

When Michelin Meets Instagram: Human Branding Strategies of Starred Chefs

Karine RAÏES

Emlyon Business School

Mariem El Euch Maalej

Essca School of Management

Jean-Louis Chandon

Inseec

Marielle Salvador

Institut Lyfe

Cite as:

RAÏES Karine, El Euch Maalej Mariem, Chandon Jean-Louis, Salvador Marielle (2025), When Michelin Meets Instagram: Human Branding Strategies of Starred Chefs. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 54th, (126151)

Paper from the 54th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, Spain, May 25-30, 2025



When Michelin Meets Instagram: Human Branding Strategies of Starred Chefs

Abstract: Food experiences become essential for tourism and travel decisions and social media is playing an increasingly important role in how tourists identify and select restaurants. In this context, starred chefs are ever more present on social media to showcase their positioning, nurture their human brand and develop engagement. Existing literature identifies two branding strategies for chefs: one emphasizing their persona and human dimension, and another focusing on their professional or commercial identity. Our study reveals a more nuanced and multifaceted approach to human brand positioning. By analyzing 4,362 Instagram posts from 16 Michelin-starred chefs over two years using the LIWC text analysis tool and a configurational methodology (fsQCA), we identify diverse content strategies that express their human brand and culinary identity and succeeded to engage audiences and strengthen their presence on social networks. We finally discuss how these strategies may influence gastronomy tourism and destination attractiveness.

Keywords: *human branding strategies, social media branding, starred chefs, gastronomy tourism, LIWC, fsQCA*