

Ashdale Insights

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Table for one

This month we ask are do operators do enough when it comes to solo diners?

The ever changing nature of business means that more and more of us have to travel around the country (and world) in order to carry out our responsibilities. Anyone familiar with the railway stations of London, Manchester, Birmingham and the like can't fail to notice the increasing number of non-tourists dragging suitcases or other overnight bags with them as they go about their journeys.

Over the last few years I have joined this migratory work-force and have found myself working away from home sometimes for weeks if not months at a time, depending on the nature of the project.

As a result of this when I have finished work I am often faced with the prospect of finding somewhere to eat, usually by myself. It's fair to say as a solo diner my experiences have



been mixed at best. It's also true to say that it's no longer just individuals away on business who find themselves eating alone. A survey by the restaurant app Bookatable suggested that there had been a 38% increase in bookings for a table for one in the last three years. The bookings website OpenTable also recently reported that reservations for one have increased across the UK by 160% since 2014 (to 2019).

So what can operators do to take advantage of this growing trend?

Elephant in the room...

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the fact that many food operators don't like solo diners. For example one American outlet clearly instructs singletons to "respect everyone's time...whatever you do, don't dilly dally". Hardly the most welcoming of attitudes.

The thinking being that one person sitting at a table for two is somehow halving the revenue you should be taking.

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

www.ashdale-consulting.com

The largest downward contribution this month again came from restaurants and hotels, as well as clothing and footwear, particularly women's jackets

Co-op continued its run of growth, which stretches back to May 2018, with sales up +2.7%

The first month of 2020 has given us a mini Boris-bounce with a two-point increase in our Consumer Confidence headline score

Economic Headlines

These headlines are from our Economic Bulletin.

CPI for December 2019 was +1.3% down on +1.5% in November, this has raised speculation as to whether there will be a cut in interest rates.

Latest figures from the ONS show that the unemployment rate was 3.8%, as wage growth

continues to increase ahead of inflation at +3.2%.

The latest estimate for GDP for the 3-months to November 2019 was +0.1%, this marks a slight slowdown versus previous months.

CPI	+1.3%
RPI	+2.2%
CPIH	+1.4%

UNEMPLOYMENT	+3.8%
PAY	+3.2%

3-Mth to Nov-19 GDP	+0.1%
TRADE BALANCE	+£1.09
SERVICES	+£28.81BN

Retail Headlines

These headlines are from our Retail Bulletin.

Retail sales rose +0.9% in December 2019 vs.

December 2018, which was much lower than had been expected, raising concerns over what the future may bring.

Retail sales were disappointing across the board with Food stores

hard hit, with the quantity bought falling by the biggest amount since December 2016.

Latest 12 week figures saw the Grocery Market grow +0.3%, with both Dry January and Veganuary having a positive impact on their respective categories.

RETAIL VOLUMES	+0.9%
RETAIL VALUES	+1.5%
INTERNET SALES	+11.6%

GROCERY MARKET	+0.3%
GROCERY INFLATION	+1.0%
Lidl	+11.1%

Consumer Spending Headlines

These headlines are from our Consumer Spending Bulletin.

Average family spending power was up £14 a week in October at £219, this is a three and a half year high as inflation falls to +1.5%. **No update**

The estimated average mortgage debt in November was £131,724,

meaning the average annual interest paid would be £3,161 per household (based on a rate of 2.4%).

GfK's UK Consumer Confidence Index was (9) in January, driven by the uptick in the jobs and housing markets, coupled with low headline inflation and interest rates.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	£820
TAXES & COST OF LIVING	£601
DISCRETIONARY	£219

HOUSEHOLD DEBT	£59,982
EXC MORTGAGES	£8,096

Overall Confidence	(9)
LY Personal Finances	+1
NY Personal Finances	+6

Beer Update

Latest data from the British Beer & Pub Association shows that beer sales in Q4 2019 were up +1.1% on the same quarter a year ago.

The growth was driven by sales through Supermarkets & Convenience Stores as sales through Pubs, Bars & Restaurants declined in the quarter.

Sales through Pubs, Bars & Restaurants in the UK in Q4 were down (1.5%). This compares to growth of +2.0% in 32 this year and a growth of +3.1% in Q4 in 2018.

Sales through Supermarkets & Convenience Stores in the UK in Q4 were up +3.2% compared to the same quarter last year.

This compares to growth of +6.0% in Q3 and growth of +4.0% in Q4 in 2018.

Total sales on a MAT basis are up +1.1%.

Source: BBPA January 2020



Despite comparison to a World Cup year in 2018 and concerns over Brexit, 2019 saw total beer sales in growth for the 3rd year running

Supermarkets Update

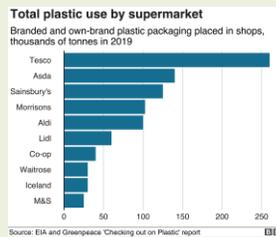
Despite the increased demand for non-alcoholic drinks and the growing popularity of Veganuary, Britain's supermarkets struggled to increase sales last month, according to the latest data from Kantar Worldpanel.

Sainsbury's has promised to reduce its net carbon emissions to zero over the next 20 years. The

supermarket chain, which is the second largest in the UK, has said it will spend £1bn to reach the target. It pledged to reduce emissions from areas like refrigeration and transport.

Tesco is removing plastic wrapping from its multipack tins in an effort to cut down on waste.

They say they will remove 350 tonnes of plastic a year by working with the likes of Heinz and Green Giant to replace plastic-wrapped multipacks with multi-buy deals.



Late last year Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, Morrisons and Waitrose pledged to clear "black plastics" from shelves

Weather Summaries

For more months and years then simply go to:

www.ashdale-consulting.com

DECEMBER		
MILD	DRY	Temp = +1.9
COLD		Rain = 99
		Sun = 92
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting mild, then much colder before becoming mild again Slightly warmer than average but with less sunshine 		

JANUARY		
	MILD	Temp = +2.0
		Rain = 100
		Sun = 94
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The middle of the month was unsettled, quite windy but mild The month ended quite wet with some snow on higher ground 		

Frosts were generally fewer than average – some heavy snow in northern Scotland

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Helping clients...

Sell More
Charge More
Lower Costs

About Ashdale Business Consulting

I help my clients **sell more, charge more** and **lower costs**.

Having been a client myself I understand you always have **more things which need doing** than you ever have time for. Sometimes you also need **additional skills** or **experience** to complement those already in your organisation.

Sound familiar?

That's where help. I provide an independent flexible resource to draw from on just those occasions. I work across a range of different industry sectors providing **analysis, insight** and **strategic thinking**, however I specialise in helping the UK alcohol and hospitality sector.

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 my website:

www.ashdale-consulting.com

Dates and Events for Your Diary

General

February

14th Valentine's Day
25th Shrove Tuesday

March

1st St David's Day
11th Budget
17th St Patrick's Day
22nd Mother's Day
29th Clocks Go Back

Licensed Trade

February

4th - 5th Pub 20
19th National Burger Awards
27th - 29th BrewLND

March

11th-12th Beer X (SIBA)
25th-26th Casual Dining Show

Sports

February

2nd Super Bowl (USA)

March

1st League Cup Final (Lnd)
15th Grand Prix (Aus)
22nd Grand Prix (Bahrain)

Ashdale Training Dates

Helping Pubs & Bars Make More Money

No more Open Workshops in 2019_

For more information [click here](#).