

teaching note

Bringing Home Three Stars: The Creation of Michelin Star Takeout

By Samantha Jones and Lisa Cain

Synopsis

Covid-19 has caused wide-spread damage to the hospitality industry. Everyone from hotels to restaurants have had to find new methods of revenue and unfamiliar ways to engage and connect with guests. Using organizational resilience to overcome these challenges, restaurants like Alinea, a three Michelin Star restaurant in Chicago, have consistently come up with back up plans so that they can be prepared for all opportunities that arise. Michelin Star restaurants are at a particular disadvantage because most, if not all, of their revenue comes from in person dining. They engage their guests by offering an experience along with a meal, which makes the translation and reformation of their food difficult to a takeout and delivery audience.

To combat that, Alinea has developed a multi-prong action plan that has options for various time periods, weather conditions, and price points. It was this mindset of organizational resilience that allowed Nick Kokonas to guide Alinea into a successful takeout restaurant which has allowed the business to stay afloat. With this in mind, it can only be extrapolated that the restaurant and owners will only continue to learn from their customers behavior and create new experiences to engage their guests through their takeout options and online presence.

Target Group

Undergraduate and graduate students in the hospitality field would benefit best from this type of case study as it can be used as a steppingstone for identifying and analyzing different marketing and revenue tactics during times of crisis. Specifically, this case study would benefit hospitality marketing, revenue management, restaurant operations, and/or hospitality and tourism management or operations courses as it provides real world examples of a restaurant managing differential pricing and attempting innovative marketing methods. By engaging undergraduate or graduate students in this conversation there is more room for interpretation and discussion, as well as real value in assessing the success of the theoretical underlying of organizational resilience theory.

Learning Objectives

- **LO1:** Analyze the changes restaurants have made to their take-out and delivery options post Covid-19 regulations to determine if these new menus align with the restaurants brand.
- **LO2:** Compare alternative dining options from different Michelin star restaurants and come up with a marketing analysis that predicts whether these changes will provide short-term or long-term profit.
- **LO3:** Characterize the elements that make-up a Michelin star-rated experience and evaluate how the loss of service may change a guest's attitude towards the price of a meal.
- **LO4:** Evaluate the success of Alinea's differential pricing strategies short and long term and predict how that might change their design of future dining experiences.
- **LO5:** Compare and Contrast these new dining options with the original Michelin star experiences and decide whether they align with the Michelin star rating system.
- **LO6:** Make recommendations for how experiential dining restaurants can provide similar experiences to at-home guests.

Teaching Strategy

Discussion: This case study has multiple elements that could be dissected to start off a group discussion. Depending on the focus of the course, options for discussion focus could be on the following: marketing strategies during times of crisis, engaging new and past guests via social media campaigns, analyzing differential pricing strategies for takeout, and understanding how organizational resilience could help predict the future success of a restaurant.

Example Discussion Question 1: Using this case study as a starting point, find another hospitality company that is using social media to gain new customers and to encourage new revenue options for their business. Please describe the campaign this hospitality business used and hypothesize their success (LO1, LO2).

Instructors note: It is suggested to look to larger companies like Marriott (which leverages Facebook) or Hyatt or Hilton (which both utilize virtual concierge services). Smaller companies like Café Lola (see: <https://www.ilovecafelola.com/>) or Pizza Anonymous (see: <https://www.instagram.com/ilovepizzaaanonymous/?hl=en>) can be used to examine the use of Instagram. For a brief overview, see: <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/social-media-hospitality-industry-37599.html>

Example Discussion Question 2: Develop a SWOT Analysis for Alinea based on one of their strategies demonstrated in this case study (LO4, LO5, LO6).

Instructors note: The SWOT allows the students to examine the internal environment by looking at the company's strengths and weaknesses and the external environment by examining the opportunities and threats that exist. Remember that strengths and weaknesses can be controlled by the company and can be used to address or take advantage of the opportunities and mitigate the threats posed by things that are outside of the organization's control. When organizing the findings after the issue is discussed, it is good to look at what *strength* allows the company to capitalize on an *opportunity*, or which *opportunity* can leverage a *strength*. What *weakness* could prohibit capitalizing on an *opportunity*, or which *opportunity* helps mitigate the impact of a *weakness*? What *strength* can help the organization mitigate or overcome a *threat*, or which *threat* might diminish a *strength*? And finally, it is important to think about a *weakness* that might promote or intensify the impact of a *threat*, and which *threat* might amplify a *weakness* in the organization. By answering these questions, suggested strategies for pivoting in a pandemic, other time of crisis, or even a time of growth will be brought more easily to the forefront.

Example Discussion Question 3: Analyze the case study and develop of theory as to why and how the use of organizational resilience gave Alinea a competitive advantage in the Chicago Michelin Star takeout scene (LO1, LO3).

Instructors note: Because organizational resilience theory provides insight into how the organization, the units and the individuals that all comprise the organization, can continue to attain desirable outcomes in the face of adversity or other barriers to positive growth and development (Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2007), it ostensibly explains how all the constituents in an organization are able to pivot. The more resilient an organization is to disruption due to proper training, creative idea generation, and an ability to adapt, the more resilient they are to the threats of something like a pandemic. The case provides instances of successes in term of finding ways to promote to-go options and leveraging technology, as well as philanthropic efforts that engendered good will in the community.

Example Discussion Question 4: Examining the Alinea Intro (see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EK6Ps-ujHc>), offer suggestions for how experiential dining restaurants can provide similar experiences to guests using takeout options (LO6).

Instructors note: This discussion question is meant to spark creative thinking and novel ideas among the students. Some ideas might be to leverage the use of AI and VR to recreate the dining room ambiance while dining at home. This would require the diner to have the technology at home, or to purchase it with their meal. This could serve as an opportunity for a partnership with a technology company or application. Tutorial videos on the company's website or YouTube may be a way to explain the best practices for enjoying the to-go meal. The restaurant could also work with a silverware or flatware company to design unique 'to-go' boxes that would allow for molecularly altered foods to be transported in 'to-go' packaging that would uphold the integrity of the food.

Discussion Rubric					
Criteria	Ratings				Pts
This criterion is linked to a Learning Outcome Response to Prompts	7 pts Provocative Response goes beyond simply answering the prompt; attempts to stimulate further thought & discussion	5.5 pts Substantial Response provides most of the content required by the prompt, but does not require further analysis of the subject	4 pts Superficial Response provides obvious information without further analysis of the concept; lacks depth of knowledge or reasoning	0 pts None No response provided to the prompt within the associated timeframe	7 pts
This criterion is linked to a Learning Outcome Response to Peers	3 pts Provocative/Complete Students have responded to at least two other peers with sentences beyond an affirmative or negative response (e.g., a simple I agree is not a sufficient response, but why you agree or disagree must be presented)	2 pts Substantial/Partially Complete Students have responded to one other student with more than an affirmative or negative response	1 pts Superficial Students have only offered affirmative or negative responses with no explanation.	0 pts None No response provided to the prompt within the associated timeframe	3 pts

Learning Activities

- **Discussion Board Questions:** Students can apply their knowledge from the key questions to the above discussion questions using the rubric provided (LO1, LO2, LO5, LO6)
- **Full SWOT Analysis:** Building from DQ2, students could use the case study to develop a SWOT analysis of Alinea's business choices since the pandemic (LO4, LO5, LO6)
- **Create a Flow Chart:** Using the timeline presented in this case study and continuing it through to early 2021, depict how Alinea used the organizational resilience theory to keep changing their service and product line up and stay afloat (LO3).

Final Project: For a marketing course, this case study could act as the starting point for wider research paper topics in the field of innovative social media campaigns and marketing tactics used during the Covid-19 pandemic. Students could write a research paper for analysis, but they could also create their own marketing strategy for a hospitality business based off the strategies learned in this study. It could also encourage students to use a similar framework and perspective but design a case study based on another hospitality venture. Students could also use this resource to create a group presentation that reflects the organizational resilience values highlighted in this study. By using a group, students could identify how this theory has benefited different segments of the industry and/or dissect successes and failures as identified by the team.

For a revenue management course, this case study could be an excellence reference for anyone researching the benefits of differential pricing strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic. As Alinea was trying to keep and maintain their high-end guests, they were also trying to expand their base customers in a way that encouraged both groups to consistently order and engage in their brand. This complex system of revenue that Alinea created would make an interesting research paper from the perspective of revenue management and competitive advantage.

For a restaurant, hospitality or tourism management or operations course, this case study serves as the exemplar for a company that demonstrates organizational resilience through adaptability, utilization of technology and willingness to find unique ways to provide experiences during a time of crisis. As organizational resilience theory supports the development of successful strategies restaurants use to survive and thrive during difficult times and into the future, identifying those tactics that prove successful for Michelin rated (or highly-rated, e.g., 4-Diamond Hotels) properties would be beneficial for future managers and operators to research.

Research Paper Rubric					
Criteria	Ratings				Pts
Abstract/Key Words	10 pts Exemplary Abstract provides an overview of the paper including the findings and implications. 3-5 key words presented.	7.5 pts Proficient Abstract provides an overview of the paper but lacks results and/or implications. 1-3 keywords presented.	5 pts Partial Abstract offers only 1-2 sentences of an overview. 1 key word is presented.	2.5 pts Unsatisfactory Abstract does not offer an overview. 0 key words presented	10 pts
Introduction to the paper/ Thesis Statement	10 pts Exemplary The introductory paragraph, which is properly shaped, generates interest, reflects deep understanding of topic, establishes the scope of the paper and conveys broad research findings Thesis, which is unique, complex and academically significant, is clearly stated	7.5 pts Proficient The introductory paragraph, which approaches proper design, establishes the scope of the paper and conveys broad research findings Thesis, which is clearly stated, reflects some complexity and significance	5 pts Partial The introductory paragraph, which may be incorrectly shaped, identifies some research findings but does not clearly establish the scope of the paper Thesis is understandable but lacks depth and/or significance	2.5 pts Unsatisfactory Introductory paragraph does not establish the scope of the paper and does not convey research findings; the paragraph is noticeably limited and/or poorly designed Thesis is difficult to understand and lacks significance	10 pts

Literature Review/Supporting Paragraphs	10 pts Exemplary Paragraphs are properly shaped, including clear topic sentences and supporting information; based on focus question notes, paragraphs consistently reinforce thesis and show thoughtful sequencing and smooth transitioning between ideas	7.5 pts Proficient Paragraphs have identifiable topic sentences and approach proper overall design; paragraphs are based on focus question notes and consistently reinforce the thesis; some sequencing and intentional transitioning is apparent	5 pts Partial Paragraphs are based on focus question notes, but do not reinforce the thesis consistently; paragraphs tend to be poorly shaped, which tends to affect readability; lacks transitioning between ideas	2.5 pts Unsatisfactory Paragraphs are not based on focus question notes and consequently do not consistently reinforce the thesis; topic sentences are unclear and/or paragraphs have problems of shape and readability suffers	10 pts
Methods/ Anticipated Results	10 pts Exemplary The methods section explains the appropriate statistical method to be used for analysis of the data. The methods may be qualitative, quantitative or both. Which method(s) you use will be determined based on how you plan to collect data. All information on the population, sample, study design, and measures are discussed in the methods section. 2-3 paragraphs on what you anticipate finding from your study should be offered for results	7.5 pts Proficient The methods section explains the appropriate statistical method to be used for analysis of the data but may be incomplete. Only some information on data collection, population, sample, study design, and measures are discussed in the methods section. 1 paragraph on what you anticipate finding from your study should be offered for results.	5 pts Partial The methods section does not accurately explain the appropriate statistical method to be used for analysis of the data and is incomplete. Little to no information on data collection, population, sample, study design, and measures are discussed in the methods section. less than 1 paragraph on what you anticipate finding from your study should be offered for results.	2.5 pts Unsatisfactory The methods section does not accurately explain the appropriate statistical method to be used for analysis of the data, is incomplete, or missing entirely. No information on data collection, population, sample, study design, and measures are discussed in the methods section. No anticipated findings are offered for results.	10 pts

Spelling, Grammar, Paper Formatting	10 pts Exemplary The paper is essentially error free; meaning is clear. Headings and subheadings are used properly.	7.5 pts Proficient There are a few errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, or paper formatting; errors occasionally obscure meaning, but meaning remains mostly clear. Some, but not all headings are used.	5 pts Partial There are several errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, or paper formatting; errors tend to obscure meaning. Minimal headings used.	2.5 pts Unsatisfactory Numerous errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting impact readability of the paper. No headings used.	10 pts
Writing Style and Academic Tone	10 pts Exemplary The writing incorporates varying sentence structure, transitional phrasing and rich word usage and is written in the 3rd person; does not use contractions, slang or abbreviations	7.5 pts Proficient The paper uses appropriate vocabulary and is written in the 3rd person; does not use contractions, slang or abbreviations; writing is clear and paper is readable	5 pts Partial While the paper is written in the 3rd person, a few contractions, slang expressions and/or abbreviations are present; writing may be unclear	2.5 pts Unsatisfactory The writing contains contractions, slang expressions and/or abbreviations and is not always written in the 3rd person; writing tends to be unclear	10 pts
Conclusion	10 pts Exemplary Provides closure by reiterating thesis, summarizing most important findings, and making inferences while providing significance of the research in a broad context	7.5 pts Proficient Provides closure by reiterating thesis and summarizing most important findings; makes limited inferences while attempting to broaden research findings	5 pts Partial Provides closure by restating the thesis and providing a summary of findings, which may be limited	2.5 pts Unsatisfactory Conclusion does not provide closure because thesis is not revisited and/or research findings are not summarized	10 pts

Integration of Information/ Use of Quotations and Research Findings	10 pts Exemplary Integrates information from a variety of sources in order to address each focus question in supporting paragraphs and the paper reflects a balanced use of all resources Smoothly embeds carefully selected quotations to advance the understanding of the quote and its relationship to the thesis; skillfully integrates research findings to enhance the paper's overall message	7.5 pts Proficient Most focus questions are answered by integrating information from several sources and the paper reflects a balanced use of all resources Includes relevant quotations and research findings to answer focus questions and to support thesis	5 pts Partial Some focus questions are answered by integrating information from several sources, but some rely on only one source and the overall balance of resources is not well-rounded Includes some evidence to support thesis, but the use of additional quotes or research findings could have been used to support the thesis and advance overall understanding	2.5 pts Unsatisfactory Most focus questions are only supported with information from one source The use of quotes and research findings is noticeably limited and results in an unsupported thesis	10 pts
In source citations/References	10 pts Exemplary All end references and internal citations are properly formatted, correspond correctly to information sources, and the works cited page is fully accurate according to APA formatting guidelines. Includes more than 10 major references (e.g., journal articles, books, internet sites).	7.5 pts Proficient All end references and internal citations correspond correctly to information sources and nearly all are properly formatted; the works cited page is accurately presented in APA format with minimal exception. Includes 7 major references (e.g., journal articles, books, internet sites).	5 pts Partial While end references and internal citations correspond to information sources, in several cases information is inaccurate, incorrectly formatted, or incomplete; works cited page contains some formatting errors. Includes 3 major references (e.g., journal articles, books, internet sites).	2.5 pts Unsatisfactory End reference and citation errors are too significant to be further scored; plagiarism is a clear possibility and/or formatting errors significantly limit usefulness of citations as source identifiers. Absent or the only references are internet sites.	10 pts
Theoretical Underpinning	10 pts Exemplary Theory supports the argument, is appropriate for the topic and is properly linked to the research paper.	7.5 pts Proficient Theory somewhat supports the argument, may or may not be appropriate for the topic and is linked to the research paper.	5 pts Partial Theory is presented but is unrelated to the research paper topic.	2.5 pts Unsatisfactory Theory is not used in the study.	10 pts
Total Points: 100					

Additional Readings or Sources

- 26% of Michelin starred restaurants open in week 3, 2021 (01/18- 01/24). (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://guide.michelin.com/us/en/california/article/news-and-views/michelin-starred-restaurant-index>
- Alinea Intro (2013, April 3). Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EK6Ps-ujHc>
- Café Lola. (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.ilovecafelola.com/>
- Edmonds, L. (2020, December 21). Michelin-Starred restaurant where Gov. Newsom dined during covid-19 surge got over \$2.4 million in PPP loans. Retrieved from <https://www.insider.com/michelin-star-restaurant-over-2-million-ppp-funding-newsom-report-2020-12>
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- These Michelin star restaurants are now delivering in London. (2021, February 04). Retrieved from <https://www.elitetraveler.com/finest-dining/michelin-star-deliveries-london>
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