

HOW CONTROLLED DEMAND AND COMMERCIAL CLARITY GENERATED ~€540K IN ANNUAL REVENUE



A real operating case study on systems, control,
and compounding growth.



THE PROBLEM

Neighbourhood experienced a major PR-led demand spike before it had the systems to support it.

THE RESULT

Operational strain, full team loss, damaged reviews, and prolonged instability.

THE INTERVENTION

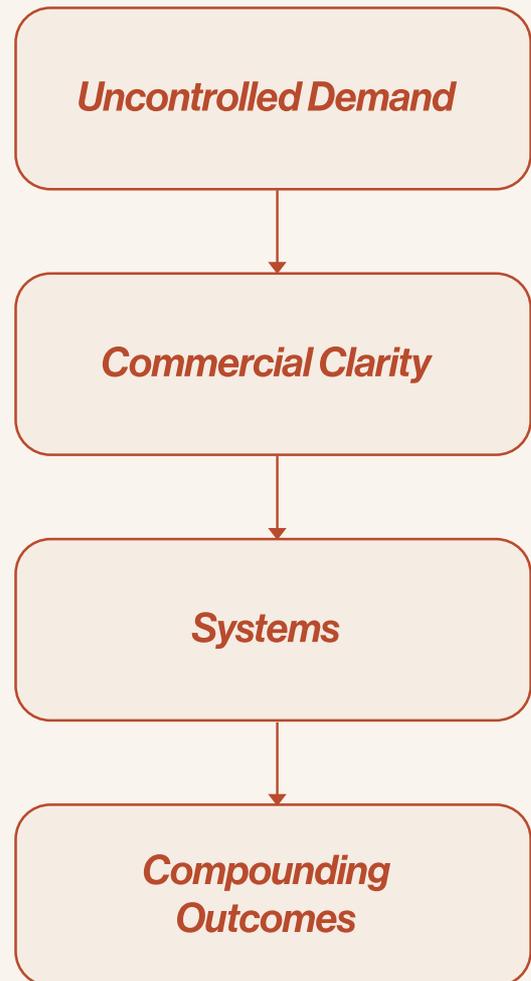
Commercial clarity was established through defined core offerings. Only then were systems introduced.

THE OUTCOME

Controlled demand, healthier unit economics, and ~€540k in gross year-over-year revenue growth.

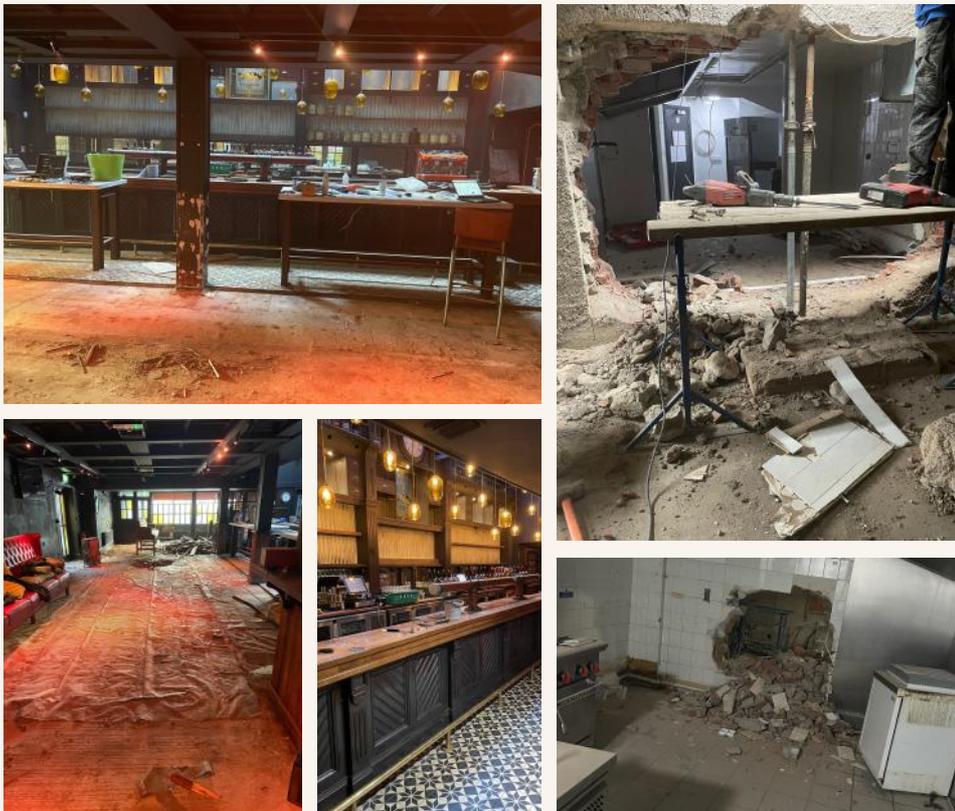
THE LESSON

Growth does not come from demand. It comes from control.



THE BUILD

Neighbourhood was built in 2019. With limited capital and no operating playbook, the restaurant was constructed hands-on, under real constraint.

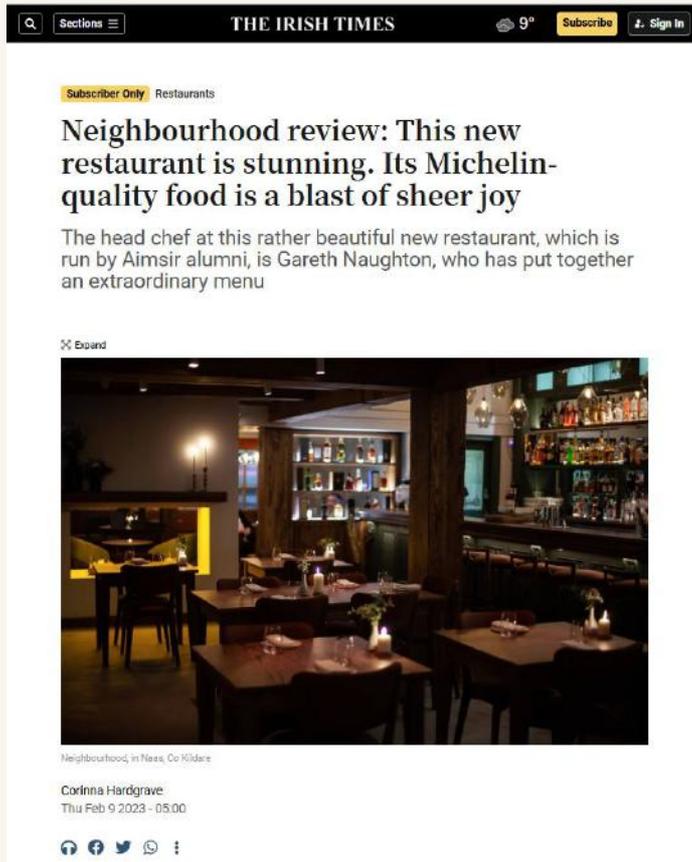


The ambition was high. The systems were not yet there.



THE PR SPIKE

An Irish Times review by Corinna Hardgrave changed everything.



Demand surged nationally, almost overnight.

The restaurant was full — but the business was not ready.

Capacity, staffing, processes, and expectations were misaligned.

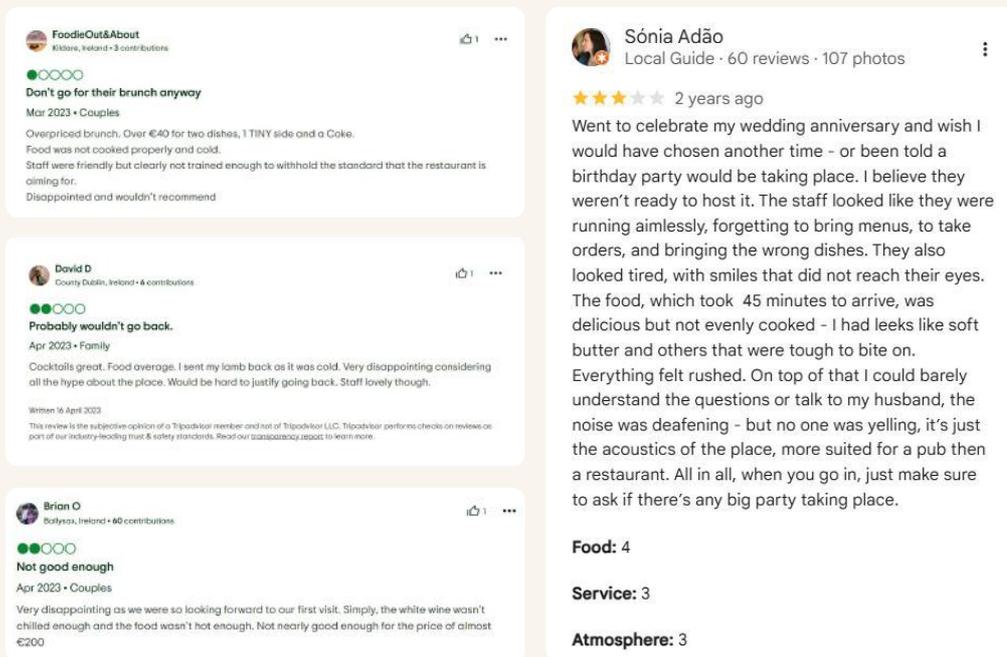


UNCONTROLLED DEMAND

The impact was immediate:

- ▲ The entire founding team left.
- ▲ Service quality deteriorated.
- ▲ Reviews collapsed (as low as ~3.9★).
- ▲ Brand damage lingered well beyond the spike.

Volume did not equal growth. It amplified weakness.



The image shows a collage of four TripAdvisor reviews. On the left, three smaller reviews are stacked vertically, each with a 2-star rating and a negative title. On the right, a larger review by Sónia Adão is shown, featuring a 3.9-star rating and a detailed negative text. Below the reviews, the text 'PR SPIKE PERIOD' is written in red.

FoodieOut&About
Kildare, Ireland • 3 contributions
2 stars
Don't go for their brunch anyway
Mar 2023 • Couples
Overpriced brunch. Over €40 for two dishes, 1 TINY side and a Coke.
Food was not cooked properly and cold.
Staff were friendly but clearly not trained enough to withhold the standard that the restaurant is aiming for.
Disappointed and wouldn't recommend

David D
County Dublin, Ireland • 6 contributions
2 stars
Probably wouldn't go back.
Apr 2023 • Family
Cocktails great. Food average. I sent my lamb back as it was cold. Very disappointing considering all the hype about the place. Would be hard to justify going back. Staff lovely though.
Written 16 April 2023
This review is the subjective opinion of a Tripadvisor member and not of Tripadvisor LLC. Tripadvisor performs checks on reviews as part of our industry-leading trust & safety standards. Read our transparency report to learn more.

Brian O
Cork City, Ireland • 60 contributions
2 stars
Not good enough
Apr 2023 • Couples
Very disappointing as we were so looking forward to our first visit. Simply, the white wine wasn't chilled enough and the food wasn't hot enough. Not nearly good enough for the price of almost €200

Sónia Adão
Local Guide • 60 reviews • 107 photos
3.9 stars • 2 years ago
Went to celebrate my wedding anniversary and wish I would have chosen another time - or been told a birthday party would be taking place. I believe they weren't ready to host it. The staff looked like they were running aimlessly, forgetting to bring menus, to take orders, and bringing the wrong dishes. They also looked tired, with smiles that did not reach their eyes. The food, which took 45 minutes to arrive, was delicious but not evenly cooked - I had leeks like soft butter and others that were tough to bite on. Everything felt rushed. On top of that I could barely understand the questions or talk to my husband, the noise was deafening - but no one was yelling, it's just the acoustics of the place, more suited for a pub than a restaurant. All in all, when you go in, just make sure to ask if there's any big party taking place.
Food: 4
Service: 3
Atmosphere: 3

PR SPIKE PERIOD



THE REALISATION

The issue was not marketing.

The issue was not demand.

The issue was **lack of commercial clarity.**

Before systems could work, the business needed to answer one question clearly:

***What are we selling — and to whom —
on each day of the week?***



CORE OFFERINGS (THE TURNING POINT)

The first real intervention was defining core offerings:



Thursday Steak Night



Taste of Neighbourhood



Live at NBHD

These offerings:

- ▲ Filled low-demand days
- ▲ Segmented guests by intent and price sensitivity
- ▲ Stabilised weekly cashflow
- ▲ Protected the premium à la carte experience on weekends
- ▲ Created predictable containers for demand

Without this step, nothing else would have worked.



CLARITY ENABLES SYSTEMS

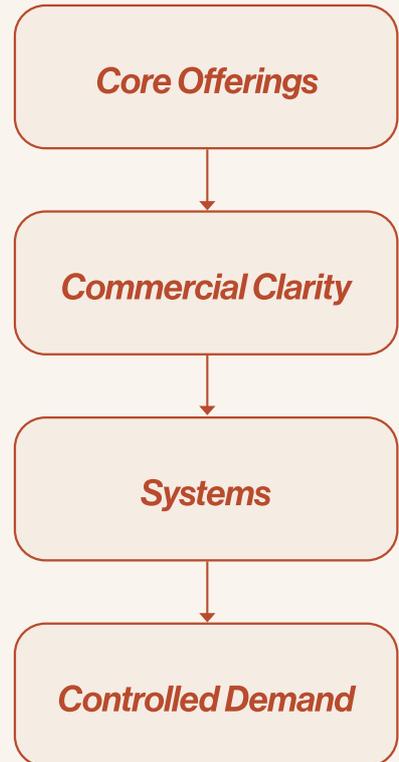
Once offerings were defined:

- ▲ Capacity became predictable
- ▲ Labour planning stabilised
- ▲ Marketing stopped being guesswork
- ▲ Data became meaningful

Only after clarity existed could systems be installed with confidence.

“

***Systems do not fix chaos
They require structure***



WEEKLY GOVERNANCE

Decision-making moved from instinct to evidence.

Weekly dashboards governed:

- ▲ Revenue
- ▲ Labour percentage
- ▲ Covers vs turnout
- ▲ Product mix

Weekly Business Dashboard									
3									
4	Gross Profit Margin %	22%							
5	Labour Cost % vs Sales	41.41%							
6	Average Revenue per Labour Hour	€52.01							
7	Labour Cost by Department								
8		Kitchen	27.78%						
9		Front of House	56.61%						
10		Bar	15.60%						
11	Payment Summary								
12	Mastercard	€ 6,449.10							
13	Visa	€ 21,908.91							
14	Cash	€ 4,185.00							
15	Gift Certificate	€ 2,102.20							
16	Table Occupancy Rate (%)	14.53%							
17	Average Turnover Time	1:54.27							
18	Avg. Kitchen Ticket Time and Variance	22:45	67%						
19	Reservations vs Actual Turnout		91%						
20									
21									
22	Covers vs Same Week Last Year	This Week: 456	Vs. Last Year: 286						
23	Net Sales vs Same Week Last Year	€ 33,809.20	€ 18,072.55						
24									
25									
26	Walk-in Covers	14	24						
27	Reservations	442	427						
28	Cancelled Covers	51	96						
29	No Show Covers	6	8						
30	NPS / Google Review Score Trend	4.70	4.5						
31									



This replaced emotional reactions with calm, repeatable decisions. Control was rebuilt week by week.



MENU ENGINEERING & UNIT ECONOMICS

Menu strategy changed fundamentally.

- ▲ Full seasonal overhauls were stopped
- ▲ Proven bestsellers were retained
- ▲ Prices were increased on winning items
- ▲ Poor performers were removed
- ▲ Decisions were guided by weekly data

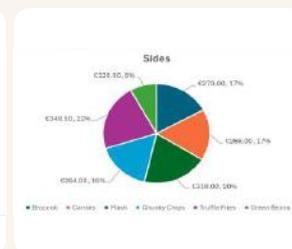
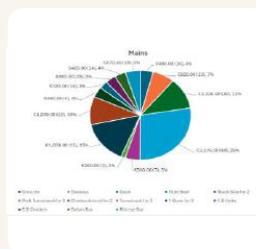
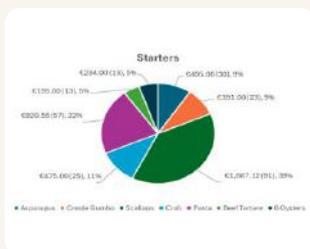
Before



After



The menu stopped being reinvented. It started being governed.



PREPAID & STRIPE

SevenRooms and Stripe were introduced to capture revenue **before service**.

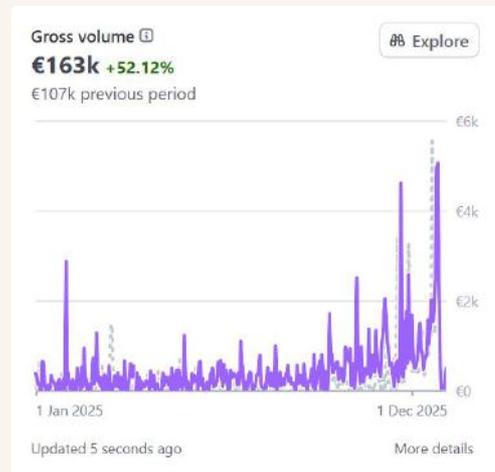
Stripe revenue included:

- ▲ Vouchers
- ▲ Pre-arrival upgrades
- ▲ Deposits
- ▲ Prepaid experiences

This reduced volatility, improved cashflow, and increased demand quality. Not all revenue is equal.



2024



2025

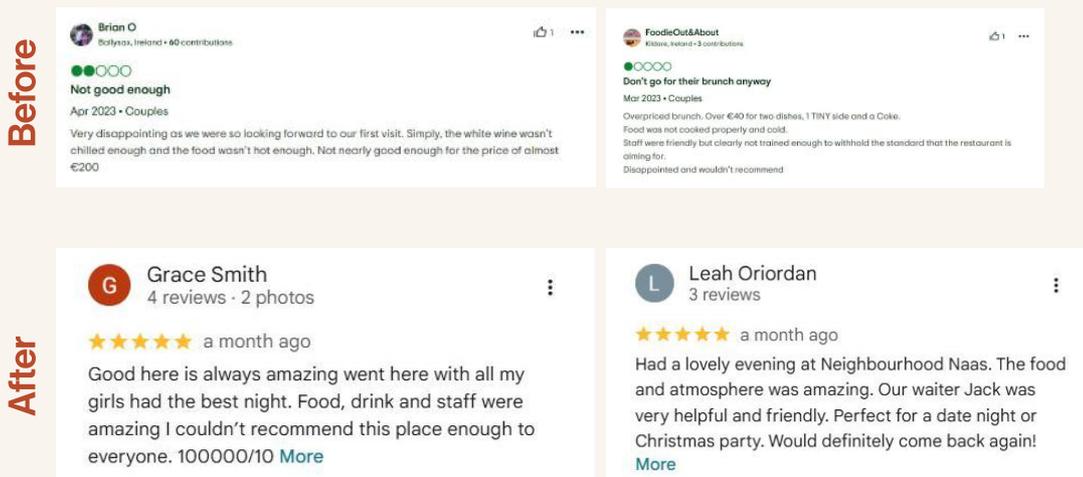


REPUTATION AS A SYSTEM

Reviews were treated as an operational output.

An automated feedback loop was implemented:

- ▲ Post-visit owner email
- ▲ Positive feedback → prompted for public review
- ▲ Negative feedback → resolved privately



Results:

- ▲ Rating recovered from ~3.9★ to ~4.1★ organically
- ▲ Increased to ~4.4★ after systemisation
- ▲ ~80% of issues resolved before going public

Reputation followed operations.



MARKETING IS FUEL

Marketing is not a strategy. It is fuel.

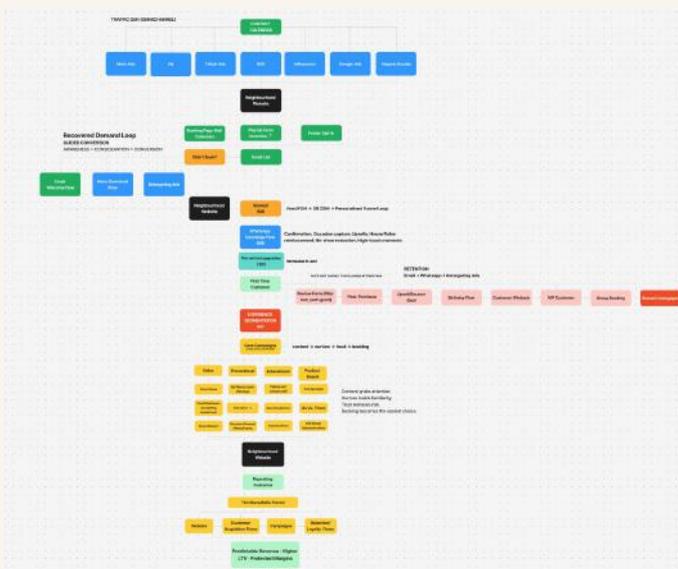
Before control, fuel causes fires.

After control, fuel creates momentum.

Once offerings, systems, and capacity were clear, traffic sources could be layered safely:

- ▲ Meta
- ▲ Google
- ▲ Influencers
- ▲ Partnerships

Marketing became predictable — not risky.



AUTOMATION & RETENTION

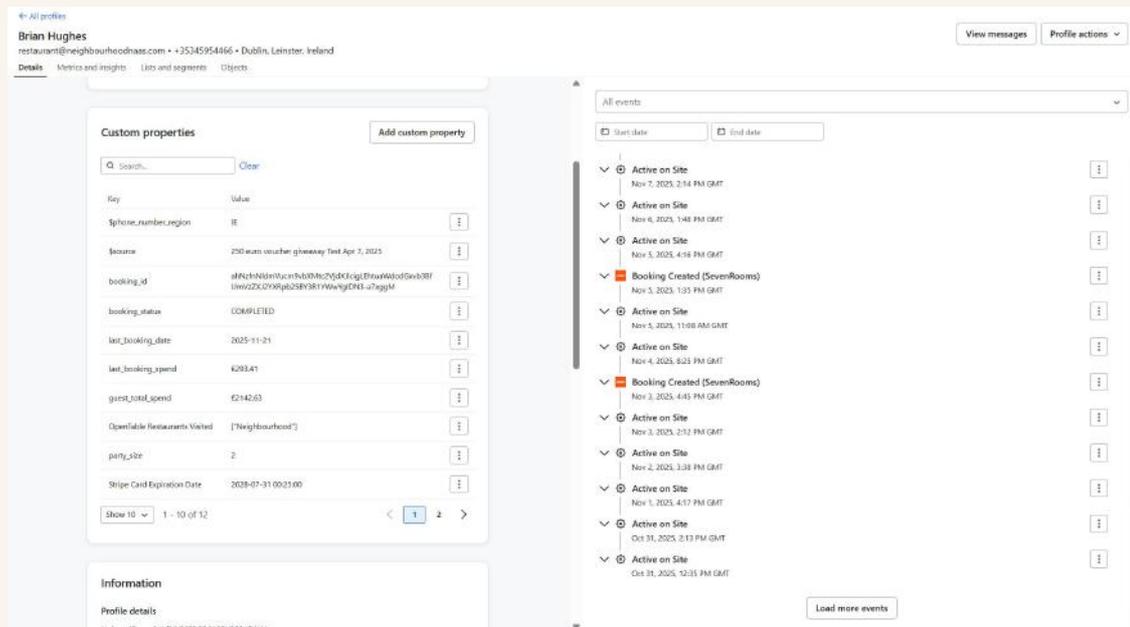
Most restaurants leak revenue after the first visit.

This system closed the gaps through:

- ▲ Automated guest capture
- ▲ Pre-arrival conversion
- ▲ Experience laddering
- ▲ Retention and return visit triggers

This was not marketing automation.

It was **revenue protection**.



The screenshot displays a customer profile for Brian Hughes. The profile includes contact information and a list of custom properties. The events section shows a sequence of 'Active on Site' and 'Booking Created' events.

Key	Value
Phone_number_region	IE
Source	290 wsm ucouter gateway Test Apr 7, 2025
booking_id	#Nc4hNl8wUcnRv638McZV5dKfUgEhxaWsdGvb3RfUhw2ZxU9Rpb258Y381FWwVgEh3-a7aggM
booking_status	COMPLETED
last_booking_date	2025-11-21
last_booking_spend	€293.41
guest_total_spend	€2142.63
Openable Restaurants Visited	["Neighbourhood"]
party_size	2
Stripe Card Expiration Date	2028-07-31 00:23:00

Information
Profile details
Unique ID: 079-24102E9E05A35V98B1FXJ44

All events

- Active on Site (Nov 7, 2025, 2:14 PM GMT)
- Active on Site (Nov 6, 2025, 1:48 PM GMT)
- Active on Site (Nov 5, 2025, 4:16 PM GMT)
- Booking Created (SevenRooms) (Nov 5, 2025, 1:35 PM GMT)
- Active on Site (Nov 5, 2025, 11:08 AM GMT)
- Active on Site (Nov 4, 2025, 6:23 PM GMT)
- Booking Created (SevenRooms) (Nov 3, 2025, 4:45 PM GMT)
- Active on Site (Nov 3, 2025, 2:12 PM GMT)
- Active on Site (Nov 2, 2025, 3:38 PM GMT)
- Active on Site (Nov 1, 2025, 4:17 PM GMT)
- Active on Site (Oct 31, 2025, 2:13 PM GMT)
- Active on Site (Oct 31, 2025, 12:35 PM GMT)

REVENUE OUTCOME

Toast — Gross Revenue

2024: €1,155,305

2025: €1,640,148

Increase: +€484,843

Stripe — Gross Revenue

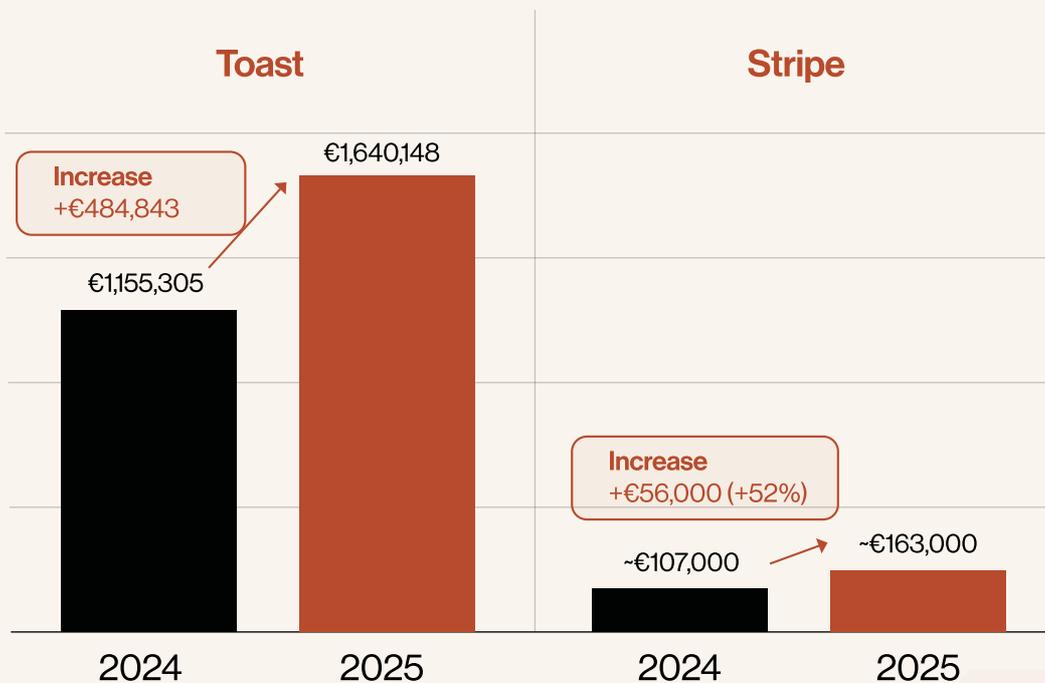
2024: ~€107,000

2025: ~€163,000

Increase: +€56,000 (+52%)

Total Gross Year-over-Year Impact:

~€540,843



COMPOUNDING

Outcomes extended beyond revenue:

- ▲ Predictable weeks
- ▲ Stable Labour planning
- ▲ Higher AOV
- ▲ Wine revenue +27%
- ▲ Drinks revenue +32

The business moved from survival to control —
and then to compounding.



WHO THIS IS FOR

This system works if you:

- ▲ Want predictable demand, not spikes
- ▲ Care about margin and longevity
- ▲ Are willing to commit to systems

This system does not work if you:

- ▲ Want quick wins
- ▲ Want ads without structure
- ▲ Won't change operations

