

Max Way Bar

Company description:

Max Way Bar, in Locarno, run by Massimo with the help of two waiters (one for the morning and one for the afternoon-evening) is open from 8 am to 21.

The bar has a defined character made of its refined atmosphere and offer.

Spaces are well-furnished, Max put a lot of attention to details; the selection of drinks and snacks is always new and sophisticated. The difference of style and the relaxed atmosphere is what Max's customer is looking for and they agree to spend a bit more to have it.

Max takes care of almost everything (suppliers, staff, and customers), an accountant helps him with bookkeeping and, as a member of Swiss Gastro, he has an automatic subscription to a service of legal advices and more.

What were you doing before? What prompted you to become an independent entrepreneur?

I worked 25 years as a pastry chef. For I have always had an entrepreneurial spirit I also managed the bar connected to the bakery and, in general, I was the handyman, the joker of the firms for which I worked. The salary was good, working times a bit tiring (wake up at 6) but I've always liked all the activities this job consisted of.

It was a good job but my fantasy was castrated! I wanted to bring new products and new ways to present them in the bakery, like new decorations for the room, new ways to present cakes, pastries etc. But I wasn't understood; my ideas were not appreciated or were refused.

My desire to make "my way" became bigger and bigger so I understood I needed to expose my ideas to everybody.

How did you get the idea of a bar? How was your initial idea?

I already knew very well which kind of job is to run a bar mostly because of my work experience and also because my grandparents were managers of a restaurant.

When I started to imagine the "Max way bar" I thought it would have been different from what already existed.

I focused on two points:

1. Product's quality (well made selection, always different, high quality)
2. Style (nice furniture, attention to image, relaxing events).

Initially I thought my bar would have been a day bar, since at Locarno almost all bars are like that, there's a lot of work with offices, lunchtime and coffee breaks.

When I opened I realized that I have an afternoon-evening bar, where people comes to drink!

There aren't a lot of bars where you can enjoy an aperitif in Locarno; I thought it was due to the kind of city life, more daily oriented. And without knowing it I found an empty segment of the market!

How long did it take to give life to your idea?

Since I took the decision, it took me about a year to find the right place to set my idea. I prepared and presented the project to the owners of the room. It takes me another year to ask for a loan and realize the bar.

What was the main problem / what you missed at the beginning?

Knowing how to manage staff, I did not know how to choose my waiters, which qualities I should look to.

Also to be a boss was difficult for me, especially at the beginning! I didn't know how to establish rules. I lacked diplomacy in general (including with suppliers) I had to learn to assert myself, to be honest, not afraid to say what I thought.

How is going now Max Way Bar? What would you change?

Max Way bar is great is still ascending and it works well. I believe this is due to the great experience that I already had in bars' administration and also to the clear character I gave to Max Way from the beginning. I would not change anything, rather than expand the business (other bars in other cities).

You did a business plan before opening?

Yes, I did one with the help of an accountant, the draft was changed later (when the bar became an evening bar) because I had to hire more staff and change some suppliers. I did not ask information to other bars' managers because, knowing the environment, I knew that I could not trust their answers.

What is the greatest satisfaction that gave you the Max Way?

Self-esteem has grown tremendously! I discovered that I could manage so many things I have no idea before. Also I do not have more economic problems, this is a great satisfaction.

What advice would you give to anyone thinking of opening an independent business?

To do something you like and you have experience of. And do not be discouraged by others, do it "your way"!