

A NEW PROFESSION ON MOLDOVA'S JOB MARKET- SOMMELIER

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Abstract: Sommelier is a multilateral concept, tightly connected with the wine culture, which enriches the HoReCa sector- the sector which offers a lot of work places, and the wine sector, traditionally the most powerful sector of Moldovan economy, which offers Moldova an international name. For promoting those sectors, we have to promote the wine culture on local markets, and this can be achieved in trade, tourism and food enterprises through this noble occupation- the sommelier

Key words: sommelier, restaurant, wine, food sector, HORECA.

Republic of Moldova is on 10th place in the top of world wine producers. Every 40th vineyard hectare from the world is in Republic of Moldova, so it is the 12th international wine exporting country. Even if wine makes us famous on the international arena, the lack of a wine consumption culture within our country, makes us rank highest in alcohol consumption per capita charts. However during the last years we can see an increase in the awareness on the art of wine, which is also a premise for the success of the Sommelier School.

In the context of sustainable development, the agro-food sector, including the public food sector has a strategic importance for the balanced and viable development of the economical and social systems of any countries. A job in HoReCa (Hotels, Cafes, Restaurants) creates 4-5 work places in complementary economical sectors.

The assessment of agro-food, tourism and public food services volumes shows us an increasing dynamics.[4,5] The structural analysis and comparison of various types of enterprises shows an increased interest for restaurants and bars, as well as wine and tourism industries providing food services. The sommelier competencies are necessary to all the professionals within the above mentioned sectors. We have over 200 companies, whose main activity is winemaking, and over 130 enterprises engaged in tourism.

In order to identify the existing issues and development perspectives of the food service industry it is important to evaluate the economical situation of this sector within the context of national economics, hence it has an utmost important role to address one of the basic human needs-nutrition.

We have to mention that within the last 5 years *the share of food /catering services within the total services provided in Republic of Moldova varied from 8%-10%*, and this share has a growth trend.

Table 1. Turnover Dynamics of the Food/Catering Services in Republic of Moldova, (million MDL)

Years	2004	2006	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
National	454	675	1133	1013	1230	1380	1831	1999
Chişinău city	320	489	813	733	886	900	1284	1397

Thus, within 2004-2013, the volume of food/catering services in Moldova, increased 4.4 times, with an annual growth rate of 20%-30%. The offer of food and catering services is in a continuous evolution, offering the customers a wide variety of unique culinary experiences.

As well as many other branches of the local economy, the food and catering sector has a deficit of qualified personnel, and a high staff rotation[2].

We believe the main reasons for this are : the low motivation of the employees, slow progress of the educational system, including continuous learning options to meet the job market requirements, low working and hygiene conditions in different food /catering enterprises, breach of labor law etc.

Table 2. The dynamics of number of employees and average monthly salary for "Hotel and Restaurants" Sector

Indicator	2003	2006	2007	2011	2012	2013
Number of employees (thousands of people)	6,6	8,2	8,6	10,3	12,3	13,1
The share within the total number of employed people in the country %	1,0	1,3	1,3	1,5	1,6	1,5
Nominal wage, monthly average per person, MDL	827	1385	1760	2112	2555	2631
Nominal wage, monthly average per person, USD	59,3	105,4	145,0	203,3	204,4	205,5
Ratio between the average monthly wage of an employee in the "Hotels and Restaurants" sector and the national average wage	92,9	81,6	85,2	83,5	73,5	69,8

Based on the analysis we can conclude the following:

- During the analyzed period we witness an increase of app. 100% in the number of employees. This means that there are a significant number of enterprises opening up in the HoReCa sector and that it is absolutely necessary to train the existing and prepare new staff in the field
- We have to mentioned that, regardless of the relatively high profitability of this sector, the salaries in the HoReCa segment are still low, even compared to the national average. The ratio between national average wage, and the wages in HoReCa over the last 2 years is about 70%.

Usually, the average wage level in Moldovan restaurants is around 130 USD for

the service personnel, and between 150 USD- 300 USD for chefs and cooks.

Most of the HoReCa operations are located in Chisinau. [2]

Based on the data from The Commerce Direction of Chisinau City Hall, the situation in the food/catering field evolved as it follows:

Table 3. *The Dynamics of number of enterprises in the food/catering service in Chisinau City*

Type of enterprise	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011	2012	2013
Catering Units	14	24	28	37	37	36	36
Restaurants	48	51	57	68	75	86	92
Cafes	277	353	425	505	476	488	501
Cafeteria	204	215	240	271	273	268	270
Buffets	417	417	441	442	426	456	447
Bars	352	457	448	318	295	337	343
Cullinary Stores	21	17	7	5	3	3	5
Cafés and summer terraces	75	91	105	73	60	78	88
Total	1444	1626	1751	1719	1654	1752	1783
% compared to the last year		104	104	98	96	105,9	101,9

The dynamics from the HoReCa sector created the demand for new professionals with new skills and competencies, one of them being the sommelier profession.

In Western Europe, the importance of sommelier was acknowledged in the beginning of 2000, especially in the high end locations, where tastings, contests and wine exhibitions are organized. In Moldova, this job title was included in the official professions' list only in 2012 at the initiative of local wine experts,

If we analyze the HoReCa network from Chisinau for 2013 we observe the following:

- Out of the total 1654 enterprises in the sector, 1403 are for public access, which is an 84% ratio.
- The total number of places in these public access companies is estimated at 82000, or 72% of all the places
- There are 75 restaurants, and 295 bars with a total number of 21000 places

The presence of a sommelier offers the restaurant, the wine bar or the tourism agency prestige and a very important competitive advantage, that is why on Moldova's labor market there is a stringent need for the new profession of *sommelier*.

According to the qualifications the sommelier is a professional in the HoReCa and beverage trade industry.

He is qualified in and has the following competencies:

- Wine and other spirits tasting
- Managing the beverage stock
- Developing the wine book (list)
- Recommending beverages for the food in the menu.
- Beverage storage and sales

- Viticulture
- Oenology
- Communication with customers

The sommelier executes and is involved in the following activities:

Presenting the wines, beverages as well as the dishes:

- Within the restaurants he or she develops and updates the wine list, manages the stocks, maintains the other materials and tools, together with the chef he chooses the dishes to be paired with the wines from the list, promotes the brand of the restaurant, serves the beverages according to the etiquette, cooperates with other staff and manages his subordinates;
- In the store he or she manages the stocks, improving the variety, recommends products to customers , as well as informs them on wine-food pairing options, promotes the wine culture.

Based on a thorough study of the HoReCa development, of the process of education and training of professionals in this domain, as well as based on consultations offered by experts from France and other EU countries – The National Sommelier Club of Moldova developed the curriculum for the sommelier profession.

The mission of this course is to make Moldova known worldwide, through promoting the Moldovan wine culture and gastronomy. To educate the costumers about the wine art and to create a new culture in the local HoReCa services, as well as to increase the quality of the cognitive and intellectual potential of the staff employed in this sector, as well as of other citizens.

The National Sommelier Club of Moldova in partnership with Technical University created the first Sommelier School, authorized by the Ministry of Education.

The first promotion of the Sommelier School graduated in February 2014. Today the alumni of the school have an enormous career success, not only in Moldova, but also in foreign countries.

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