

Ashdale Insights

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Are We Being Served

This month we look at whether operators put customer service at the heart of their offer?

Regardless of where you live the quality of food and the creativity around the décor of many restaurants is at an all-time high. It is also fair to say that the choice and variety of different places to eat out has never been greater. As a result of this many restaurants are increasingly finding it difficult to recruit and retain staff. As uncertainty around Brexit continues a number of industry bodies continue to voice their concerns over fears that these shortages will only get worse going forward.

One of the problems with a high turnover of staff is that venues can sometimes forgo investing in the right training for new starters as it is seen as a cost rather than an investment. Albeit a different industry I remember way back in



the day when working one summer for a well know high street retailer how much emphasis they placed on customer service. We were told in no uncertain terms that if a customer needed some assistance we were to stop what we were doing immediately and do whatever we could to help them. If they needed to find something in the store we were told to take them to the right aisle and not just provide them with directions or point! So do you put customer service at the heart of your offer?

Do it right from the start

While what you put on your menu and the

quality of what you deliver is incredibly important, it is the overall experience which your customers will remember. This will begin from the moment they begin interacting with you. This could be how easy they find your website to navigate or how friendly and helpful your team is when they phone up to make a reservation.

To read this in full and previous articles go to Ashdale Articles

www.ashdale-consulting.com

Inflation was helped as prices of motor fuels rose less than this time a year ago

Lidl was once again the UK's fastest-growing retailer, followed closely by Aldi who also performed well

The overall index has bounced between zero and (13) since February 2016, suggesting that consumers feel pessimistic about household finances and the UK

Economic Headlines

These headlines are from our Economic Bulletin.

CPI for January 2018 was +3.0% flat on +3.0% in December, higher than expected, adding further pressure for policymakers to hike interest rates again, possibly in May.

Latest figures from the ONS show that unemployment increased

to 4.4%, although this was the biggest rise in almost five years, the employment rate also increased.

The second estimate for GDP for Q4 was +0.4%, down from +0.5% in the preliminary estimate, which meant Britain grew by just +1.4% during 2017.

CPI	+3.0%
RPI	+4.0%
CPIH	+2.7%

UNEMPLOYMENT	+4.4%
PAY	+2.5%

Q4 GDP	+0.4%
TRADE BALANCE	(£10.8BN)
SERVICES	+£26.40BN

Retail Headlines

These headlines are from our Retail Bulletin.

Retail sales rose +1.6% in January 2018 vs. January 2017, helped by year-on-year growth from sports equipment, games and toys, which were up +10.9%.

2018 sees both High Street retailers and supermarkets come under

pressure with Debenhams, Tesco, Sainsbury's and Morrison's all announcing job cuts.

Latest 12 week figures saw the Grocery Market grow by +3.4%, as customers reined in their spending after a record breaking Christmas.

RETAIL VOLUMES	+1.6%
RETAIL VALUES	+4.4%
INTERNET SALES	+9.1%

GROCERY MARKET	+3.4%
GROCERY INFLATION	+3.6%

Lidl	+16.3%
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Consumer Spending Headlines

These headlines are from our Consumer Spending Bulletin.

Average family spending power was down (**£1**) a week in January at £200, extending the squeeze in household incomes into the New Year.

The estimated average mortgage debt in December was £123,049,

meaning the average annual interest paid would be £3,138 per household (based on a rate of 2.55%).

GfK's UK Consumer Confidence Index was **(10)** in February down **(1)** compared to January, as consumers remain subdued despite talk of higher wages this year.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	£776
TAXES & COST OF LIVING	£576
DISCRETIONARY	£200

HOUSEHOLD DEBT	£57,830
EXC MORTGAGES	£7,616

Overall Confidence	(10)
LY Personal Finances	+0
NY Personal Finances	+5

Cider Update

Latest data from HMRC shows that cider returns in Q4 2017 were up +4.4% on the same quarter a year ago.

The quarter started off slowly as returns in October were down (1.7%) on October last year.

In contrast returns in November were very

positive, +32.5% vs. November 2016.

The quarter then saw a slow finish as returns in December 2017 were down (8.5%) vs. December last year.

A result of all of this has been that Cider returns on a MAT basis continue to be in growth, currently up +5.6%.

Made Wine returns where flavoured Cider sit has now started to decline with Q4 down (2.8%) vs Q4 2016.

Source: HMRC February 2018



A strong performance in November saw Cider returns for the calendar year 2018 in growth up +5.6%

Casual Dining Update

The ALMR and British Hospitality Association (BHA) have announced a merger to create a new industry body call UK Hospitality (UKH) to represent a sector estimated to be worth £130bn.

UKH will cover pubs, coffee shops, hotels, restaurants, leisure parks, night clubs, contract

caterer as well as entertainment and visitor attractions.

Pitch returns on 29th March to bring food, drink and events to Stratford during the warmer months of the year.

A 196" HD screen will show films as part of the outdoor cinema and World Cup matches.

Group bookings, office parties and VIP booths with table service are available, and the entire 350-capacity venue can be hired exclusively.



UK Hospitality to represent a sector estimated to be worth £130bn, representing 65,000 venues

Weather Summaries

For more months and years then simply go to:

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JANUARY	
	Temp = +0.4 Rain = 110 Sun = 103
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Started mild but changeable getting colder 3rd week was cold with snow in Scotland, NI and Northern Eng. 	

FEBRUARY	
	Temp = (1.3) Rain = 73 Sun = 137
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsettled 1st half of the month, finishing colder with snow Coldest February since 2010 but also 2nd sunniest since 1929 	

February steadily became colder and snow was an issue in many areas at month-end

Ashdale Business Consulting Ltd
6 Lichfield Street
Burton-on-Trent
Staffordshire
DE14 3RD

Phone
07967 197533
E-mail
chris@ashdale-consulting.com
Twitter
@Ashdale2012

Helping clients...

Sell More
Charge More
Lower Costs

About Ashdale Business Consulting

Ashdale Business Consulting is an independent consultancy providing analysis, insight and strategy across the UK alcohol and hospitality industry. Specialist areas include Strategic & Marketing Analysis, Scenario Planning & Forecasting, Category Management and Profit & Value Chain Modelling. We also deliver training across a range of business and marketing activities, all of which help to improve an organisations ability to make more profitable decisions.

Clients range from individual outlets and microbrewers through to regional/national brewers, as well as global drinks companies and trade organisations.

For more information go to our website:

www.ashdale-consulting.com

For more information about our FREE and chargeable eLearning training go to:

www.http://ashdale-academy.teachable.com

Dates and Events for Your Diary

General

March

1st St David's Day
11th Mother's Day
13th Spring Statement
17th St Patrick's Day
25th Clocks Go Forward
30th Good Friday

April

1st Easter Sunday
2nd Easter Monday
23rd St George's Day

Licensed Trade

March

4th Newcastle Wine Fair
12th-18th Sheffield Beer Wk
14th-15th Beer X (Liverpool)
23rd-24th Whisky Live (Lnd)

April

4th Newcastle Wine Fair

Sports

March

2nd-4th Athletics World
Indoor (B'ham)
9th-18th Winter Paralympics
(South Korea)
13th-16th Cheltenham
17th-23rd Sports Relief

April

4th-15th Commonwealth
Games (Aus)
4th-15th Masters (USA)
14th Grand National

Ashdale Training Dates

Licensed Trade

March

8th How To Make More Profit (BoT) **SOLD OUT**
20th How To Make More Profit (BoT)

April

19th How To Make More Profit (Sheff)

Marketing

March

Currently no open workshops

April

Currently no open workshops

