

DOCTRINE · VOLUME I

The Interpretation Gap™

Why hospitality brands are being misread by AI systems.

An intelligence briefing on machine-mediated hospitality discovery, AI concierge systems,
and the future of recommendation clarity.

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<https://www.thefoodarchitect.restaurant/interpretation-gap>

THESIS

A discipline that did not exist last year.

Hospitality brands are no longer evaluated only by guests, critics, or search engines. They are increasingly evaluated by machines — language models, AI concierges, recommendation layers, and interpretation engines that read a brand before any human ever does.

These systems do not visit. They do not taste. They do not feel. They interpret. And the distance between what a hospitality brand is and what these systems conclude it is — that distance is the Interpretation Gap.

The gap is not a marketing problem. It is not an SEO problem. It is an interpretation problem — and it requires a new discipline.

DEFINITION

What the gap actually is.

The Interpretation Gap is the measurable distance between a hospitality brand's intended identity and the identity reconstructed by machine systems when they read that brand's distributed signals.

Every restaurant, hotel, and hospitality group emits signals across dozens of surfaces: websites, menus, reviews, listings, profiles, press, social, third-party citations. Machines read those signals asymmetrically. They weight some, ignore others, and assemble a composite reading that becomes the brand — from the machine's perspective.

When that composite diverges from reality, the brand is misread. Misreading at scale becomes misrecommendation. Misrecommendation at scale becomes lost revenue, lost reputation, and lost positioning.

CONTEXT

Why this matters now.

Discovery is shifting. A growing share of restaurant and hotel decisions begin inside an AI interface — ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews, Perplexity, Apple Intelligence, embedded concierge layers inside booking and delivery platforms.

In each of these interfaces, the user does not see ten blue links. They see one synthesized answer. That answer is the result of an interpretation. The brand that is interpreted accurately wins. The brand that is interpreted poorly is invisible — or worse, recommended for the wrong occasion, the wrong guest, the wrong moment.

For the first time in the history of hospitality, the recommendation layer is non-human. The discipline required to be read correctly by that layer is also non-traditional.

CATEGORY

A new advisory discipline.

Luxury and institutional hospitality already pays for cultural intelligence, brand audits, trend forecasting, guest sentiment analysis, and positioning reviews. These are accepted, mature advisory categories.

Machine interpretation intelligence is the next category. It sits adjacent to those disciplines and answers a question none of them answer: how do AI systems currently read this brand, and is that reading aligned with the brand's actual identity?

The deliverable is not software. It is not a dashboard. It is a Reading — an institutional document that maps the gap between identity and interpretation, and prescribes the corrections required to close it.

FRAMEWORK

Five dimensions of machine-era visibility.

Interpretation is not a single signal. It is composed of five dimensions that AI systems weigh when they assemble a reading of a hospitality brand. Together they form the PEDAL framework.

Positioning. The category and tier a brand occupies in the machine's taxonomy.

Expression. The language, tone, and vocabulary that distinguishes the brand from its category.

Distribution. The breadth and consistency of signal across surfaces the machine reads.

Authority. The third-party validation that anchors the brand's claims.

Legibility. The structural clarity that allows a machine to parse the brand without ambiguity.

AUDIENCE

Who this document is for.

This doctrine is written for the people responsible for how a hospitality brand is perceived — owners, operators, brand directors, marketing leaders, agency principals, and the strategists who advise them.

It is not a guide for ranking on Google. It is not a playbook for social media. It is a framing document for an emerging discipline that will, over the next decade, sit at the center of how hospitality brands are discovered, evaluated, and recommended.

PRINCIPLE

The Reading is the product.

The most important shift to understand is this: the institutional artifact — the Reading itself — is the product.

Not the software. Not the dashboard. The document that maps a brand's interpretation gap, names its causes, and prescribes its corrections.

That is what luxury hospitality has always paid for: clarity, authored by someone qualified to author it.

NEXT

Commission a Reading for your brand.

The diagnostic produces a first-pass interpretation report. The institutional Reading is the authored, advisory-grade document built on top of it.

<https://www.thefoodarchitect.restaurant/interpretation-gap>

This document is the portable institutional artifact — for circulation, citation, and the record.