

Uma Nota – Bringing Nipo Brasileiro Cuisine to the Global Stage



Source: Pexels (2020)

Background

Located in the heart of Central, Uma Nota is Hong Kong's first Brazilian-Japanese restaurant opened by two siblings named Alexis and Laura Offe. On a trip to Sao Paulo, the two siblings were inspired by the influence brought by Japanese immigrants on local street food of Brazil, having decided to bring such flavours back to Hong Kong, the two siblings opened Uma Nota in 2017 (Uma Nota, 2020).

Combining Japanese culinary techniques and fresh Brazilian ingredients, Uma Nota specializes in Nipo Brasileiro cuisine—a fusion that is still relatively rare worldwide (Uma Nota, n.d.). One of its signature dishes, for example, features a Brazilian-style pork mince patty deep-fried in traditional Japanese style (Uma Nota, 2020).

Beyond its food, Uma Nota is equally known for its distinctive atmosphere. Modelled after a *boteço*—a Portuguese term for a casual, friendly gathering spot for drinks—the restaurant embraces the warmth and energy of São Paulo. The founders aim to recreate the lively, colourful vibe of Brazilian street life, filling the space with laughter, camaraderie, and bold flavours (Marshall, 2018; Uma Nota, 2020).

Visioned to grow their business beyond the Hong Kong market, Alexis and Laura established the Meraki Hospitality Group in 2018 (Meraki Hospitality Group, n.d.). Under this umbrella, the group has since opened another Uma Nota in Paris and launched BEDU, a new Middle Eastern concept bar, in Hong Kong (Uma Nota, n.d.).

Challenges

While Uma Nota's culinary concept is distinctive, its success hinges on overcoming several operational challenges. The niche nature of Nipo Brasileiro cuisine means that chefs trained in

this fusion style are scarce, making it difficult to recruit qualified kitchen staff. Additionally, sourcing fresh Brazilian ingredients in Hong Kong and France poses logistical and cost-related challenges.

Expanding the brand to Paris presents further complexities. The business environment, regulatory landscape, and customer preferences differ significantly from those in Hong Kong. To succeed, the group must invest heavily in adapting its business model, menu, and service style to fit local expectations while maintaining Uma Nota's core identity.

Discussion Questions

1. How can Uma Nota guarantee ensure consistent ingredient sourcing and secure a steady supply of skilled kitchen staff to sustain its operations?
2. What preventive strategies can be adopted to mitigate risks of supply chain disruptions?
3. What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of expanding into a market like Paris? How should the group adapt its offerings to align with local market expectations?
4. What strategies can help Uma Nota reduce the impact of cultural differences when entering markets with unfamiliar consumer behaviours and preferences?
5. How can innovation support the successful adaptation and scaling of the Uma Nota brand in new markets?

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Keywords

- Food and Beverage
- Culinary innovation
- Restaurant internationalization
- Cultural adaptation
- Hospitality entrepreneurship
- Expansion

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