

## **Amico 1890 – Building Community Through Food and Creativity**



Source: Unsplash (2021)

### **Background**

Located in the vibrant district of Mongkok in Hong Kong, Amico 1890 is a small Italian diner founded by two passionate local young men in 2015. Beyond offering affordable and authentic Italian cuisine, the founders envisioned creating a welcoming space for friends to gather, hence the name “Amico,” the Italian word for "friend" (Amico 1890 Instagram, 2015).

Since both the owners and the core customer base are young adults, Amico 1890 adopts a playful and relatable communication style across its menu and social media platforms. For example, the restaurant offers humorously named drinks such as 未諗到 (I haven't decided), 一陣先 (Not Now!), and 求其特飲 (Whatever Special) (OpenRice, 2022). These witty labels not only spark curiosity and encourage guests to explore the menu, but also contribute to a relaxed, fun atmosphere ideal for socializing with friends.

To broaden its customer base and appeal to a wider audience, Amico 1890 also provides complimentary desserts and personalized plate drawings for guests celebrating birthdays or special occasions with a reservation (Amico 1890 Facebook, 2023). approach has proven effective in attracting families and couples looking for a place to celebrate special occasions.

In an unconventional move, the restaurant discourages e-payments and instead incentivizes cash transactions by offering a 2% discount on the total bill for customers who pay with cash (OpenRice, 2022). This practice appears aimed at reducing transaction fees associated with electronic payment systems, thereby maximizing profit margins.

## **Challenges**

While the restaurant enjoys popularity among local customers, it has yet to build significant traction among tourists and non-Chinese-speaking visitors. One likely reason is that most of its digital marketing efforts are conducted exclusively in Chinese, and many menu items lack English translations—creating a language barrier that may deter foreign patrons.

Additionally, most of the restaurant's promotions are only available to guests who make advance reservations. This model may alienate walk-in customers who are unaware of these offers, potentially limiting customer acquisition and reducing spontaneous visits.

Furthermore, in today's increasingly cashless society, the restaurant's cash-only discount policy may be seen as inconvenient or even unfair, especially by customers who do not typically carry cash. This could inadvertently create negative customer experiences or discourage repeat visits.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. What differentiates small, independent restaurants like Amico 1890 from larger restaurant chains in Hong Kong?
2. What are the potential effects of offering reservation-based promotions on customer satisfaction, retention, and business growth?
3. What strategies could the restaurant implement to make its promotions more inclusive and accessible to walk-in customers?
4. How else can Amico 1890 innovate its business model or menu offerings to further differentiate itself from its competitors and appeal to a broader audience?

## **References**

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### **Keywords**

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Food and Beverage

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Selling point

Payment method

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