

- Attracting more customers
- Customer retention and loyalty
- Reducing costs
- Increasing profits

Thus, it can be concluded that the use of Big Data can help a market to work with information in the most efficient way, analyze consumers' behavior, anticipate their needs, and to be the first to meet them.

## POOLING MARKETING EFFORTS: GASTROFEST

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Due to the persisting difficulties in our country's economy, the overall café and restaurant traffic have dropped by approx. 30 per cent as compared to the situation several years ago. Food service providers are therefore looking for efficient ways of attracting customers to increase the traffic and, hopefully, their earnings. Some of them decided to pool their marketing and advertising efforts in a joint project, Gastrofest.

Gastrofest is a series of gastronomic festivals for lovers of delicious food and drinks. All festivals have a different theme, but one mechanism: 20 operators in a particular food service segment offer their best set at an agreed fixed price during a certain period of time, and guests both enjoy a gourmet quest and determine the winner by voting for the best set on the Gastrofest website.

The first Gastrofest festival was held in October-November 2016 in Minsk and participated by top restaurants. As it turned out to be successful, the second one, Gastrofest.Coffee, was launched in February-March 2017 for Minsk-based cafés and coffeehouses.

Using the case of Gastrofest.Coffee, we made an attempt to figure out if, and to which extent, this marketing and advertising move was beneficial for the parties involved.

The main sponsors of the Gastrofest series, including Gastrofest.Coffee, are Alfa Bank and Lavazza.

Alfa Bank's benefit appears to be evident: as the bank offered bonuses for using its bank cards to pay for the festival coffee sets, the card usage increased. Sponsoring this project is also a good way of advertising Alfa Bank in general.

Lavazza's benefit is quite evident as well: for this worldwide leading coffee manufacturer and supplier, Gastofest.Coffee is a marketing/advertising activity in its primary domain, aimed to promote the brand, increase coffee consumption and, ultimately, increase Lavazza coffee sales.

The fixed price for all festival coffee sets offered by the Gastofest.Coffee participants was BYN5. Compared to normal, non-festival prices (BYN12 to 15 per set), the festival offers were up to 3 times more attractive, taking into account no compromise in set size or quality.

In spite of some unpleasant drawbacks such as a full house or, in some cases, dirty dishware, the consumers' benefit seems indisputable.

According to the managers and staff we interviewed, they were quite dissatisfied with the significantly low fixed price due to the substantial loss of profit it caused. Some Gastofest.Coffee participants incurred extra costs as they had to hire additional personnel to cope with the customer flow during the busy festival days.

At the same time, that was compensated in terms of quantity: most of the festival-participating cafés and coffeehouses reported a considerable traffic spike, and the number of guests in some of them even doubled.

Moreover, most of the participants' owners assume that the traffic will not roll back to the pre-festival level; they predict their daily guest flow will increase by approx. 30 people.

Based on the above, the conclusion can be made that Gastofest.Coffee is a successful project that is beneficial for all its stakeholders. It proves to be an efficient pool marketing and advertising instrument to boost consumer activity in the café and restaurant segment of the food service sector.

According to consumers and food service providers, they both look forward to new Gastofest festivals in the near future.