

» Deconstructing the territory of a global bank brand: storytelling, protagonists and shared value

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The world's best chefs bring their restaurants to your home. They do it literally. The Roca brothers, along with their team of 40 people, believe this is the best way to promote their restaurants all around the world, and thanks to BBVA it is possible. Together, they created a world tour called "The Cooking Tour Experience", which has already taken place twice. The 2015 edition consisted on:

- Celebrating gastronomic gatherings with the bank's customers in five cities around the world (Miami, Houston, Birmingham, Istanbul and Buenos Aires).
- Organizing masterclasses in every location to disseminate the fusion of the local cuisines and that of the Roca brothers.
- Electing local products and even small enterprises from the food sector to promote them internationally.
- Identifying young chefs with high potential who will be granted a scholarship to study at the Celler school.

The outcomes of the 2015 edition were outstanding:

- In terms of diffusion, the potential media audience amounted to 50 million people and that of social networks totaled 24 million users.
- In business terms, BBVA has achieved the satisfaction of 2,500 special customers in five cities around the world.
- In gastronomic terms: they have made 35,000 dishes emphasizing the value of local products by using 420 different ingredients.
- In social terms: as a result of this action, 9 scholarships for new chefs were established and the project of the Roca brothers and BBVA reached the 27,000 people who attended the masterclass.

The main lesson learnt through this initiative is that, in order to exploit the potential of such a universal field as gastronomy, the old sponsorship formulas were no longer valid. The new formulas consist on understanding and properly combining four elements: the main communities –citizens–, the leaders of the territory, their agendas and the contents.

Why? Territories are the thematic spaces that we –companies– aim to use to contact our stakeholders and carry out our corporate storytelling. These spaces involve the fields of music, fashion, innovation, art or sports among many others. How can we take advantage of them?

Over the last decades, the efforts to participate were limited, in most cases, to funding events, sponsoring the main actors or buying contents to subsequently disseminate them. These formulas, traditional during the pre-Internet era, have always encountered many difficulties in highlighting their contribution to the generation of value.

It is thus necessary to create new ways of contributing in the territories by generating opportunities that connect the leaders with the main actors, the people. Nowadays, we –citizens– do not only want to feel as followers in the territories we enjoy, we want to be the main protagonists because our stories interact, our anecdotes are important and our messages are more credible than those of companies and institutions.



HOW DOES THIS WORKING MODEL APPLIED TO THE CASE OF THE COOKING TOUR EXPERIENCE?

In the case of BBVA and the Roca brothers, we can find elements promoting this new way in which large companies can collaborate in a specific space. Here are some of the ways that made it possible, broken down into four main points:

The main communities:

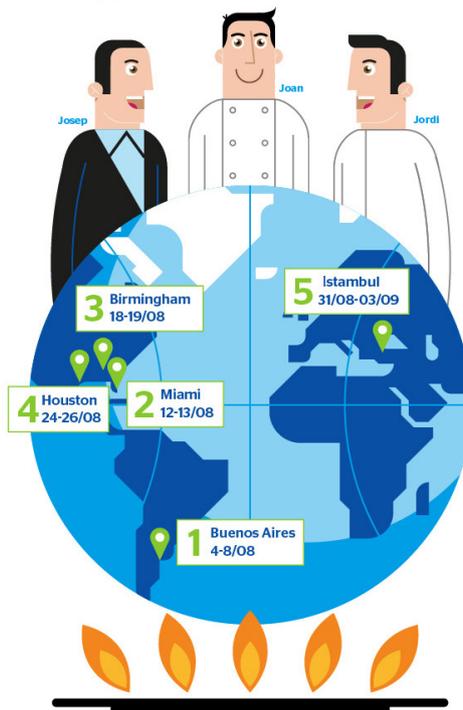
- Gastronomy has always been interesting for a wide range of people. The success of food-and-cooking TV shows reveals that the audience is very interested in this field.
- Fine dining, within the reach of very few people, has among its followers a group of citizens with high purchasing power who are the target of large banks. Furthermore, they normally follow the latest trends, great names and restaurants.
- However, gastronomy also offers a very powerful alternative in the sphere of employment. Its capacity to channel the professional career of hundreds of thousands of applicants in one of the service sectors that operates throughout all five continents is an extraordinary mechanism of social integration. International organizations and governments are fully aware of this and want to make the most of the inspirational initiatives. Their members form another community of interest for large companies.
- And the cuisine is one of the engines of the world's agro-food industry. With globalization, finding an exotic ingredient from the other side of the world has become a real possibility. Many experts, amateurs, retailers and a large number of actors gather around this table. All of them make up a chain of potential customers for financial enterprises.

The leaders: Why the Roca brothers?

- Not only are the Roca brothers the best chefs in the world, but they also are an example of humility, entrepreneurship and social contribution. They are convinced that gastronomy can contribute to a better world.
- They have designed and implemented a program focused on the generation of shared value. As regards the BBVA example, in addition to making their cuisine accessible for thousands of people, they have achieved the commitment of the aforementioned company to create scholarships for local cooks from the locations they have visited so that the latter can learn at the Celler de Can Roca workshop. They have also used local products from the agro-food sector to promote them internationally. However, it is usually difficult to justify the social component of a sponsorship with no contents to activate it.
- Stakeholders have been present since the very first moment in order to measure the return of their partner's investment. BBVA has invited its customers and outstanding contacts to lunches and dinners organized in five different locations all around the world in each of its tours. It has managed to merge three dimensions into one: an action with social impact, a relationship initiative for the business and a contents-rich event to enhance its relations with millions of cuisine lovers from all five continents.
- Finally, the proposal of BBVA and the Roca brothers has exploited the synergy between both of them: efforts, simplicity, responsibility, humility, cooperation, teamwork, spirit of constant improvement, strength and leadership. Companies find metaphors that help them explain their corporate culture with the best examples in each territory. This identification provides robustness and consistency to their collaboration.



BBVA & El Celler de Can Roca present The Cooking Tour Experience 2015



The agenda:

- Territories have their own calendar of events where all kinds of professionals and amateurs meet. In the case of gastronomy, these include the publication of different rankings or even culinary exhibitions, congresses, agro-food fairs or contests.
- Companies can join these meetings as long as they are entitled to do it or make a valuable contribution. Historically, they only used to fund them but have gradually understood that their commitment with the territory also provides a broad range of options to enhance their positioning and reputation.
- However, companies have the possibility to promote their own events as well. The Cooking Tour Experience is a good example of this. BBVA takes advantage of the Roca brothers' convening power and schedules a series of milestones in different countries. Each dinner, masterclass and press conference offers the opportunity to invite stakeholder communities, connecting the brand and the bank's activity to the territory in question.

"Territories are the thematic spaces that we –companies– aim to use to contact our stakeholders and carry out our corporate storytelling"

- More ambitious transmedia projects have also been developed. Its documentary "Cooking Up Tribute" is an example of brand journalism (<http://elcellerdecandroca.bbva.com/el-celler>).

CONCLUSIONS:

- Once we have defined our strategic plans, it is time to clarify what projects we need our interlocutors to get involved with (workers, shareholders, clients, partners, opinion leaders, authorities, etc.). It is then when we look for our common features and draft the story we need to share with them with the purpose of achieving our goals together.
- Territories enable us to link these stories to the interests of the people. We must choose the territories that motivate our stakeholders, know their leaders, the dates of the major milestones and the contents that would enhance the conversation of these communities.
- It is the moment to listen to the dreams of those leaders to study how a company can make them come true and, at the same time, feed and improve its business model.
- The activity must generate a shared value for society: it has to take advantage of the interrelation between sustainability, the impact on the reduction of inequality and reputation.
- The contents generated by this initiative are the main excuse to disseminate this collaboration and to establish new ways of relationship. The company must include in its project the formula to create them, enhance them and include them in the interaction of the members of the community as well as making them accessible to the citizens.
- Emotions and reasons must go hand in hand since they cannot be split up. It is necessary to develop projects in which both feed each other back. Emotions will be found in the territories and in the events that connect leaders and citizens, whereas the social value of the action has the rational element.

The contents:

- The links between the people who love gastronomy are the experiences and contents. Nowadays, the richest, most useful and entertaining contents are usually generated and promoted by members of the communities.
- The interactions they produce are genuine and create the stable and long-lasting connections the companies strive for. Thanks to the Internet, they leave an indelible mark in search engines and social networks. Nevertheless, the challenge lies in sowing the seeds for them to grow and spread.
- BBVA, being aware of the importance of using emotions and reason to illustrate the project, created the following online asset: <http://elcellerdecandroca.bbva.com/> in which many posts, videos and computer graphics are frequently posted and then shared through profiles on social networks such as Twitter (@CellerRocaBBVA) or Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/CellerRocaBBVA/>).

Figure 1. Structure of territories



Figure 2. Roca Brothers and BBVA example





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