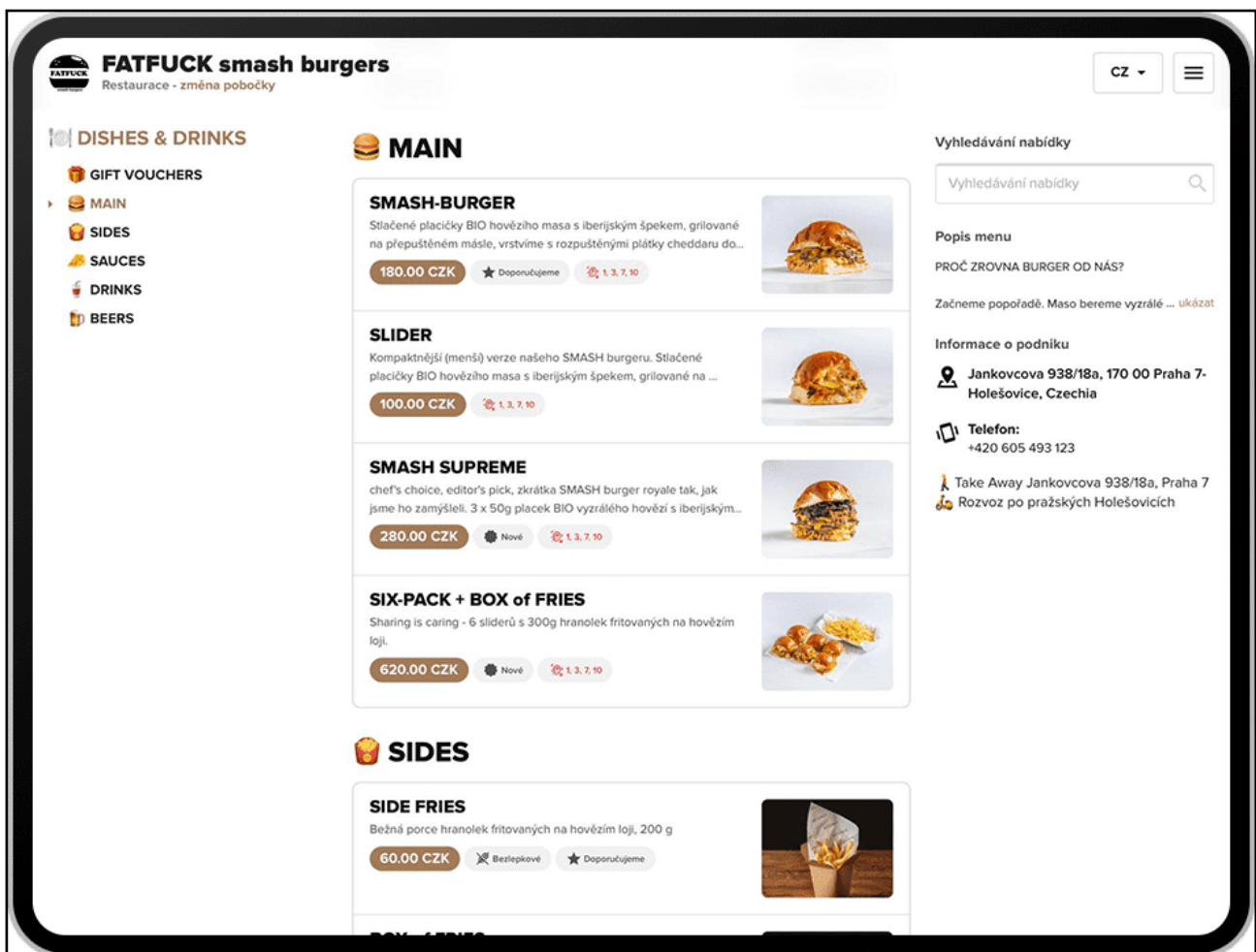


Figure 3 Choice QR Reservation System

3.2.4 BookioPro

It is the youngest reservation system created in Slovakia in 2016. Today, it is used by more than 130 restaurants. Its progress has been hampered by the Covid19 pandemic, which has had a negative impact on the entire tourism industry. However, BookioPro offers the possibility of online reservations created via the web or Facebook within unlimited access. The system can be used in off-line or online mode. There is a table clear booking book with a map and a waiting list. In addition, it also offers other services:

- SMS confirmation (each SMS is charged)
- Guest list
- Customer reviews
- Statistical reports

There are other systems on the market today than those mentioned. And new ones are emerging within various start-up companies. However, the most used ones with the best references and ratings were intentionally listed here.

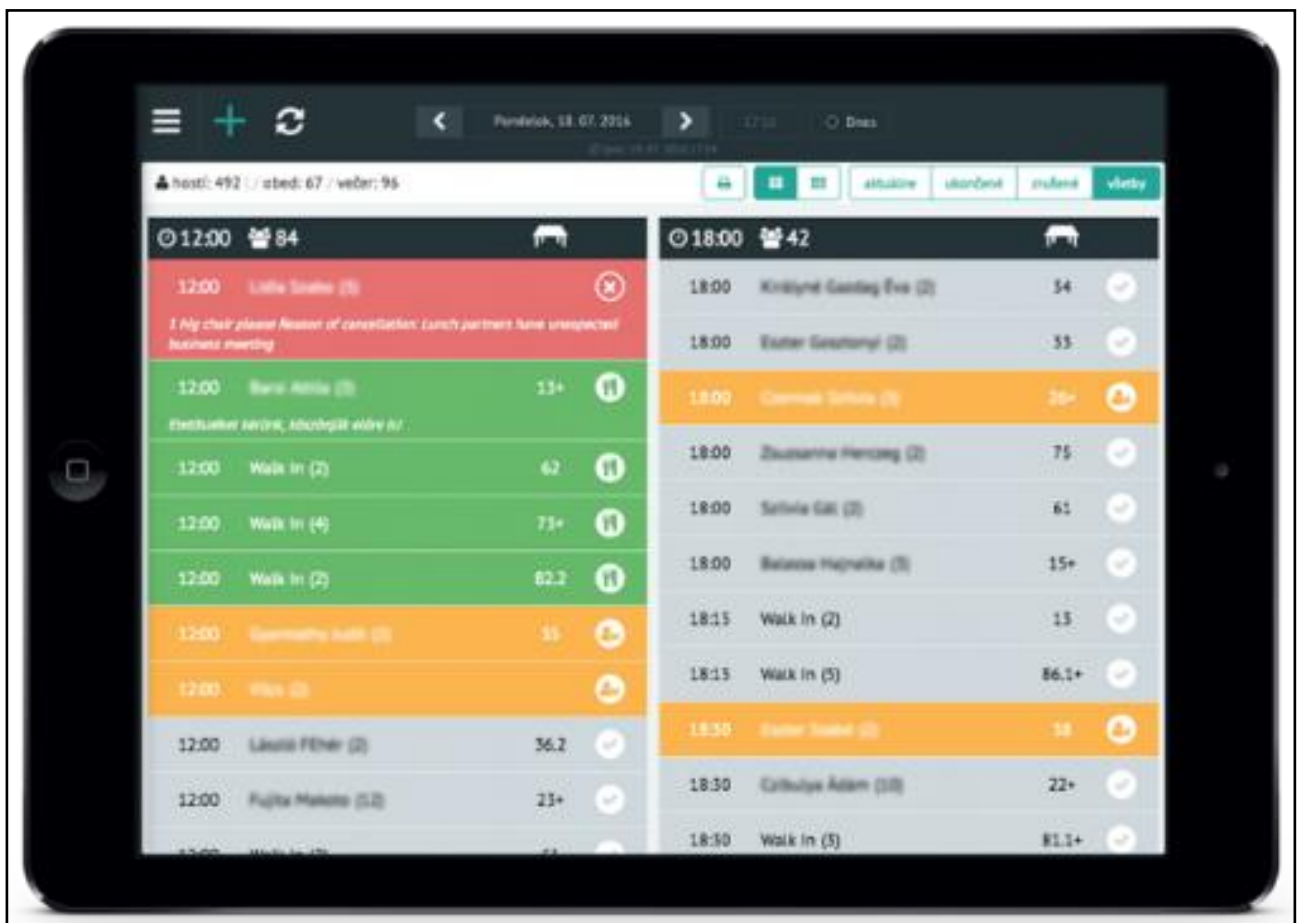


Figure 4 BookioPro Reservation System

4. Discussion

Technological progress and development cannot be stopped. And eventually we are forced to submit or adapt. However, the implementation of new systems usually carries with it negatives or externalities. A simpler and

faster recruitment process can be expected in brand new businesses. It is easier for new staff to accept that these systems are part of the work process. For companies with permanent staff, the opposite will be the case. A stable team is a big positive for both the employer and the client. However, when it comes to applying new trends, it is exactly the opposite. It is necessary to count on rejection, finding mistakes, and perhaps some sabotage on the part of the staff. Older colleagues in particular are less accustomed to new technologies. Why change something that works reliably for many years? This will be a frequent answer to the question regarding the change in the possibility of booking seats in their company. It is also possible to argue the cost side. It is certain that the introduction will bring with it rising costs in the initial phase and possibly additional costs for each reservation. I also need to emphasize security when I store clients' credit card information. It also generates additional costs. However, statistics from most systems confirm that each crown invested brings with it increasing sales and multiples of profits. An increase in labor productivity and, in some cases a reduction in labor costs for the reservation department, is also significant. There is also an undeniable increase in client comfort. Some parties will see greater benefits in online bookings and others in online systems. Therefore, we will certainly not avoid the question of not using the good of both options and developing your own reservation system. It is not that simple. The development of your own application is possible; however, it is a very time-consuming and especially financially demanding process. Therefore, at present, it pays to use existing systems by license and for a small fee from each reservation. The advantage is compared to the situation a few years ago that systems based on historical criticism already today offer a wide range of customizations of their system to meet the needs of the gastronomic facility.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that booking a table through your own websites or introducing new reservation systems into practice brings with it minor complications. However, the benefits are undeniable. To compete in the gastronomic market in the future, it will be necessary to accept this reality. Despite the minor disadvantages that come with the implementation and subsequent use of online reservations through open systems or the corporate website, it offers significant benefits and convenience for the client. It was said in the introduction that booking a table is a necessary condition that the expected gastronomic experience does not begin with inconvenience or other complications. Therefore, bookings through these systems should ensure that we, as clients, are remembered with a probability bordering on certainty. Therefore, the last question for the owner or operator of the gastronomic operation is not whether but what system will better suit their needs.

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