

CASE-STUDY 3: PRODUCT DIFFERENTIATION

The world of the “brasseries”



Brasseries often seem similar in concept, but successful businesses distinguish themselves in the details.

We review the most important ways in which brasseries can differentiate themselves from one another.

1. Kitchen and culinary profile

Although many brasseries serve classic cuisine, you can distinguish yourself by:

- Signature dishes (e.g. the stew or the shrimp croquette)
- Focus on local products or seasonal cuisine
- A clear style: French classic, Belgian, Mediterranean, modern comfort food
- Homemade preparations (sauces, broths, desserts)

👉 Not more choice, but clearer choices

2. Atmosphere and interior

Atmosphere is often more decisive than the menu:

- classic vs. modern
- warm & homely vs. sleek & urban
- open kitchen or tranquillity
- music, lighting, table arrangement

👉 Guests remember how it felt, not just what they ate

3. Service and guest experience

This is where many brasseries really make the difference:

- personal service (recognising regular guests)
- pace: fast for lunch, slower for dinner
- thinking along with guests (diet, wine recommendations)
- consistently friendly attitude

👉 Good service is difficult to replicate

4. Drinks

Drinks are a strong distinguishing factor:

- extensive beer menu (speciality beers, local)
 - strong wine selection with a clear style
 - own house wine, house beer or mocktails
 - focus on coffee, digestifs or aperitifs
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5. Target audience

A brasserie can focus on:

- strong lunch business
- after-work drinks and snacks
- dinner spot for couples
- family-friendly brasserie
- late-night cuisine

👉 Who you serve is important!

6. Location and context

Even with the same menu, there may be differences between brasseries in terms of:

terrace experience, view or location, connection to the neighbourhood or tourism, opening hours tailored to the surroundings

7. Values and story

Increasingly important:

- sustainability
- local collaborations
- craftsmanship vs. speed
- tradition vs. innovation

👉 People are more likely to choose a story they can relate to.

8. Consistency

Perhaps the most significant distinguishing factor:

consistent quality, consistent hospitality, consistent atmosphere

👉 Reliability prevails over originality in the long term.

Question: Find an example of another sector that has all the characteristics of (strong) monopolistic competition and list all the factors that indicate product differentiation between suppliers.

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| Sector |
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| Factors of product differentiation |
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