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INNOVATIVE APPROACHES AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN HOTEL AND RESTAURANT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT IN UKRAINE UNDER CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

Introduction. The hotel and restaurant industry (also known as hospitality industry, HoReCa sector (Hotels, Restaurants, Cafés) is one of the most dynamic sectors of the economy, which is undergoing dynamic changes under the influence of globalization, digitalization, and contemporary challenges such as economic uncertainty, geopolitical crises, and rising customer expectations. At the same time, it is also one of the most labour consuming industries involving a great variety of different specialist who cannot be replaced by automation due to the nature of the tasks performed (gourmet cuisine, VIP service, hotel rooms cleaning etc.). However, in the contemporary world, effective management of hotel and restaurant enterprises requires the integration of cutting-edge technologies, new tools, and personalized service strategies to enhance operational efficiency and customer experience.

For Ukraine, the relevance of these advancements has significantly increased due to the ongoing war, which has reshaped the hospitality industry in multiple ways. Under such conditions, the implementation of innovative approaches and digital technologies in hospitality management is no longer optional – it is a critical factor for survival, adaptation, and sustainable development. Thus, the purpose of the given chapter is to analyse the contemporary state of the hotel and restaurant industry in Ukraine and to highlight the novel solutions that have been stimulated by the preceding coronavirus restrictions and continuing hostilities.

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Paper main body. Innovation in the hospitality industry is broadly understood as the introduction and application of new ideas, processes, services, or technologies intended to improve business performance, customer satisfaction, and competitiveness¹. According to Ivanov and Webster (2019)², innovation may manifest in service automation, enhanced customer interaction, or novel organizational models aimed at increasing operational efficiency. The definition provided by Shin, H., and Perdue, R. R. (2022)³ suggests that continuous innovation is essential for service-oriented businesses to maintain relevance and meet evolving customer expectations as well as achieving a long-lasting success and performance. In the hospitality context, innovations often target the personalization of services, seamless guest experiences, and the integration of smart technologies within the service process.

It should be noted that in the pre-war and pre-pandemic periods, Ukraine's hotel and restaurant business experienced stable growth, demonstrating competitive advantages and strong profitability. A significant number of establishments became popular, earned a reputation as reliable and socially responsible enterprises. But pandemic years proved that dining out is not only about food, drinks and eating, but also about some other needs that people are seeking to satisfy: social interaction and rapport when people can socialise and express their feelings freely in a friendly and relaxing atmosphere; psychological – when one's self-esteem, self-confidence or need for self-assurance is satiated by visiting a luxurious restaurant or a bar; it can also be of economic or convenience nature that means the need for good food items value for the price paid or desire to have somebody else to cook for you and do all the work involved.

Despite numerous challenges, the period of quarantine restrictions brought substantial innovations to the restaurant and hotel business, ensuring not only safety

¹ Buhalis, D., O'Connor, P., & Leung, R. (2023). Smart hospitality: From smart cities and smart tourism towards agile business ecosystems in networked destinations. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 35(1). <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2022-0497>

² Ivanov, S., & Webster, C. (2019). Robots, artificial intelligence and service automation in travel, tourism and hospitality. Emerald Publishing. ISBN: 9781787566880, 297 p. DOI:10.1108/9781787566873

³ Shin, H., & Perdue, R. R. (2022). Hospitality and tourism service innovation: A bibliometric review and future research agenda. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 102, 103176. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2022.103176>

and security for both customers and employees but bringing in a number of innovations and improvements that created an exceptional leap into the digital future. Transformations largely depended on a variety of factors including some general ones such as peculiarities of the governmental approaches to quarantine problem solutions and level of freedoms and rights given to people, and some specific ones such as the type of establishment, the clientele to be served, the expected turnover of guests, the type of menus presented, the site of the establishment and the venues available, cost of the meals served and changes, transformations and rearrangements introduced by each separate business enterprise.

These innovations spread across nearly all establishments and included the possibility of ordering takeaway or home delivery via third-party services, the establishment of drive-through systems, improvements in packaging to maintain sanitary standards and preserve food quality, as well as the widespread adoption of contactless and mobile payment methods, mandatory digital menus accessible via QR codes, online ordering and payment options, and the development of specialized apps. The inevitable expansion of social media and messaging platforms enabled restaurants to maintain their reputation at a high level by swiftly and flexibly responding to emerging threats, which became a decisive factor in the survival of many businesses. According to a survey, 40% of restaurant industry entrepreneurs, across all segments from fine dining to casual cafes and eateries, confirmed the integration of technological solutions into their businesses during the pandemic years⁴.

It is noteworthy that the priority audience for delivery services are millennials and generation Z. Compared to older generations, these cohorts allocate a significantly larger portion of their budget to ordering ready-made meals. As a result, issues such as food quality and safety are critically important to them, alongside other key expectations including instant delivery, gamification, personalization, and real-time

⁴ Forbes Ukraine. URL: <https://forbes.ua/>

order tracking. Moreover, these generations are more inclined to leave feedbacks – positive or negative – thus shaping the online reputation of restaurants and hotels.

During the pandemic period, the safety issues were primarily related to compliance with established rules and regulations, cleanliness, hygiene, and food safety. However, in the context of military operations, this list has expanded to include such concerns as personal safety and survival.

Since the start of the full-scale war, the Ukrainian restaurant market shrank from 36 500 to 32,000 establishments⁵. According to the data, the average revenue of restaurant business in Ukraine increased by 40% in 2023 compared to 2022. At the same time, due to the devaluation of the national currency and the subsequent rise in prices, the average receipt grew by 38%. Overall, although missile attacks on civilian infrastructure and power outages in 2022 did not lead to the mass closure of restaurants, they did negatively affect revenues. Depending on the location, income declines reached up to 15% ⁶.

The resilience of the Ukrainian restaurant business is also evidenced by a 70% increase in the number of registered sole proprietors (FOPs) and limited liability companies (LLCs) in the restaurant sector in 2023 compared to the previous year – rising from 8,059 to 13,721 entities⁶.

This reflects a clear upward trend in the development and formalization of the industry despite ongoing external challenges. According to Statista,⁷ in general there were approximately 67,300 accommodation and food service firms in Ukraine in 2023, reflecting an increase from the previous year. While specific figures for 2024 have not been published, the upward trend suggests that the number of businesses in this sector likely continued to grow despite all challenges and threats of ongoing war. The tendencies of accommodation and food service businesses growth in Ukraine 2010-2023 is presented in Fig.1:

⁵ Ukrainian Restaurant Association (URA). URL: <https://www.ura.org.ua/>

⁶ Forbes Ukraine. URL: <https://forbes.ua/>

⁷ Statista. URL: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/995480/ukraine-accommodation-food-service-businesses/>

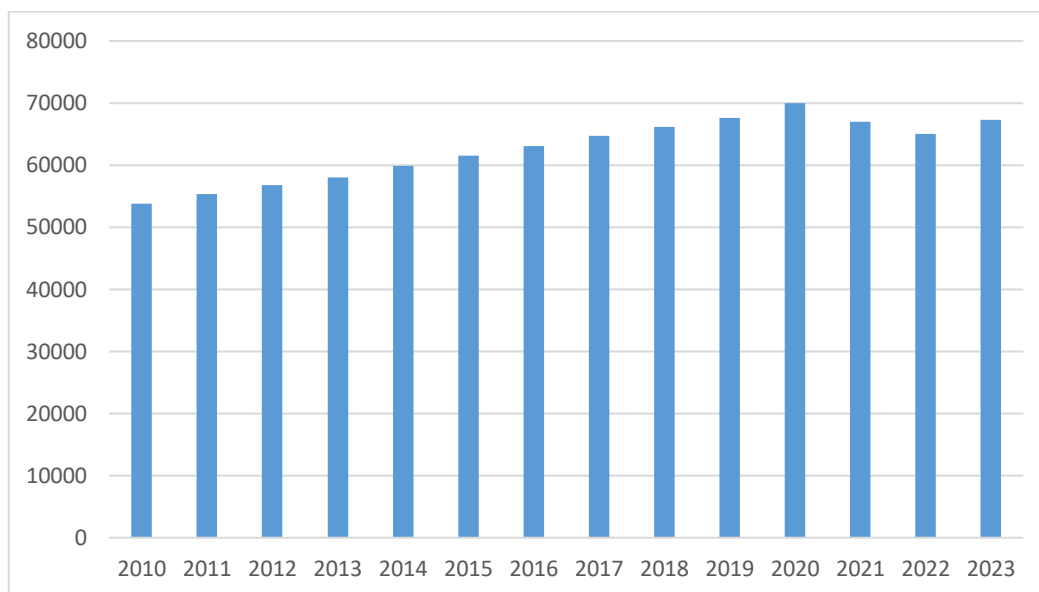


Fig. 1. Number of accommodation and food service businesses in Ukraine 2010-2023

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Ukrainian hotel and restaurant businesses is its exceptional adaptability. 2023 – 2024 winter periods became a true test for the entire country, with continuous power outages transforming hotels and restaurants into resilience hubs for thousands of Ukrainians. Many establishments provided free access to Wi-Fi, charging stations for mobile devices, workspaces, warmth, and emotional support during difficult times. Restaurants located in basements or semi-basement spaces are in the most advantageous position, as they can continue operating during air raid alerts, offering not only food services but also serving as shelters for visitors. And it is an obligation for hotels to have a bomb shelter where the guests are obliged to go during the air-raid attacks.

The most resilient and safest restaurants are located in western part of Ukraine, particularly in Lviv and the Lviv region. Lviv Croissants, known for its affordable yet high-quality café-bakery concept, remains the largest restaurant chain in Ukraine with 11 branches in Poland. In 2024, the chain launched franchises in Slovakia, the United

States, and in Cannes, France⁸. During the war, the company demonstrates strong operational stability. However, customer reviews regarding service and food quality have declined since the war began, requiring further analysis and strategic improvements. The challenge lies in the franchise model, where maintaining uniformly high standards across all locations is a complex task.

The second-largest restaurant group is !FEST Holding of Emotions, which in 2024, opened 45 new establishments, expanding to 150 locations in Ukraine, some of which operate under a franchise model. The third-largest chain is McDonald's, which gradually resumed operations in Ukraine from September 2022. The company deliberately delayed reopening, emphasizing that the safety of employees and customers was its top priority. One of its new strategic directions involves opening locations along major highways, increasing competition with restaurant brands at fuel stations such as WOG, OKKO, and UPG.

According to Forbes Ukraine, the largest restaurant chains in 2024, are as follows:

Table 1

Top 10 Restaurant Chains in Ukraine

№	Restaurant Chain	Number of Locations	Number of Cities
1	Lviv Croissants	179	42
2	!FEST Holding (“Piana Vyshnia”, “Lvivska Maisternia Shokoladu”, “Rebernia” Restaurants: “Teatr Pyva Pravda”, “Mazokh Kafe”, “Hasova Lampa”, “Kryivka”, “Poshta na Drukarskii”)	150	33
3	McDonald’s	109	35
4	Domino’s Pizza	65	14
5	KFC	64	21
6	GastroFamily (e.g., “Ostannia Barykada”, “Ohota na Ovets”, “Mushlya”, “BPSH”)	62	17
7	Kumpel Group (+Fast Food Systems)	50	29
8	Puzata Hata	41	6
9	Chornomorka	32	13
10	Tarantino family	24	1

Source: compiled on basis (Forbes Ukraine, URL: <https://forbes.ua/>)

⁸ Forbes Ukraine. URL: <https://forbes.ua/>

GastroFamily, the restaurant group founded by Dmytro Borysov, had positive results in 2023, but lost its fourth position in 2024 and moved to the sixth one.

The top five largest restaurant chains are rounded out by the American franchise Domino's Pizza, which continues to operate 65 locations in Ukraine, despite closures in the southern and eastern regions due to the war, and KFC with 64 restaurants.

The above presented restaurant establishments make up only a third of the Ukrainian HoReCa market. As of 29 December 2023, there were 32,000 restaurant establishments in Ukraine, of which 6,500 were restaurants and 6,000 were coffee shops. In this context, it is necessary to add that the presented rating does not take into account several other large mixed-format chains, as well as restaurants and coffee shops at petrol stations that have a good reputation and are identified as safe by drivers and travellers, and compete with McDonald's and KFC⁹.

Another important factor is projection of the hotels market development in Ukraine presented by Statista¹⁰. Thus, if the contemporary trends remain and, hopefully, the war stops or there is a ceasefire, the growth of hotel market is expected to be at 7.57% and reach the market value of US\$291.43m by 2029 and by this same year the amount of guests is expected to achieve 3.88m users. As for 2025, it is expected to make a revenue of US\$217.66m. The projected Ukraine hotel industry revenue in million USD from 2018 to 2029 is presented in Fig. 2.

In the period from 2024 to 2026, at least 45 new hotel and apartment complex projects are planned to be implemented in Ukraine, adding 6,670 rooms to the market, as well as 108 hotel-type cottage towns. This market segment is one of the fastest growing, as Ukrainians are increasingly investing in income property as an effective way to grow their savings¹¹.

⁹ Sushchenko, O. A., Akhmedova, O. O., & Yermakov, I. O. The influence of reputation on the safety of restaurant enterprises. *Tsentrlnoukrainskyi naukovyi visnyk. Ekonomichni nauky*, (10)43, (2023). 88–98 p.

¹⁰ Statista. URL: https://www.statista.com/outlook/mmo/travel-tourism/hotels/ukraine?utm_source

¹¹ Ribas Hotels Group. <https://ribashotelsgroup.ua/analytics>

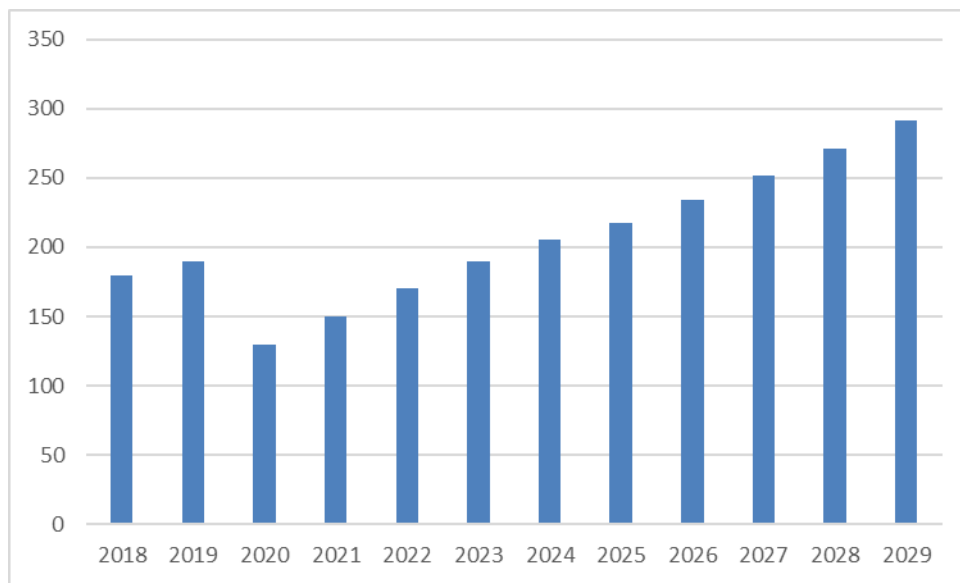


Fig. 2. Projected Ukraine Hotel Industry Revenue in million USD (2018–2029)

Due to the war, some Ukrainian hotel chains, such as Ribas Hotels Group, have diversified their operations abroad. Ribas Hotels Group is actively developing its projects in Poland, Bali and Moldova. This not only ensures the survival of the business, but also creates new opportunities for growth. It is also expected that by 2029, 86% of the total revenue generated in the Hotels market in Ukraine will be through online sales that additionally makes digitalisation a topical and urgent process.

There are several basic reasons why innovative approaches and digital technologies in hotel and restaurant business management in Ukraine are undergoing significant advancement. Among them are the following:

- digital adaptation due to military operations when governmental bodies, social and educational institutions, businesses had to fully or partially transfer services online in order to survive and safe employee's lives;
- strong government support of the digital strategies. Ukraine is a progressive country in terms of creating an innovative environment for the provision of public services in an online format. The government's ambitious initiative "Digital state" aims

to make Ukraine the most digital state in the world by 2030¹². The most widespread is the *Diia* digital platform and mobile application, which combines more than 130 public services online and helps reduce bureaucratic procedures and make interaction with the state more convenient. Citizens can receive electronic documents (passports, driving licences, birth certificates), as well as use services related to business, social benefits and other areas. Platforms such as *Diia.Business* (support for entrepreneurs, free consultations, information on business ideas and development opportunities); *Diia.Digital Education* (provides free courses to improve digital literacy); *Diia. Centres* (a network of centres where citizens can receive administrative services, advice on online services and support in doing business); *eMalyatko* (offers a comprehensive service for parents of new-borns); the web portal of electronic services of the Pension Fund of Ukraine; the online medical service *Helsi* and others are part of the *State in a Smartphone* strategy, which aims to transfer all public services to an online format, ensuring convenience, transparency and efficiency of interaction between the state and citizens. The hostilities and numerous casualties have made adjustments to the functioning of the state, its interaction with citizens and the way it manages financial flows to restore critical infrastructure and the long-term reconstruction and modernisation of destroyed housing. For example, Ukrainians whose homes have been damaged or destroyed as a result of the hostilities have been offered the *eVidnovlennya* platform, which enables to apply for financial assistance for repairs or compensation for the purchase of new housing¹³;

- high level of digitally literate population (especially millennials and generation Z, who drive demand for innovation), high internet penetration and wide smartphone use plus a special war-created Ukrainian digital resistance mind-set, which means embracement of all kinds of innovation as a cultural peculiarity and national trait. Thus,

¹² Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine. URL: <https://thedigital.gov.ua/ministry>

¹³ Akhmedova O., Pomaza-Ponomarenko A., Digitalisation of the public sector as a factor of effective governance. № 2(56) (2025): Naukovi perspektyvy. p. 87-89.

according to DataReportal¹⁴, a total of 56.4 million cellular mobile connections were active in Ukraine in early 2025, and this number is equivalent to 147 percent of the total population. Nonetheless, it has to be noted that not all of the mobile connections have access to the internet, some of them have only services of voice and SMS connections. Besides, there were 31.5 million individuals using the internet in Ukraine at the start of 2025, when online penetration stood at 82.4 percent. Ukraine was home to 21.6 million social media user identities in January 2025, equating to 56.4 percent of the total population. As we can notice, the data demonstrates great stats of Ukraine as a digital state;

- growth of the Ukraine's IT sector. Between 2018 and 2023, the Ukrainian IT sector demonstrated sustained and dynamic growth, positioning itself as one of the most resilient and strategically significant industries in the national economy. Export revenues increased steadily from \$4.2 billion in 2018 to \$8.5 billion in 2023, effectively doubling over the six-year period despite external shocks, including the full-scale war. Parallel to this financial expansion, the sector experienced a substantial increase in its workforce – from 172,000 IT specialists in 2018 to 307,000 by 2023. This 80% growth in employment reflects the sector's capacity to absorb and train digital talent, as well as the increasing global demand for Ukrainian IT services. These figures underscore the IT industry's critical role not only in sustaining economic activity but also in supporting the country's broader digital transformation and post-war recovery¹⁵. In this respect it is necessary to admit that Ukraine can boast unprecedented support of the international organisations and businesses aimed at building digital capacity and digital services. Among them there are Google, Microsoft, Amazon Web Services (AWS), Cisco, Palantir Technologies, SAP, Oracle, Salesforce and others;

- human resources shortages have become an acute problem in any sector of Ukrainian economy, including hotel, restaurant, and catering services. A significant

¹⁴ DataReportal. URL: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-ukraine>

¹⁵ IT Research. Resilience as the new reality. Ukraine, 2024. URL: <https://itcluster.lviv.ua/en/it-research-ukraine-report/>

number of employees, especially men of conscription age, were mobilized into the Armed Forces, thousands of workers either fled abroad or were displaced internally, further disrupting staffing and operational continuity. According to industry reports, many establishments experienced up to 50% personnel loss during the first year of the war, with staff either joining the military, seeking safety, or relocating to unaffected regions. In 2022, approximately 23% of hospitality businesses suspended operations, with an additional 54% functioning only partially, resulting in widespread job losses and reduced working hours. The sector as a whole experienced a 20–25% reduction in employment during this period¹⁶. The situation was especially critical in frontline areas, where businesses were forced to close entirely, resulting in mass layoffs and long-term unemployment for service workers. Simultaneously, the destruction of infrastructure, decline in tourism, and general economic instability sharply reduced demand for hospitality services, leaving employers unable to retain or hire staff. Additional problem that is admitted by almost all businesses is the lack of competent employees (22, 9 % of all recruitment problems), rather low motivation to work because of low salaries (9,6 % of all recruitment problems), reluctance of some men to apply officially (8 % of all recruitment problems)¹³. Although efforts to retrain and rehire displaced workers have begun, the sector continues to experience a shortage of qualified personnel, making workforce recovery one of the most urgent challenges for post-war reconstruction and sustainability of the Ukrainian hospitality industry and, in its own way, creating demand for innovative approaches and digital technologies;

- necessity for business digitalisation, especially in HORECA and retail sectors as far as these businesses in Ukraine have been using the software of the Russian origin for a long time. It has really become a question of survival because even after three years of the full-scale war some of the hospitality enterprises continue to utilise software directly or indirectly connected with Russian federation. Moreover, Russian

¹⁶ Sudakov M., Lisohor L. Labour market of Ukraine 2022-2023: state, trends, and prospects. State Employment Service of Ukraine, Federation of Employers of Ukraine, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Solidarity Fund PL, 2023. P 13-32.

owners and developers are undertaking great effort to obscure the programs' true origin, including reregistration of their companies under foreign jurisdiction, altering original product names, proposing highly competitive low prices to retain market share, etc. These practices pose significant risks to data security, corporate transparency, and the integrity of digital infrastructure, reinforcing the urgent need for comprehensive digital sovereignty and the replacement of hostile-origin software with trusted, locally or internationally verified alternatives.

Therefore, Ukrainian software developers and businesspeople in restaurant and hotel sectors are trying to confront numerous challenges related to all the problems mentioned above and propose their solutions in the following aspects.

Among the most popular and comprehensive software solutions we have to admit Servio of Expert Solution¹⁷, which is a Ukrainian company specializing in the automation and optimization of hotel and restaurant businesses. Their comprehensive software suite offers a unified information space for managing various aspects of hospitality operations. Key modules include hotel automation, restaurant systems, website booking modules, CRM, QR-menu, mobile statistics applications, and order and delivery centers. Servio's solutions are designed to integrate seamlessly with various third-party applications and equipment, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of hospitality services.

In the context of Ukraine's ongoing challenges, particularly the war-induced disruptions, Servio ExpertSolution's digital tools have become vital for businesses in the HORECA and retail sectors. By facilitating online delivery platforms, CRM and POS systems, contactless menus, loyalty programs, and chatbots, Servio enables businesses to reduce costs, maintain operations during blackouts, and reach customers even in crisis situations. This digital transformation is not just a strategic advantage but a matter of survival for many enterprises in the region.

¹⁷ ExpertSolution. URL: <https://expertsolution.com.ua/>

Another developer is Ultra¹⁸, a Ukrainian technology company, which specializes in developing comprehensive digital solutions for the hospitality and retail sectors. Their offerings include cloud-based point-of-sale (POS) systems, customer relationship management (CRM) tools, and mobile applications designed to streamline operations and enhance customer engagement. Ultra's platforms are tailored to meet the dynamic needs of businesses, providing real-time analytics, inventory management, and integration capabilities with various third-party services. This adaptability is particularly crucial for Ukrainian enterprises navigating the challenges posed by ongoing geopolitical tensions and economic fluctuations.

Ultra offers a flexible pricing model with options for both subscription and perpetual licenses, making it suitable for businesses seeking long-term investment and customization. The availability of a perpetual license can be cost-effective over time for establishments planning extended use. Servio POS provides a straightforward subscription-based model, which includes comprehensive features and technical support. This simplicity can be advantageous for businesses preferring predictable monthly expenses without the need for significant upfront investment. A comparative overview of the pricing structures for Ultra and Servio systems, tailored for businesses in the hospitality and retail sectors are presented in Table 2.

Both Ultra and Servio provide vital digital tools that enable Ukrainian businesses in the hospitality sector to maintain operations, reduce costs, and reach customers effectively, especially during crises such as power outages or supply chain disruptions.

A highly attractive solution for small to medium-sized businesses in the hospitality and retail sectors, including restaurants, cafes, bars, and food trucks is Poster POS , specifically designed Ukrainian-developed cloud-based point-of-sale (POS) system. It offers a modular architecture combining sales automation, inventory management, financial analytics, and CRM functionalities through an intuitive interface accessible via tablets, smartphones, and desktops.

¹⁸ULTRA. URL: <https://ultra-company.com/>

Table 2

Comparative overview of Ultra and Servio POS systems

№	Feature / Plan	Ultra	Servio
1	2	3	4
1	Monthly subscription	From 699 UAH per workplace; discounted to 559 UAH with annual payment	875 UAH per workplace
2	Technical support	Included in subscription; for perpetual license, 306 UAH/month after initial period	Included in subscription
3	Perpetual license (one-time payment)	13,600 UAH for a full license covering modules like Restaurant, Kitchen, Hotel, Fitness, and Store	Not specified; primarily offers subscription-based pricing
4	Mobile application module	250 UAH/month per workplace; technical support at 150 UAH/month	Included in standard subscription
5	Target business size	Micro, small, and medium enterprises	Micro, small, and medium enterprises
6	Installation type	SaaS and on-premises options available	SaaS and on-premises options available
7	Supported platforms	Web, Android, iOS, iPadOS, Linux, macOS, Windows	Web, Android, iOS, Windows

Poster POS supports real-time cloud synchronization, enabling business owners to monitor operations remotely and respond flexibly to market conditions. A distinctive feature of Poster is its Poster Delivery module, which allows restaurants to manage their own delivery system independently from third-party platforms. The system also includes integrations with fiscal printers, online payment providers, and loyalty programs, aligning with Ukrainian legal compliance (including cash registration requirements). Poster has become especially valuable during wartime, as it allows businesses to operate during power outages through offline functionality, maintain continuity via the cloud, and optimize workflows with minimal staff. Its scalability, cost-efficiency, and localization for the Ukrainian market make it a leading solution in the digital transformation of Ukraine's HORECA industry.

These companies are not the only ones but are the most popular at the moment and help Ukrainian hospitality businesses to adapt, rebuild, and remain competitive on both local and international levels.

In the context of restaurant and hospitality automation systems, a few words have to be added as to the importance of the third-party services, which refer to external software, platforms, or hardware that can be integrated into the main system to extend its functionality. These integrations allow for more seamless, automated, and comprehensive operations.

The main types of the third-party services commonly integrated with hotel and restaurant systems are as follows:

- payment systems and terminals (Visa/MasterCard, Apple Pay, Google Pay, LiqPay, WayForPay, etc), whose integration allows for fast, secure in-person and online payments directly through the POS system;

- delivery and e-commerce platforms (such as Glovo, Bolt Food, Rocket, Uber Eats) which allow restaurants to receive orders directly from delivery platforms into their POS or kitchen systems;

- booking engines and OTAs (Online Travel Agencies) like international Booking.com, Expedia, Airbnb, Hostelworld, Onetwotrip.ua, Hotline.travel, and national ones – Tickets.ua, TripMyDream, Kiyavia, Arktur, Farvater.travel, Coral Travel Ukraine, and others, give the users opportunity to compare and choose hotels, flights, travel packages and, if necessary to find offers specifically tailored for Ukrainians. Their integration with hotel management systems (PMS) allows automatic updates of room availability and reservations;

- accounting and financial software (for example BAS – a Ukrainian alternative to the Russian-originated 1C software), which is crucial for any business and includes automated accounting, tax reporting, financial analysis, and inventory control;

fiscal equipment / tax compliance that include mandatory fiscal cash registers and software-based cash registers (e.g., Checkbox, E-Receipt, etc.). They insure legal compliance of Ukraine's tax regulations with issuing of digital receipts;

various kinds of CRM, Email & SMS marketing tools developed by Ukrainian companies, such as OneBox OS (specially created for the restaurants and hotels' needs, easily integrates with messengers like Viber, Telegram, WhatsApp, Gmail, tracks tasks, automates notifications, etc.), NetHunt CRM (provides tools for scheduling, appointments, promotions), Selzy (a Ukrainian email marketing platform that offers tools for creating, automating, and analyzing email campaigns. It supports SMS marketing, segmentation, and integration with numerous CRM systems). There are many other specific applications that help managing client data, track guests' behavior, automate personalized communication and promotions;

mobile restaurant and hotel guest applications, QR-menus, digital room service, etc. developed both by above mentioned companies and others in order to enhance guest experience and allow contactless service;

cybersecurity & backup services that help to secure data backup and provide anti-virus, firewall, and remote monitoring services.

Conclusions. In the contemporary highly volatile environment, leveraging innovative approaches and digital technologies in hotel and restaurant business and modern management tools is not just an opportunity but a necessity.

The Ukrainian hotel and restaurant industry has demonstrated extraordinary resilience and adaptability in the face of severe contemporary challenges such as the pandemic, the full-scale Russian invasion, economic instability, and human resource shortages. These unprecedented circumstances have accelerated the digital transformation of the HoReCa sector, turning innovation and technology into vital instruments not just for growth, but for survival and stabilization.

As demonstrated throughout this paper, the integration of innovative approaches and digital technologies has redefined management practices across the industry. From the

widespread implementation of cloud-based POS systems and delivery management tools to the growth of domestic CRM and marketing platforms, Ukrainian hospitality enterprises are strategically shifting towards digital-first business models. Companies like Servio, Ultra, and Poster POS have proven crucial in helping businesses remain operational during wartime, often under extreme conditions such as blackouts or missile attacks.

The ongoing transformation is further driven by Ukraine's strong IT sector, high internet penetration, and a digitally literate population, particularly among millennials and Gen Z. Governmental initiatives, including the ambitious "Digital State" project, have created a supportive framework for innovation in both public and private spheres. These efforts are supplemented by international support from global tech giants and a national cultural embrace of digital resilience.

Amid personnel shortages, shifting consumer expectations, and the need for operational continuity in unpredictable conditions, automation and smart technologies have enabled hospitality businesses to reduce overhead, personalize customer experience, and maintain a competitive edge. This technological shift includes the integration of AI-driven chatbots, QR-menus, contactless payments, online bookings, and CRM systems capable of automated communication and loyalty program management. Furthermore, the integration of fiscal equipment and local accounting software ensures full legal and tax compliance, a necessity in Ukraine's highly regulated financial environment.

Looking ahead, the hotel and restaurant industry in Ukraine is poised for a continued upward trajectory, with projected annual growth rates suggesting increasing revenues and user engagement, particularly through online channels. If the current pace of innovation is sustained, and provided that geopolitical circumstances improve, Ukraine's HoReCa sector may not only recover but thrive in the post-war economy.

In conclusion, innovative approaches and digital technologies are not merely tools of modernization in Ukraine's hospitality sector – they are the cornerstones of

resilience, reinvention, and sustainable progress. The collective experience of the industry during times of crisis has not only catalyzed the adoption of digital solutions but has also laid the groundwork for a smarter, more adaptive, and globally competitive hospitality ecosystem in Ukraine.

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