

The Importance of Food Styling and Food Photography Towards Customers' Perspective at Kitchen Corner Café

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Abstract

This aims to study about the importance of food styling and food photography towards customers' perspective at Kitchen Corner Café, as well as understanding the relationship between food photography technique and food styling in front of camera which influences the customer to be aware of the cafe. Additionally, food styling is extremely useful in making the food look more appetizing and appealing to the customers. Furthermore, to describe the sensory evaluation by sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste to attract customer's interest towards food presentation. Therefore, food styling for camera is also a helpful tool for social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, magazine and application to attract customer's attention. Moreover, basic photography technique for food photography can capture the best shot and create special effect to the photo. This allow to create food storytelling to the dish for customer at Kitchen Corner Café, a casual dining café in Bangkok.

Keywords: Food Styling, Food Photography, Social Media, Photography Technique.

บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาความสำคัญของการตกแต่งอาหารและการถ่ายรูปอาหาร ณ ร้านคิทเชน คอรเนอร์ คาเฟ่ เพื่อให้เกิดความเข้าใจความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างศิลปการตกแต่งอาหารและการถ่ายรูปอาหาร การนำเทคนิคในการถ่ายรูปมาปรับใช้เพื่อ การเล่าเรื่องราวทางภาพจะช่วยสื่อให้อาหารดูน่าดึงดูด น่ารับประทานต่อสายตาลูกค้ามากยิ่งขึ้น ซึ่งมีผลในการกระตุ้นลูกค้าให้ตัดสินใจเลือกมารับประทานอาหารที่ร้าน

อีกทั้งยังช่วยสร้างความรู้สึทางประสาทสัมผัสทั้ง 5 ของมนุษย์ได้แก่ การมองเห็น การลิ้มรส การได้กลิ่น การได้ยิน และการสัมผัส ที่สำคัญคือภาพอาหารที่ถูกจัดแต่งอย่างสวยงามเป็นเครื่องมือที่มีประโยชน์ในการสื่อสารเพื่อการส่งเสริมทั้งภาพลักษณ์ของร้านอาหารให้เข้าถึงกลุ่มเป้าหมายได้ดียิ่งขึ้น สื่อที่สามารถเข้าถึงลูกค้าเป้าหมายได้โดยตรง อาทิเช่น อินเทอร์เน็ต ยูทูบ เฟซบุ๊ก อินสตาแกรม และสื่อสิ่งพิมพ์ทางนิตยสารต่าง ๆ เพื่อเป็นการโฆษณาให้ลูกค้าได้รู้จักและสร้างความจดจำจากภาพอาหารที่เห็น รวมถึงที่มาของอาหาร วิธีการเตรียมอาหาร และเข้าใจถึงเรื่องราวของอาหารที่ผู้ปรุงอาหารต้องการสื่อออกไป ณ ร้าน คิทเชน คอนเนอร์ คาเฟ่ ซึ่งเป็นร้านอาหารสำหรับลูกค้าที่ต้องการบรรยากาศแบบง่าย ๆ สบาย ๆ ในกรุงเทพมหานคร

คำสำคัญ : การแต่งอาหาร การถ่ายภาพอาหาร สื่อสังคมออนไลน์ เทคนิคการถ่ายภาพ

Introduction

Food styling is to create and arrange food for visual appeal. In the past, people used illustrations of food in magazines, cookbooks and advertisement. However, because the trend changes and development of technology, people start business in food styling for food photography as mentioned in Custer, (2010). Food styling has become more popular and has made people more interested in how food is prepared and presented. Moreover, Vivaldo and Flannigan, (2010) mentioned to succeed in food styling, basic culinary are essential as this will enable the food stylist to handle food safely and properly. Basic cooking and cutting skills also can helps produce a variety of shapes and carvings for vegetables. Using garnish enhances texture, taste and color to the food. Additionally, good food presentation can give the customer a glimpse of what the food will taste like. In food styling, Christopher, (2006) found that props such as napkins, tablecloths and dinnerware can play an important role in storytelling towards food presentation. Food photography can also alter the mood and tone food by applying light control, composition, post processing, styling and props to the photo (Manna, 2005). This is to develop the relationship between food styling for camera and customer's perspective towards food presentation at Kitchen Corner Café.

Next, adding movement to the photo can stimulate the five senses. For example, using some effects like smoke from a cup of tea shows heat and aromatic flavor. A grill mark and a flame created by blow torch make food look more realistic as reported by Smallbone, (2018).

Furthermore, food styling is not just about selecting the best ingredients but understanding how to plate the food and make it stand out. Moreover, food photography is more than just shooting photo but it can also create trend and plating style which attract customer's interest

by eye appealing. Food photography can be used as a tool in social media such as magazines, cookbooks, website, Facebook and Instagram to create an advertisement (Jam, 2019).

Previous scholars also interested to discuss the impact of food styling and food photography on importance factor which related to the main stakeholders especially, the consumers. For instance, McBride (2010) cited that the lighting, styling and photography of food will lead to apply in the television, magazines, and cookbooks to attract the consumer. Manna, (2005) also mentions the PR photographers have to face the challenge in terms of employing the food styling and photography to promote their food because this factor has the positive impact on hotel image, satisfaction, price, and sales (Yim & Kim, 2017).

Consequently, if the business omitted to utilize the food styling and photography in their place, it will lead to a negative pact in terms of consumer satisfaction, price of product, and sales and image of business. Hence, food styling and food photography is a guideline to help create a beautiful and appetizing dish at Kitchen Corner Café which exceed beyond customer's expectation.

Objective

1. To study the importance of food styling and food photography towards customers' perspective at Kitchen Corner Café
2. To understand the basic technique of food photography that helps food presentation at Kitchen Corner Café.

Scope

This article proposed to explain the literature which related to the food styling and food photography based on the case study of Kitchen Corner Café, Bangkok, Thailand.

Literature review

Styling Considerations

The styling consideration needs several issues to consider to achieve the successful food photography. This involves food storytelling and props, composition, lighting control, post processing along with advertisement perspective. This process is the key to achieve beautiful and appetizing photos. To make food look fresh and appetizing for photo shooting for any types of food photography such as advertising, packaging, catalogs, recipes, restaurants, video and television, websites, blogs, cookbooks as Ferroni, (2012) mentioned. Moreover, the

process of using some basic photography skills to help bring out the beauty of food presentation to the customers.

Food Storytelling and Props

The process of using props for food storytelling including dinnerware, tablecloths, dishes and accessories, napkin and backdrops. These useful props can affect the mood and overall impression that presented to attract customer (Young, 2012).



Figure 1 Smoked Salmon Salad

As shown in Figure 1, adding some movements by showing the gesture of a human hand, shows the gentle attention in arranging food with passion which can give a photo a sense of movement that add value to the dish. This can create food storytelling to the photo that attract customer's interest

Next, in Figure 2, using wooden tabletops as a prop help creates feeling of home cooking. At the same time, using some accessories like small plant and selecting round green plate adds more greens to the dish. Additionally, the warm light also give a relaxing mood to the dish and this make it look more appetizing as mentioned by Dujardin, (2011).



Figure 2 Sea bass fillet

Composition

The use of camera angles such as diner, top down and straight on angle. Top down angle is shooting directly above the dish. In Figure 3, this allows customer to see every detail of the dish. Also, the customers will be able to see the contrast of color and variety cuts of shape. This angle cover overall of the food presentation (Ferroni, 2012).



Figure 3 Mango & sticky rice

Next, capturing the photo from the diner's angle which is from slightly on the side view of the dish. This angle in Figure 4, is to raise the highlight of the dish which allows the customer to see the food ingredients stacked which include onion, tomato, cheese, beef patty and lettuce. Moreover, an aluminum French fries' basket like the one in the photo is useful accessories that often used in many café. This create the plating to look more and add warm cozy feeling to the photo (Langford, 2000).



Figure 4 Beef Burger



Figure 5 Tom Yum Kung

The Figure 5, using the depth of field to blurred the white flower jar and still keep the jar in the background which give food storytelling to the photo, as well as, to highlight the shrimp as the main focal point. Moreover, this photo is using straight on angle which is an eye-level angle to isolate the focal point from the other subject by using close-up photography technique reported by Bellingham and Bybee, (2008).

Lighting Control

A process of using light to create a beautiful and mouthwatering plate of food. There are two types which include natural light and artificial light.

For example, in Figure 6, where the photo is being capture outdoor and natural light pass across the dish. This is to highlight the focal point and also add a mystery feeling to the photo. The natural light help set mood and warm tone with some shadow on the photo (Styler, 2006).



Figure 6 Pai's Tom Yum

However, there is another way beside natural light which in Figure 7, using studio light or lightbox which brightness can be controlled. Therefore, the mood and tone are not as natural as using natural light in term of adding warm light or to create a shadow to the photo, but this technique can enhance the sharpness and clear contrast of color (Carafoli and Smith,1992).



Figure 7 Kitchen Corner Burger

Post processing includes the color correction, exposure correction, layers and cloning correction of the photo as mentioned by Ferroni, (2012). In Figure 8, using layers to help the background of the photo to be blurred which help stand out the bread from the tray. Next, the exposure of the photo is to adjust the color of the picture and contrast in order to highlight the main focal



Figure 8 Kitchen Corner bread

point. Also, the layers give a depth and dimension to the photo as in the Figure 8, the close up on the hand gesture of brushing the bread and the second layer is the background of the tray with the remaining of bread. This give an impression of home cooking and casual style mood. Next, cloning is a way to concentrate on specific small detail on the food which customer can be surprisingly impress how this technique are able to show the glossy and smooth texture of the bread.

Advertisement perspective

Food photography has a significant role in advertisement as it can help attract customer's interest. Moreover, to achieve the best effective advertisement, the food photographer needs to know how to bring out the main focal point and tell the story. In Figure 9, this photo influence the customer's attraction to purchase the food



Figure 9 Beetroot Soup on Valentine's day

without eating it but with visual appealing. Furthermore, there is many ways to create a food advertisement which requires different skill sets.

For example, using food photography for food advertisement on magazine, cookbooks website, Facebook, Instagram and blogs which needs to be able to specialized the idea concept of the overall dish reported by Ferroni, (2012). In Figure 10, shows the food styling for advertisement such as magazine and cookbook. In this case, allow customers to see and understand more about the food, as well as ensure the customer what could be expected.



Figure 10 Smoked Salmon Toast

Therefore, food styling for camera can also be useful for websites, blogs and cookbook in order to write about food in more detail. The photo in Figure 10 show an impression of using natural light to focus on real food which attract the audience to desire to eat the food off the screen.

Furthermore, the Kitchen Corner's Café also promote the menu through social media for example, this Instagram post in Figure 11, shows food photo of overall dish at the café which allow the customers to view the dish on the menu and click like or comment the photo. Also, customer can click to share to their friends and access the profile to check out the address and contact number to visit the place.

Nowadays, advertisement is another way to use as a marketing tool where food photography and food styling play an important role in order to give visual food appealing and promote for the upselling.



Figure 11 Kitchen Corner Cafe

Discussion

Based on the observation, Kitchen Corner Café has become more well-known in Bangkok. The café is able to gain more customer by using food styling and food photography where this play a major role in preparing and presenting the dish. This shows the importance of the relationship between food styling and food photography. The food styling creates food storytelling which helps food to look more interesting. Applying food styling technique by using props as styling tips can describe food impression and add visual interest to the photo. In addition, the integration between food styling and food photography enhances the flavor, texture and color of the dish which change the perspective of food presentation (Gourmet Marketing, 2016). Therefore, this is the study of the essentials that need to be consider when create appetizing photo and to enhance each elements of the overall dish. Apart from this, to become a professional food stylist and food photographer requires strong culinary and artistic talents to pick out the best appealing photo for any specific types of advertisement as mentioned by Vivaldo and Flannigan, (2010). Furthermore, the study in the case of Kitchen Corner Café led to the solution of presenting food through the eye-appealing plays an important role in order to achieve great success in food industry.

Conclusion/Recommendation

Overall, food styling and food photography increase the value and express feeling for mood and tone of the food. These also helps increase the profit and attract customers to visit the Kitchen Corner Café. Also, applying food styling for photography helps the café capture the best shots which can be used for advertising since nowadays people tend to dine out and focus more on how food is presented. This will help the café give what customer expect and allow to create a food storytelling to the dish.

Additionally, food styling and food photography helps make food look more appealing and beautiful. Also, food styling is able to stimulate five senses which attract the customer interest towards food by eye-appealing. Therefore, food styling is to arrange food in the way that is presentable by applying the artistic knowledge and culinary skills to achieve the best impression photo which referred to Kopcok, (2018). This can also offer a different perspective on food and allow customer to understand more about food background.

Last but not least, the Kitchen Corner Café owner should be able to engage food styling and food photography to the marketing tools in a wider range for example, integrating the

7Ps to increase the sales and gain more profits. Therefore, to build a strong customer relationship, the café can utilize the food photography technique to create food trends and styles in order to compete with the competitor. Besides, food styling can also use for developing product and packaging towards food industry and photography industry. In summary, these tools will help improve the café's social media presence and play a significant role to exceed customer's interest at first sight.

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