

# Ashdale Quarterly Newsletter

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## Dealing with difficult customers

*This quarter we ask how effective are operators at dealing with difficult customers?*

No matter who you are, at some point in your life you will have had a situation when you or those with you have felt the need to complain about something while out in a restaurant or other hospitality venue. I would like to think that you handled the situation well and didn't make too much of a fuss even if you felt that things weren't as they should be.

Thinking back to when it happened, how did the staff at the venue re-act? Was your issue dealt with swiftly and effectively? Were you completely happy with the outcome?

Whether we like it or not, anyone who works in this industry knows that from time to time you will have to deal with customers who have problems. All being well in these situations it is hoped that the customer behaves in a calm, logical



and fair manner. However the reality is that on some of these occasions this simply just isn't the case.

This leads me to ask the question, how effective are operators at dealing with difficult customers?

### **The root cause...**

Whilst there are a myriad of different reasons why a customer may become difficult when in your venue, in most cases these can be grouped together under two broad headings. Either it relates to something you have control over or it doesn't. Let me explain. Things which you have control over will include the quality, cooking and temperature

of the food you serve. It will also embrace the quality and speed of service as well as anything to do with the physical surroundings of your outlet, such as the lighting or sound system. Things which you don't have control over centre around how a customer thinks or behaves. For example, they maybe in a hurry, or conversely running late, they maybe too loud or worse drunk.

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

[www.ashdale-consulting.com](http://www.ashdale-consulting.com)

***Despite Supermarkets & Convenience Stores picking up sales, the closure of Pubs, Bars & Restaurants in 2020 meant total beer sales were down (14.5%) vs 2019***

***The 2<sup>nd</sup> national lockdown at the end of 2020 put paid to any optimism for the category***

***With everything going on it's no surprise that sales of sparkling wines have continued to suffer, with limited reasons to celebrate***

## Beer Update

Latest data from the British Beer & Pub Association shows that beer sales in Q4 2020 were down (26.2%) on the same quarter a year ago.

The decline was driven by sales through Pubs, Bars & Restaurants following the Covid-19 shutdowns. Sales through Pubs, Bars

& Restaurants in the UK in Q4 were down (76.5%). This compares to a decline of (27.2%) in Q3 in 2020 and a decline of (2.1%) in Q4 2019.

Sales through Supermarkets & Convenience Stores in the UK in Q4 were up +12.0% compared to the same quarter last year. This compares to growth of

+18.2% in Q3 this year and a growth of +2.2% in Q4 in 2019.

Total MAT sales as of Q4 2020 were down (14.5%) vs. +1.6% in the MAT to Q4 2019.

Source: BBPA February 2021



## Cider Update

Latest data from HMRC shows that cider returns in Q4 2020 were down (13.6%) on the same quarter a year ago.

The quarter started off well as returns in October were up +29.3% vs. October the previous year.

This performance worsened as returns in

November were down (29.2%) vs.

November 2019.

The quarter came to an end with returns for December down at (35.2%) compared to December 2019.

A result of this has been that Cider returns on a MAT are now in decline at (13.9%).

These numbers are for traditional apple Ciders only. Fruit based Cider volumes are categorized as Made-Wine for duty by HMRC.

Source: HMRC Februarv 2021



## Wine Update

Latest data from the HMRC shows that still wine returns for December 2020 were up +8.5% versus December the previous year.

This combined with October up +12.3% and November up +4.0% meant that Q4 was up +8.1% vs. 2019.

This means that the current MAT is up +10.6%

vs. this time last year.

Sales of sparkling wines in December were up +11.0%.

Combined with a decline in October of (21.7%) and growth of +12.1% in November meant Q4 finished up +0.7% vs. 2019.

This means that the current MAT is in decline

of (0.7%).

Fortified wine saw an increase during Q4 up +8.5% vs. 2019 with the MAT now at +7.2%.

Source: HMRC February 2021



## Pubs & Bars Update

Wetherspoon is to open beer gardens, roof top gardens and patios at 394 of its pubs in England from Monday 12 April. The pubs will be open from 9am to 9pm (Sun to Thu) and 9am to 10pm (Fri & Sat), although some have restrictions on closing times and, in those cases, will close earlier.

A new report by CGA, commissioned by UKHospitality, on the safe reopening of hospitality has shown that businesses in the sector were not significant areas of Covid-19 transmission in 2020.

Red Oak Taverns has acquired its 2<sup>nd</sup> pub package of 2021, increasing its estate to

190. The package of 10 L&T pubs acquired from Wells & Co are all based in the Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire.



***"We are delighted to secure a further portfolio of quality pubs to join our business," says Mark Grunnell, chief executive of Red Oak.***

## Casual Dining Update

Rosa's Thai Veggie, the offshoot vegetarian sister concept to Rosa's Thai Cafe launched as a three-month pop-up in 2018, is being revived as a virtual brand in London Fields. Opening as a delivery and takeaway-only kitchen initially, Rosa's Thai Veggie has ambitions to expand to further cloud kitchens, and explore

bricks and mortar opportunities for the concept down the line.

Consumer confidence in the UK's hospitality industry is rising according to new research, with a third of adults planning to return to restaurants as soon as they open. The Covid-safe measures hospitality venues put in place

during last summer are likely to be a driving factor in this increase. The findings are from order-and-pay solution Wi5.



***"Last summer, operators went above-and-beyond to put measures in place to protect their staff and customers," comments Prask Sutton, founder and CEO of Wi5.***

## Supermarket Update

The supermarket price-war has edged up a notch after Sainsbury's followed Tesco's Aldi price-match scheme. The major supermarkets are fighting the German discount chains for business and price is their chosen battleground. Sainsbury's have promised to slash the cost of hundreds of essential groceries to

match Aldi.

The grocery landscape worldwide is changing "for good", online supermarket Ocado has said, after a year in which the global pandemic forced many people to buy online for the first time. Ocado's comments came as it reported a 35% jump in sales over the past year.

Multi-buy offers on unhealthy foods will be restricted from April 2022 under new Government plans to tackle obesity.

Source: Various



***The popular "buy one get one free" and "three for two" deals will be banned in supermarkets in a drive to help the nation lose weight.***

## Helping clients...

**Sell More  
Charge More  
Lower Costs**

## Dates and Events for Your Diary

### General

#### April

1<sup>st</sup> April Fool's Day  
2<sup>nd</sup> Good Friday  
4<sup>th</sup> Easter Sunday  
5<sup>th</sup> Easter Monday  
23<sup>rd</sup> St Georges Day

#### May

3<sup>rd</sup> May Early Bank Holiday  
31<sup>st</sup> Spring Bank Holiday

#### June

12<sup>th</sup> Queens Birthday  
20<sup>th</sup> Father's Day  
21<sup>st</sup> June Solstice

### Licensed Trade

#### April

23<sup>rd</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> British Beef Week  
**12<sup>th</sup> Possible Outdoor Service**

#### May

15<sup>th</sup> World Whisky Day  
**17<sup>th</sup> Possible Indoor Service**  
25<sup>th</sup> National Wine Day  
31<sup>st</sup> National BBQ Week

#### June

4<sup>th</sup> National Fish & Chip Day  
12<sup>th</sup> World Gin Day  
15<sup>th</sup> Beer Day (UK)  
16<sup>th</sup>-21 Taste of London  
**21<sup>st</sup> Possible Nightclubs Open**

### Sports

#### April

8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Masters (USA)  
10<sup>th</sup> Grand National  
18<sup>th</sup> Italian Grand Prix  
25<sup>th</sup> League Cup Final

#### May

9<sup>th</sup> Spain Grand Prix  
15<sup>th</sup> FA Cup Final  
23<sup>rd</sup> Monaco Grand Prix  
26<sup>th</sup> Europa League  
29<sup>th</sup> Champions League




#### June




6<sup>th</sup> Azerbaijan Grand Prix  
11<sup>th</sup> Euro 2020 Starts  
13<sup>th</sup> Canadian Grand Prix  
27<sup>th</sup> French Grand Prix  
28<sup>th</sup> Wimbledon Starts

## Weather Summaries

For more months and years  
then simply go to:

[www.ashdale-consulting.com](http://www.ashdale-consulting.com)

JANUARY		
	<b>COLD</b>	Temp = <b>(1.5)</b>
		Rain = <b>113</b>
		Sun = <b>95</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally cold, with wintery showers across the country</li> <li>• Wet &amp; windy (Storm Christoph) with snow in the West &amp; Mids</li> </ul>		

FEBRUARY		
	<b>COLD</b>	Temp = <b>+0.4</b>
	<b>MILD</b>	Rain = <b>116</b>
		Sun = <b>103</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initially very cold with snow, becoming milder &amp; wetter</li> <li>• Above average rainfall, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the month boosted temps</li> </ul>		

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## 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](http://www.ashdale-consulting.com)