



FROM PLAN TO PLATE

Influencing the hospitality customer journey in a new world

In partnership with **Zonal**



FROM PLAN TO PLATE

Welcome to the Plan to Plate 2021 insight report. KAM is delighted to have partnered with Zonal, the technology provider empowering hospitality businesses, to bring you this deep dive into the hospitality consumer's journey from 'plan to plate' in a new world.

The shape of hospitality has changed forever. One thing, however, never changes - the importance of understanding the way in which customers think and behave. Influencing these thoughts and behaviours is becoming harder as they, and the world around them, changes. To better support hospitality operators and brands as they adapt to the world we now live in, this research report tracks the hospitality customer's decision process, from plan to plate. We will follow the customer journey from the initial decision to leave the house and venue choice through to ordering, paying and leaving a review.

For this report we conducted an in-depth research study with 1,004 UK adults. This was a nationally representative sample of UK residents, aged 18+, who typically visit pubs, bars and restaurants. The research was conducted 2nd – 6th April 2021.



The hospitality customer journey

The customer decision journey is a model that shows how customers complete a visit and purchase within a hospitality venue, from plan to plate. There are 5 key stages and this report will take you on the customer journey.



INFLUENCES

Making the decision to go out versus staying in. Exploring the alternatives that are vying for consumer spend at home compared to within hospitality

CONSIDER

That moment when a potential customer considers the need and considers the solutions that fit that need

EVALUATE

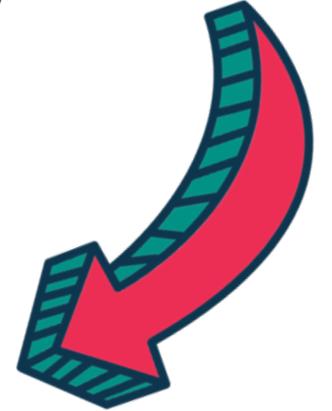
When the customer evaluates all the options available to them and decides which is their most preferred

PURCHASE

When the customer makes the choice of venue and the choice of food and/or drink to order

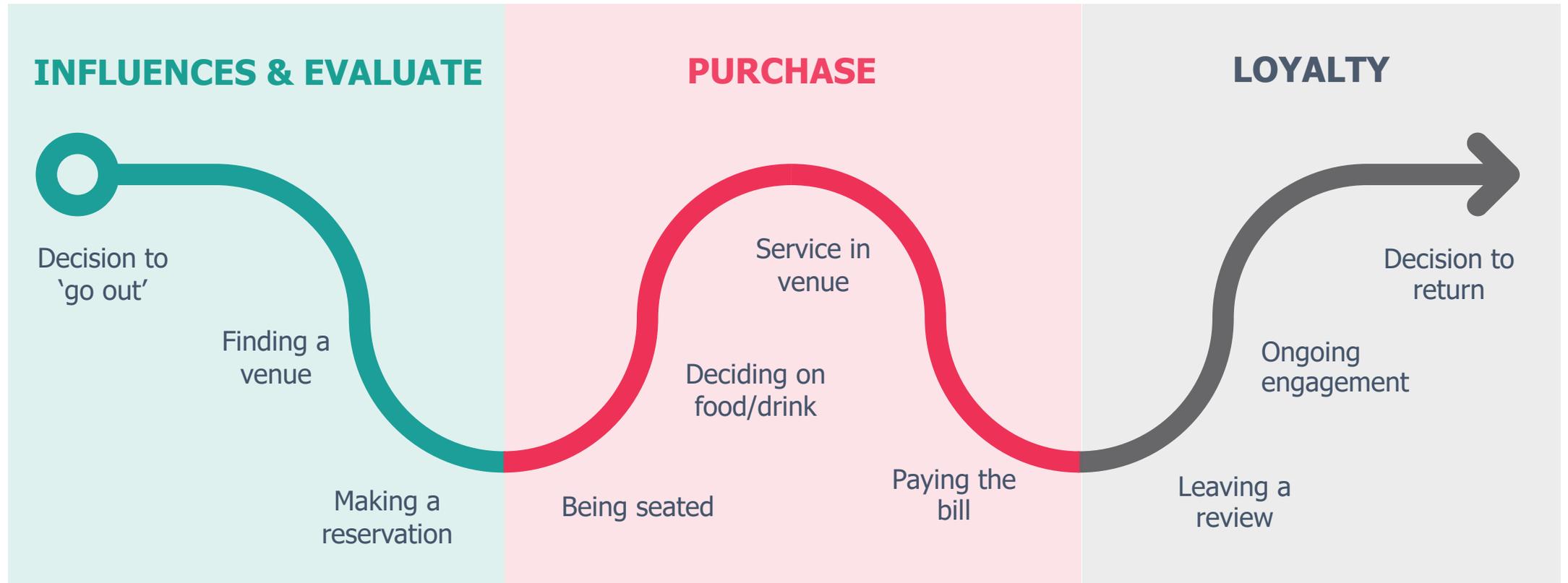
LOYALTY

Ensuring the customer enjoys and connects with the experience, leaves a review and comes back for more



Influencing customer decisions

Every customer will follow this journey and at each key touchpoint, there are opportunities for brands and operators to influence the decisions that customers make and to surprise and delight. BUT these can also be key 'stress points' for customers along the journey.



INFLUENCE & CONSIDER

This section will explore what influences a consumer's decision to go out Vs staying in, whilst taking a look at the alternatives that are vying for consumer spend, i.e. the rapid rise of in-home experiences.



Let's start with the role of hospitality

The average hospitality customer visits pubs, bars and restaurants 4.4 times a month.

That's more than once a week. It's part of their lifestyle and it forms part of the fabric of their social connectivity.

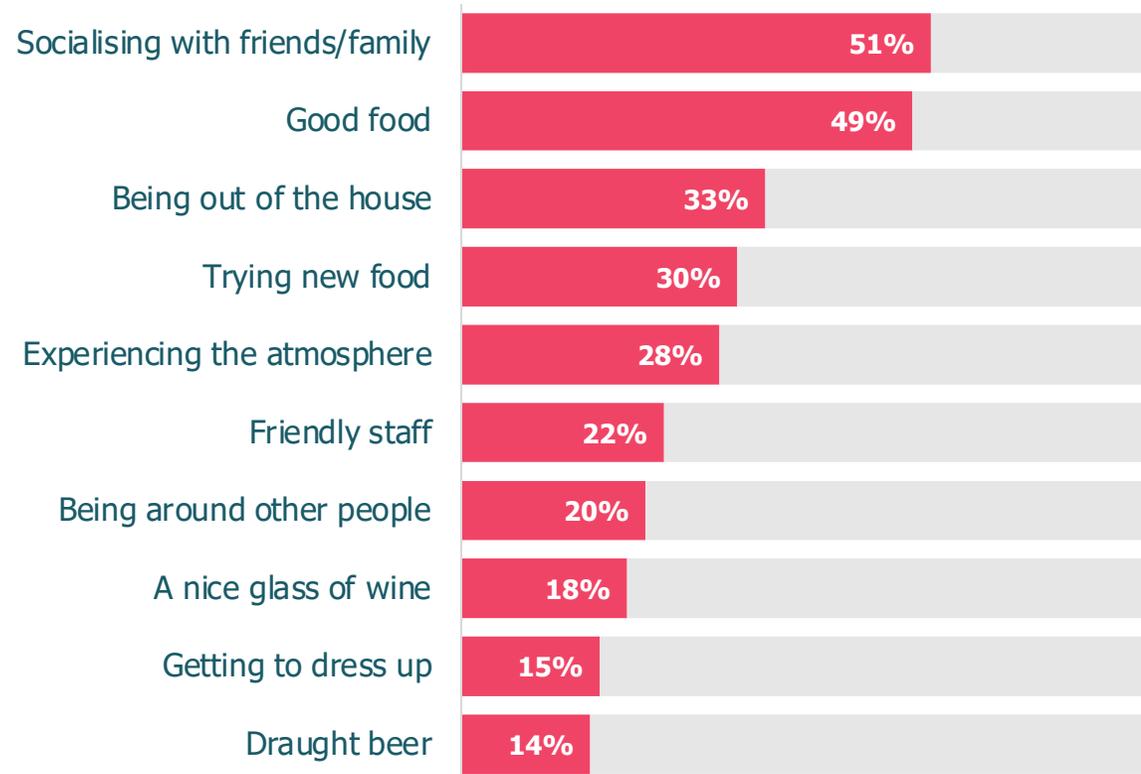
We see this even more with the Gen Z (5.5 x per month) and Millennials (5.9 x per month).

Of course, going to pubs, bars and restaurants is about experiencing quality food and drinks but, above all that, it's about spending time with friends and family in an inviting, buzzy, bustling atmosphere.

By our nature, as human beings, we are resourceful and over the last 12 months we've managed to bring a lot of what's good about going out into our homes. However, the atmosphere and physical interaction is much harder to imitate and replicate. As hospitality starts to bounce back, we explore the role that hospitality plays in consumers' social connections.



'The top 10 things we like most about going out to pubs, bars and restaurants'



Lockdown has formed new social habits

During lockdown many of us tried to replicate our visits to hospitality venues in our homes and gardens. Many people have certainly noticed a benefit to their bank balance as well as how much easier it is to 'travel' to your front room. There are also trends which have emerged that will have an impact on not just the way in which people view hospitality but how they use it and, more importantly, what their expectations will be for what hospitality needs to offer in the future. As an industry, we need to take note of the things that consumers have liked about being at home and replicate in our venues.

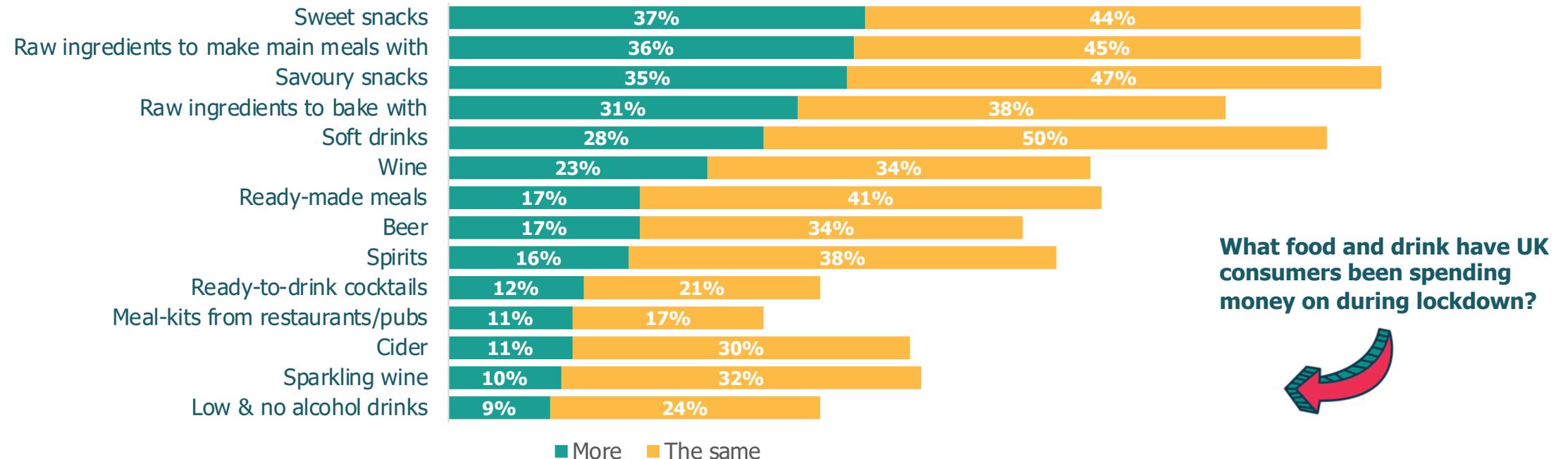
What did UK consumers like about staying in rather than going out?



Eating and drinking at home

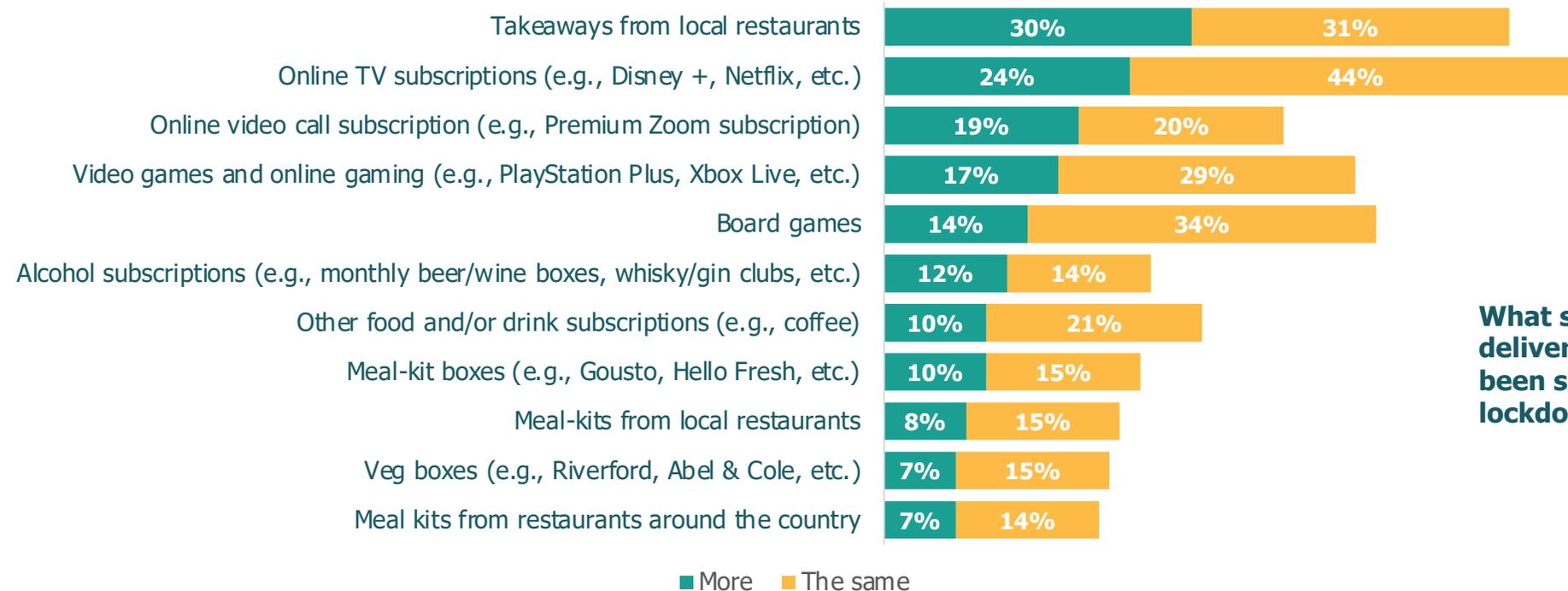
Brits have been spending more money on food for cooking at home during lockdown. With spend on cooking and baking ingredients up 200% and 158% respectively. We know that people have been cooking more at home, and enjoying doing so, whilst also pushing the boat out on more expensive ingredients to make those dishes a bit more special. We've also seen an increase in snacking foods, both sweet and savoury. Interestingly, we have seen a 'net' decline in spend on alcohol. However, it's important here to understand that this is a perceived reduction in spend and not volume. Clearly there is a perception amongst consumers that due to the relative cheaper prices from supermarkets etc, they have been spending less money on alcohol during lockdown.

It's clear, though, that this will have implications on how much and how often these consumers will be willing to spend on food and drinks as they return to hospitality venues.



Subscriptions and home deliveries

The biggest increases in spending 'at home' for Brits during lockdown were on entertainment subscription services, with a 167% increase in spending on TV subscriptions like Disney+, a 143% increase in spend on video gaming and a 138% increase in spend on video calling services. Whilst technology has been spearheading most of our 'in-home entertainment', lockdown has also seen an increase in spend on board games, up 27%. Interestingly, the highest increases in spend have been from the 18-34-year-olds, which is a core consumer base for many pubs, bars and restaurants. It suggests, therefore, that lockdown has forged new social habits amongst these age groups, and created new social occasions which will now compete alongside traditional hospitality venues for consumer time and spend. Can hospitality afford to return as normal or do they need to consider how their customers have changed over the last 12 months? Hospitality should be exploring 'at-home', that much is obvious- but how can they also benefit from a subscription model? **During lockdown, what have we been spending more or less money per month on...?**



What subscriptions and deliveries have UK consumers been spending money on during lockdown?

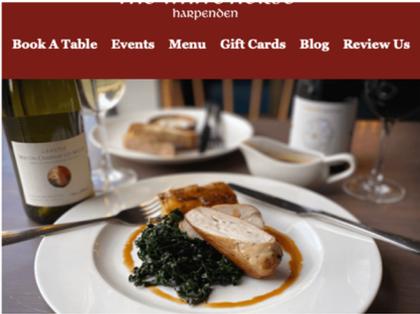


Source: KAM Media Plan to Plate 2021 Report // Q. During lockdown, have you been spending more or less money per month, on average, on the following?

Hospitality at home

'At home' meal kits and food boxes aren't just for lockdown. We've seen some great examples of leading pubs and restaurants continuing to showcase their 'at-home' offerings during the re-opening phase.

We need to think of the 'at home' occasion as an extension of the brand and not a cannibalisation of sales. Operators can now have access to two of their customers' tables – in venues and in their homes. It also allows operators to broaden their brand reach, both geographically and also potentially becoming relevant to a broader customer base.



harpenden

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Enjoy Peach at Home
Anywhere in the UK!

We can't believe how busy these next few weeks in the pub are. Perhaps you've struggled to can't get a table with us, or have a little one at home, or just not ready to brave the alfresco dining?

Either way, we don't want you to miss out on the good stuff. That's why on all boxes ordered for delivery in April, you'll enjoy delivery – on us! **Just enter code Welcome04 when you come to checkout.**

Peach at Home brings your favourite dishes straight to your door, all skillfully prepared, using the good stuff from our much-loved suppliers, ready for you to plate and finish. All you need to do is light the candles, press play on our playlist, pour yourself a glass and pretend you're out.

There's plenty of choice - from Beef Fillet Wellington, Free-Range Chicken Ballotine, or Jimmy Butler's Pork, to Aubrey's 28 Day Dry-aged Côte de Boeuf. Complete with sides, starters and puds and don't forget to add your favourite bottle of wine or a cocktail (or two). The feedback has been incredible, find out what others have said [here](#).

Treat yourself, you deserve it.

[ORDER HERE](#) [FIND OUT MORE](#)



From our kitchen to you

HANDMADE · WITH LOVE · IN OUR KITCHEN

We've been working through the various lockdowns, cooking meals for the isolated, elderly & homeless which has been hugely rewarding for us all, but in this lockdown we have also been able to test our food boxes. They are slightly different to most that we've seen, our come fully prepared, you just need an oven, a couple of trays, a pan & a few bits, add on 40 minutes, (25 of which you can read a good book) & you have a full gastro to go meal for 2 ready to be enjoyed!

HAWKSMOOR

Hawksmoor @HawksmoorL... · 11h ...

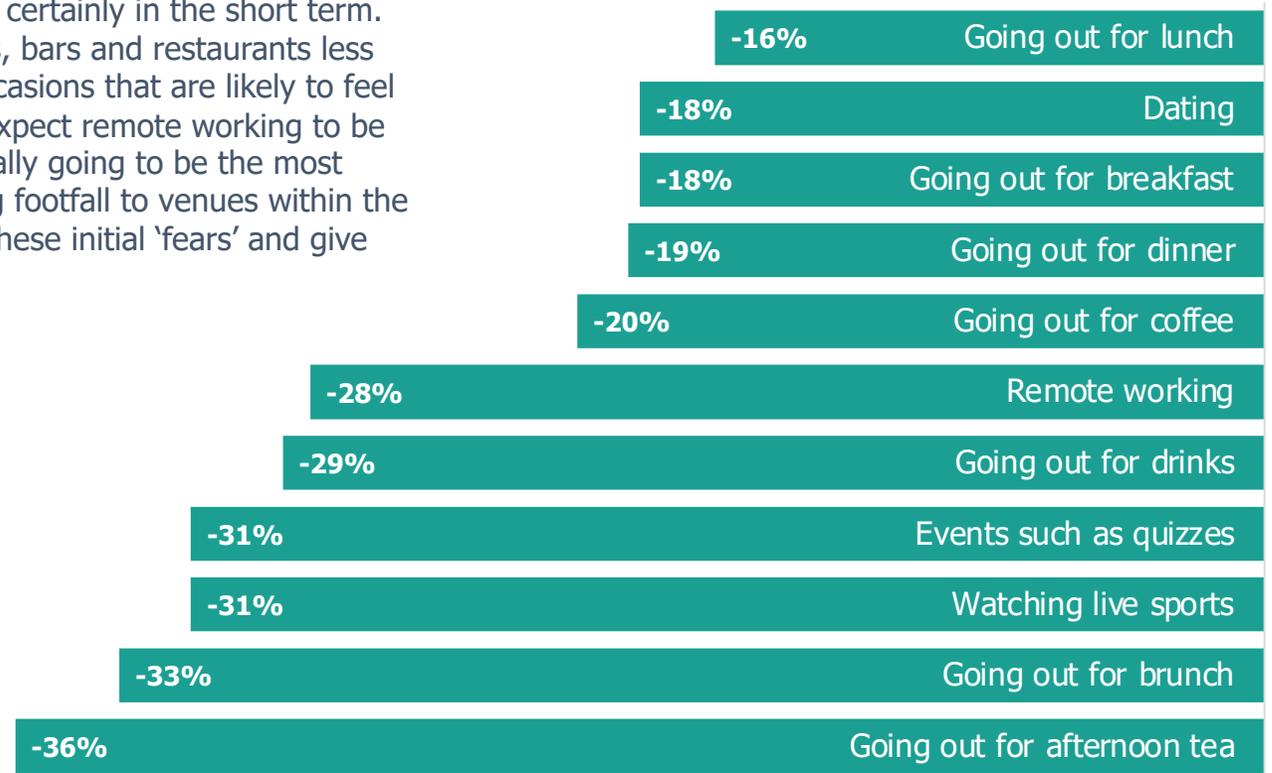
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Show this thread

Will customers return to hospitality in the same way?

It would seem that it's going to be a tough road ahead for hospitality to return to the levels of consumer spend that we were accustomed to prior to the pandemic, certainly in the short term. According to our research, customers believe that they will visit pubs, bars and restaurants less than they did prior to lockdown— across many key occasions. The occasions that are likely to feel the brunt will be afternoon tea, brunch and drink-only and we also expect remote working to be slow to return to pre-pandemic level. Food-led occasions are potentially going to be the most robust. Dining, therefore is going to become a key element in driving footfall to venues within the immediate future. Operators will need to help customers overcome these initial 'fears' and give them every reason to return to our venues for these occasions.



The 'net' change, short term, in occasions which customers believe they will visit pubs, bars and restaurants for when they re-open





"Forced to stay at home for most of the past year, a large proportion of the population have created a new way of living, discovered new activities, unearthed new desires, experienced frustrations, and sought greater purpose for their lives."

"We have seen many trends developed, or existing ones accelerated, with new skills learnt, such as cooking and baking from scratch or crafting; and we have spent our money differently, switching out of home spend on food and drink to in-home experiences. The re-opening of hospitality has seen significant pent-up demand for eating and drinking out of home (despite the weather), predominately for the social interaction, but this is to be expected given the restrictions placed on our freedoms. What will stick over the course of the next few years is critical to understand...

The consumer need for greater 'Purpose' and 'Fulfilment' are long term trends that have been amplified and brought forward considerably; these two trends are shaping consumers behaviours now and are here to stay. The in-home experiences have also gained stickiness, and for some consumers, wariness of the out-of-home market will remain for some time.

Future hospitality has to recognise these long-term trends, the changed consumer behaviours, and the stickiness of the in-home experience, and adapt the offer to meet these new demands and expectations; key to this will be the experience delivered, the value from great hospitality, and the ability to be where consumers' demands are – and that won't always be in the same place as they were before!

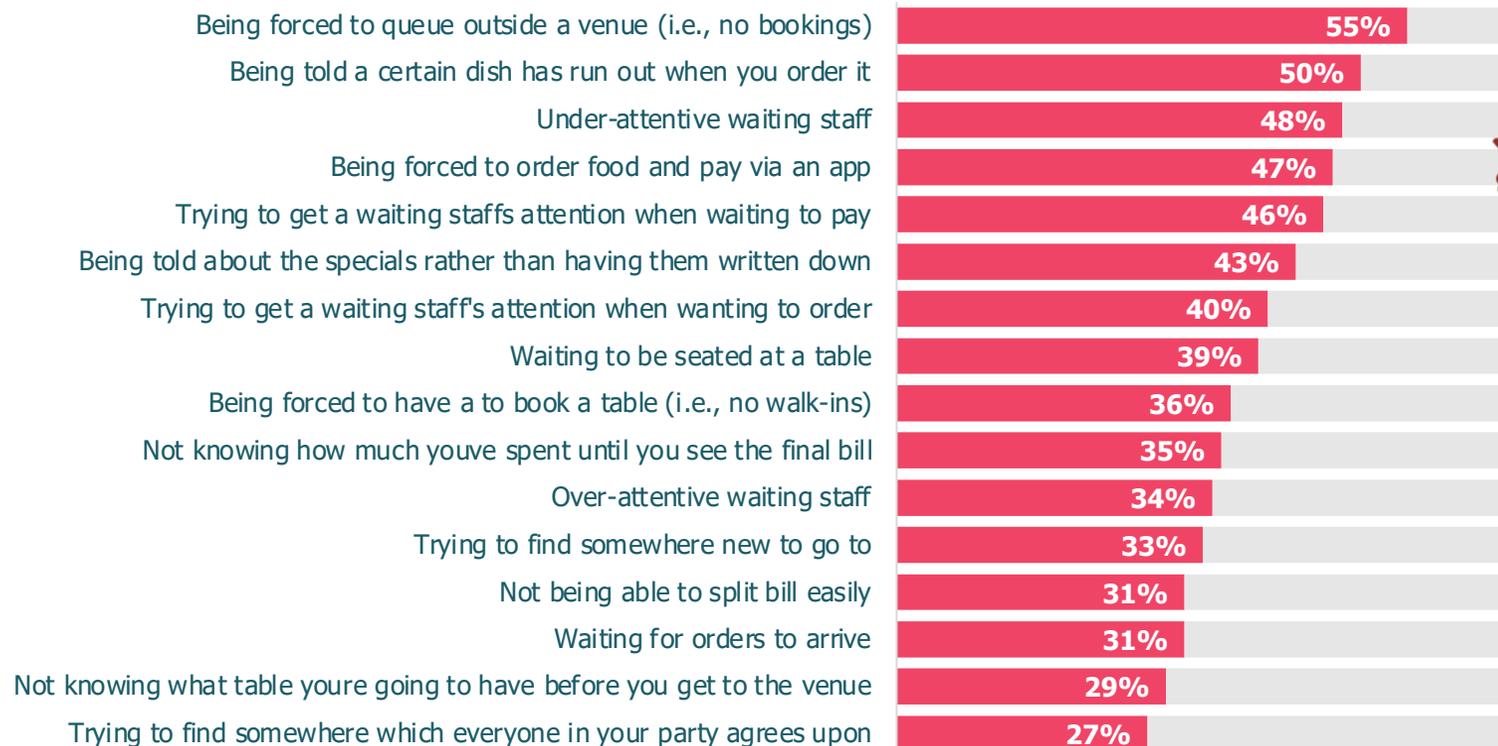
A clear positioning of the hospitality offer is recommended, targeting specific consumer occasions, such as 'Social Refuelling', 'Destination Dining' or 'Foodie Heaven', and a demonstration of a deep understanding of the many alternatives that consumers now have."

Simon Stenning
Founder of [FutureFoodservice](#)

The biggest hospitality frustrations

Clearly the fallout from Covid will have an influence on the extent to which customers will return to hospitality in the immediate future. However, time away has also allowed customers to reflect on what frustrates them most about going out v staying in. Hospitality should be a welcoming, enjoyable environment that makes customers want to come back time and time again. However, there are lots of things that frustrate customers about the experience currently. We've been enjoying the 'hassle-free' experience of entertaining at home over the last 12 months, so venues need to ensure that going out can deliver the experiences and atmosphere we've been missing but without the added hassle.

The top frustrations we have when eating and/or drinking out in pubs, bars and restaurants





“Having accepted the need for technology over the past 12 months, consumers now have a greater understanding of how it improves their experience in terms of removing some of their typical frustrations. From an operators’ perspective this can only be positive, as maximising the power of tech helps free up staff to concentrate on those elements that help enhance the overall guest experience. It also provides greater choice for their customers in how they want to order.

We know that there is pent-up demand from consumers to come back to hospitality but we are likely to see a more knowledgeable and demanding consumer, with many preferences shaped by the events of the past year. So while the need for seamless and efficient service remains as important as ever, those operators that deliver an extra special experience will be in pole position.”

Alison Vasey
Group Product Director, [Zonal](#)

The 'going out Vs staying in' dilemma

We've all had those moments when friends or family want to go out to a pub, bar or restaurant and you have that decision to make – do you go or do you stay? Similarly, we may have planned a night in with our loved one, or catching up with friends on Zoom, but suddenly there is the urge to get out of the house and go to a pub, bar or restaurant instead. What are the factors that are most likely to force our hand in each scenario? Through understanding the barriers and triggers to customer footfall, venues can be better prepared to influence this pivotal decision and swing the pendulum in their favour.

What makes us stay at home instead of going out?

Bad weather // **40%**

Difficult to make a reservation // **34%**

Hassle to get to the venue // **34%**

Tempted by a takeaway instead // **20%**

Switch to doing a zoom call instead // **20%**

What makes us go out instead of staying in?

Special deals on food // **34%**

Special deals on drinks // **25%**

Events (e.g. live music, quiz, etc.) // **25%**

Received an email or text from a venue and it tempted me // **18%**

Saw on social that other friends were going out // **15%**





“People have had the opportunity to create a lot of experiences at home. Using meal-kits and delivery cocktails, for example, to do some of the heavy lifting. Our business, however, is built on delivering an experience that is very difficult to replicate at home. Although it’s limited some of our ability to transfer that to the home, it does put us in a strong position to capitalise on people coming back into hospitality.

We are a destination venue, we aim to bring people to us – there is an experience in the atmosphere, the curation of music, the vibe, the lighting, etc. – which is hard to achieve at home. This is key for us. It doesn’t matter how good your food or your drink is, the energy that a full room can bring to an evening out is the biggest weapon we have in the fight for footfall”

Simon Potts
CEO, The Alchemist

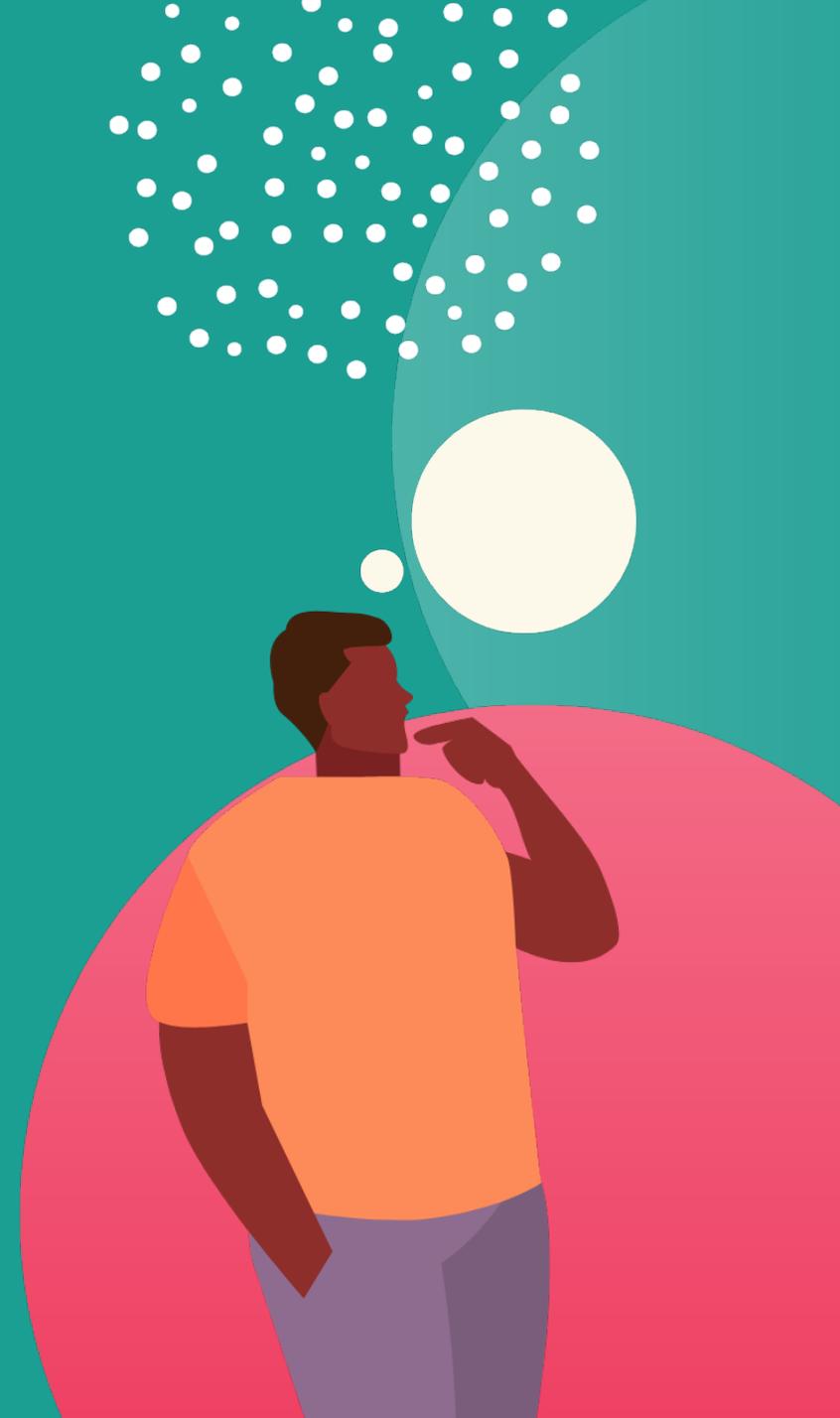
Industry checklist

- ✓ Look at the things that consumers have liked about being at home and try to replicate these experiences in our venues. Think about the relaxed, easy-going at home experiences we've been enjoying and ensure that going out doesn't mean that customers have to 'go out of their way' or feel 'inconvenienced' by the experience.
- ✓ At the same time we need to accentuate the factors that make hospitality unique (e.g. atmosphere, experience, speciality drinks, etc.) We need to really dial up those elements that have always made us unique – now is the time to really shout about them.
- ✓ Don't forget about the 'at-home' experiences – this is the perfect opportunity to create an offer that works across all occasions. Customers suggest they will be switching some of their traditional 'out of home' occasions into 'at home' occasions – so make sure that your offer can straddle both seamlessly – either through takeaway food/drink options or meal kits, food boxes, etc.
- ✓ Be fast and flexible – many consumers make the 'home Vs out' decision on the day – be ready (and able) to influence their decision.



EVALUATE

This section will explore what factors are at play when a consumer considers their options and makes the decision to visit a pub, bar or restaurant.



You're going out, but where are you going?

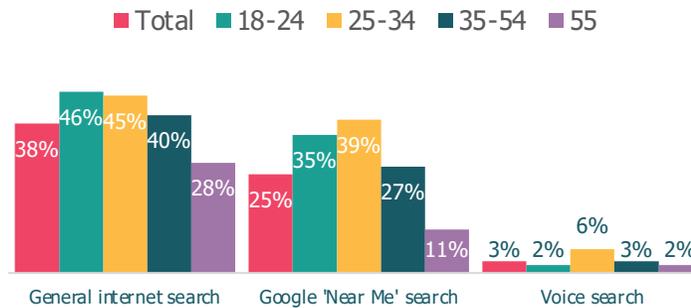
So we've made the decision to go out somewhere for food and/or drinks. However, how do we choose a venue and, crucially, what are the best methods for operators and brands to influence this decision? 61% of consumers use at least one 'tool' to help them choose a venue. With the remainder happy to visit the places that they usually go to. **This represents a huge opportunity to influence the decision.**

General internet searching and seeking recommendations from friends and family are the main sources of help for consumers.

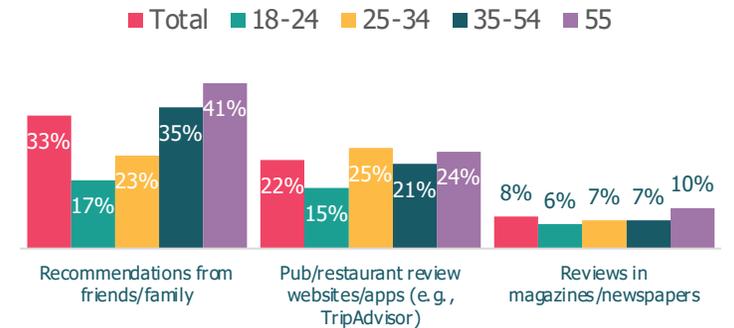
However, we see huge generational swings when it comes to the use of social media, with Gen Z and Millennials, in particular, heavily reliant on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok for ideas and inspiration.

Brands and operators need to ensure they are targeting the right channels which fit with their strategy and target customer base.

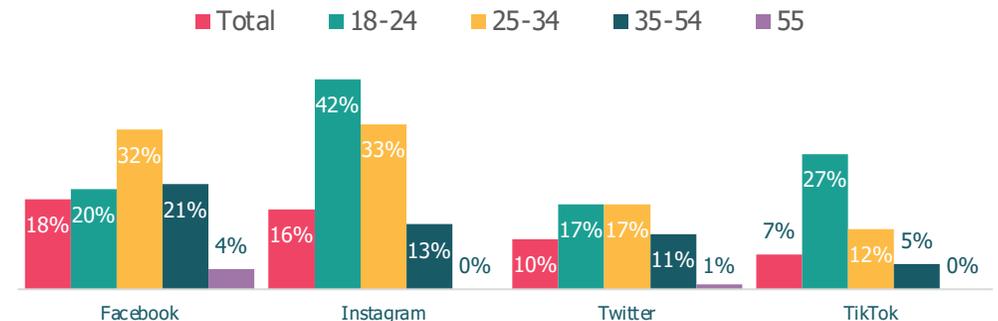
'Search'



'Reviews'

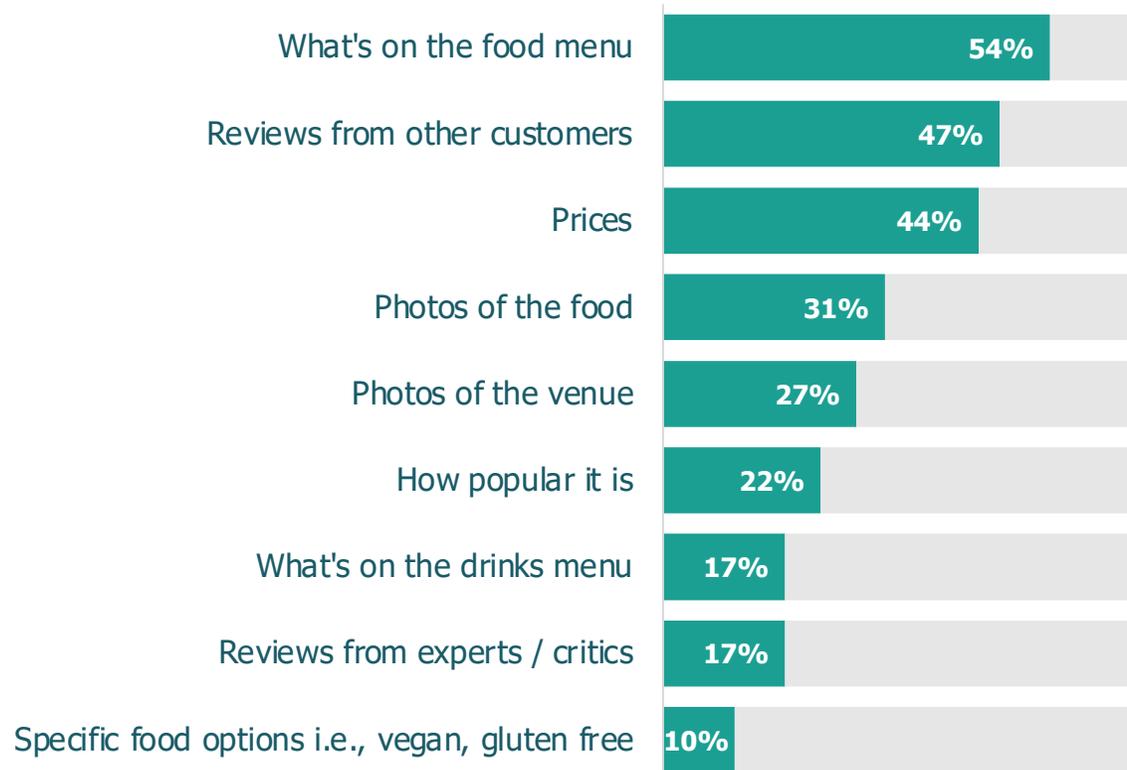


'Social'



What are we looking for when we search?

'The top things we look for when researching for potential pubs, bars and restaurants'



Menus and prices are a key element of what customers are searching for, alongside customer reviews. (Remember price doesn't mean 'cheapest', it means 'within my expected budget for that occasion.')

We see nearly 1-in-3 customers looking up photos of the venue and the food. This is considerably higher with Gen Z and Millennials, with nearly 1 in 2 looking for photos of food. We know how powerful 'Instagram-ability' is with this generation and they eat with their eyes, and in many cases with their phones, before they even consider using their mouths!

Older demographics are far more likely to favour customer reviews as the key determining factor.

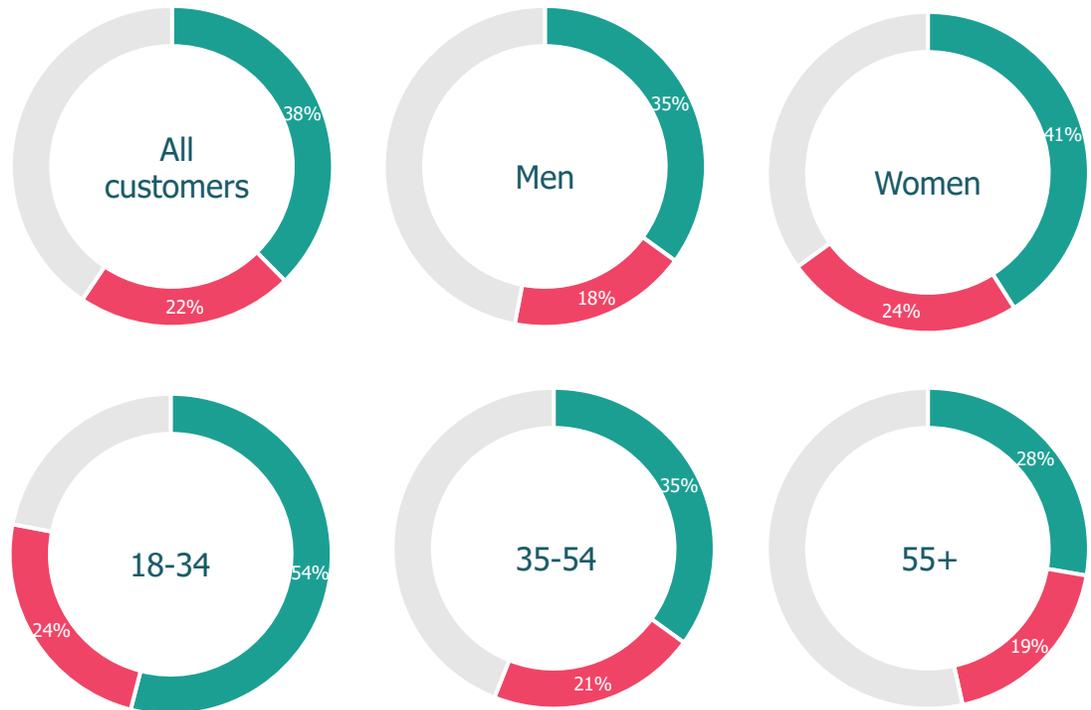


Will we be more adventurous out of lockdown?

'Are we more or less likely to try new venues we've not been to before once hospitality is fully re-open?'



■ More likely ■ Less likely



UK hospitality customers will be more adventurous with their choice of pubs, bars and restaurants going forward.

It appears that we may be cautious when it comes to returning to pubs, bars and restaurants in general, but when it comes to trying out new venues, we're actually going to be a little more adventurous. Women more so than men, and the trend towards the carefree younger demographics enjoying hospitality continues to ring true.

In here there will be elements of people looking to support local venues that perhaps they've not visited before, as they look to give something back to the local community in these difficult times. Also, however, it may be that we are looking to reduce the frequency of visits, but to make sure that every visit counts – and that we look to experiment more and try new venues – in order to maximise these going-out occasions.

Now is the time for venues to communicate with new customers who are looking to try something different and become part of their regular 'repertoire' post-pandemic.

Influencing venue choice

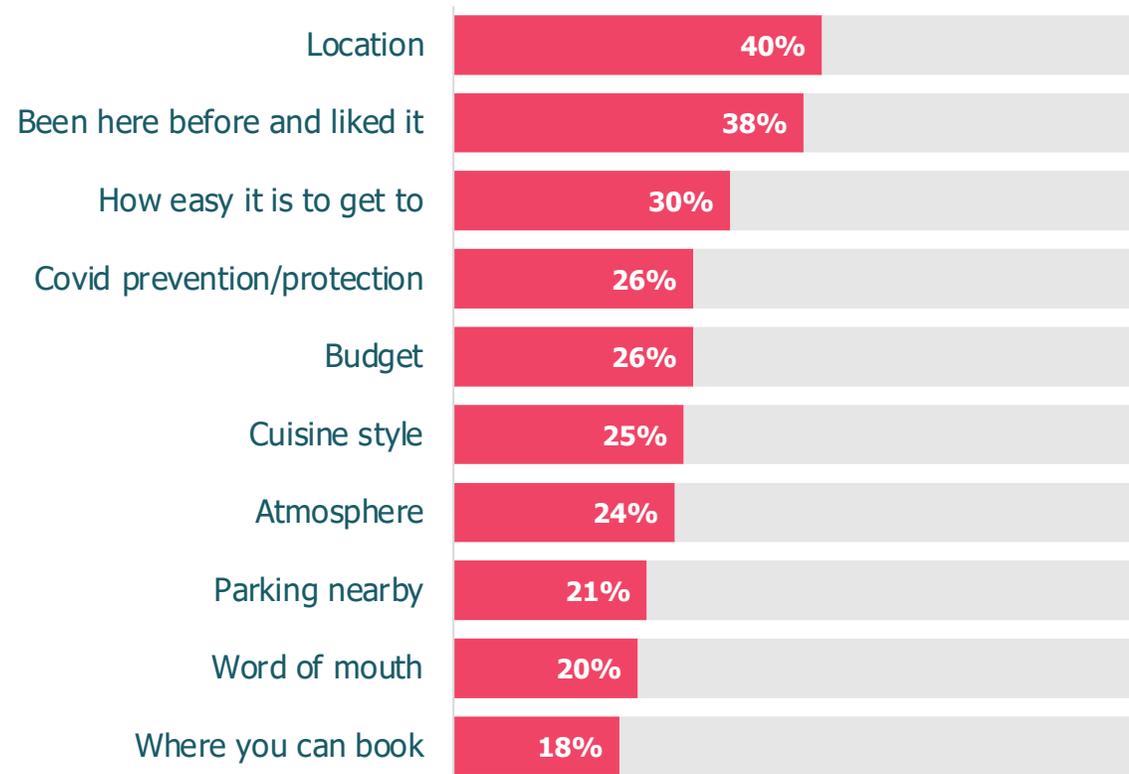
Location, familiarity and ease of getting to the venue will be the top influences on customers' choice of pub, bar or restaurant after they re-open fully.

We've already seen that the unique atmosphere of hospitality has been the hardest thing to replicate at home for consumers, and it's almost level with Covid prevention/protection compliance in terms of what they're looking for when choosing a venue. Making customers feel 'safe' is still critical and will be for some time.

Operators must bring the atmosphere back, and quickly, in order to ensure that the return to venue doesn't become a token gesture but the return of the habitual visit.



'The top 10 factors that will influence our choice of pubs, bars and restaurants'





“For us it’s all about doubling down on experience. It’s front and centre of what we do. The aim of for us, now, is to take this to the next level. We’re now competing against customer’s homes – watching latest movies, cooking good food and having quality drinks delivered at home.

So experience is going to be more important than ever. Consumers will be making a more considered choice about where to go. Just having a good location, won’t cut it anymore. You need to become a destination as customers are more likely to be making plans as to where they’re going to go. Delivering an exceptional and unique experience, therefore, becomes critical in driving footfall.”

Charles Gilkes
Co-Founder, Inception Group

To book or not to book

1 in 6 hospitality customers are more likely to book when visiting pubs, bars and restaurants now compared to pre-pandemic.

The majority of customers are happy to make reservations when visiting pubs, bars and restaurants. With table-only service for the immediate future, it will, in a lot of cases be the only way to guarantee that you are able to visit at all.

Over 1-in-3 customers, however, would take issue with having to book a table in a pub or bar when having drinks-only. Clearly this may be something that customers will have to get used to, certainly in the short-term, but it's important for these venues to understand customer sentiment and ensure that they retain a certain proportion of tables for walk-ins.

There is an element of the customer base who enjoy the spontaneity of a visit to a pub, bar or restaurant. Nearly 1-in-5 don't like to be tied to a time, so we need to make sure that booking is quick and easy with the potential to be done whilst on the way to the venue.

51%

"I like to book so I know I can have an available table"



38%

"I expect to book for food, but not for a drink"



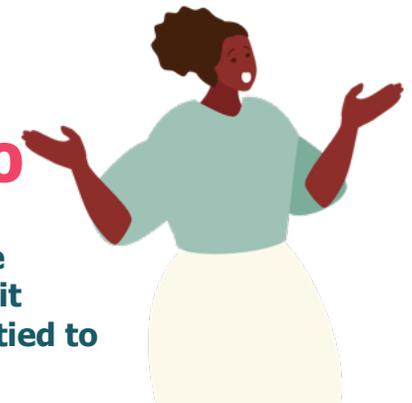
26%

"On the busier days I'd expect to book if I want to guarantee a table"



18%

"I don't like booking as it means I'm tied to a time"



“All the evidence shows us that the culture of pre-booking is here to stay, and there are enormous benefits for both customer and operator.

Customers are now sold on the advantages of pre-booking, allowing them to overcome any fears around the safety and well-being of their group, securing a table when it suits them most, and feeling good about their interaction with you - their host. From initial enquiry right through to the actual experience, pre-booking sets the tone for the customer’s whole visit, giving you - the operator - one of the most practical and significant opportunities to sell your unique offering or brand.

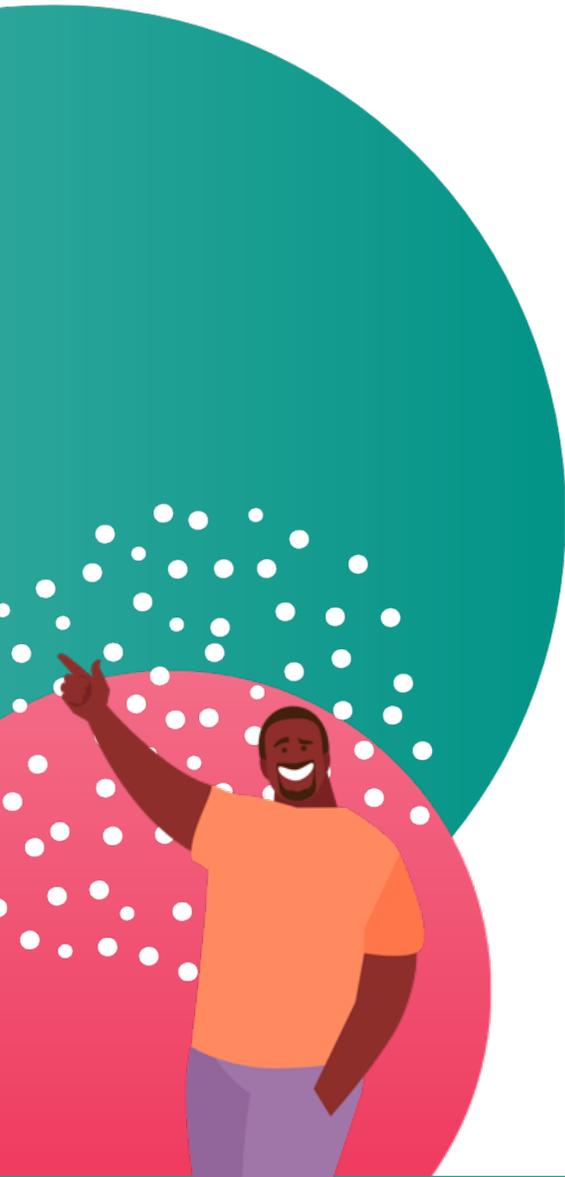
For Operators, pre-booking is win:win! Efficiency savings associated with your labour costs and outgoings; better financial forecasting; improved planning and delivery of your products; substantially improved communication with your customers, and the opportunity to drive a higher spend by selling packages in advance.

Top tips for operators to drive organic growth via pre-booking:

1. Re-purpose space and rooms. Ensure all bookable space is utilised. Capacity management at group and site level is vital.
2. Implement immediate customer response time and open and honest communications. Promote ongoing contact and promote forward planning for experiences and options throughout the year.
3. Maximise upselling through dynamic pricing. Aim to increase spend per head and minimise no-shows through packages and experiences.
4. Faster table turning and shoulder times where possible should be managed through your booking system. Selling pre-ordered packages with clear and transparent terms and conditions is vital.
5. Retain that all important guest experience through good old-fashioned hospitality for that next visit. Follow up with the right technology partner for repeat visits.
6. You can reduce no shows through SMS day before using reminder text messaging. Ask for £5pp deposits at peak tables for groups 4+. Sell experiences and always secure deposits or card authentication. If you can, deliver ‘day before’ phone calls to customers to confirm bookings.
7. Focus on customer profiling as opposed to blanket communication. Use your Customer Journey tech “touch points” to identify your segments. And re-set the importance of the relationship and customer experience with your ops teams to sit alongside the safety measures.
8. Implement a sales report each week to track bookings vs. capacity, putting you firmly in control of your decision making.

You cannot afford to ignore this vital area of activity. Go for it: put pre-booked sales at the forefront of your future activity and sales culture.”

Amber Stainings
CEO, [Bums On Seats](#)



Industry checklist

- ✓ Be aware of the 'routes to information and influence' that match your target customers – and invest time, effort and money into maximising your reach. Consider the channels that your customers will be using and the type of information that is most likely to impact and influence their decisions. There's no quick fix though – it needs dedication to keep it up-to-date and relevant.
- ✓ We eat with our eyes – make sure you have quality photography across all digital. This isn't just about food, but your venue too. Remember that we consider occasions and atmosphere to be key drivers of destination, so photography needs to capture the 'vibe' rather than just what things look like.
- ✓ Booking must be quick and easy for customers. We need to take the 'hassle' out of going out and do our best to alleviate the pinch points for customers from their home to the venue - and ensure you leave some space for walk-ins, because some of us like to be spontaneous!
- ✓ Use technology to create a frictionless experience for customers. Order-and-pay technologies are great examples of simple fixes to the most common customer frustrations.



PURCHASE

This section will explore how the customer decides what to purchase when they are in the venue. What influences their decisions and also the role of digital in driving behaviour at point-of-order/payment.

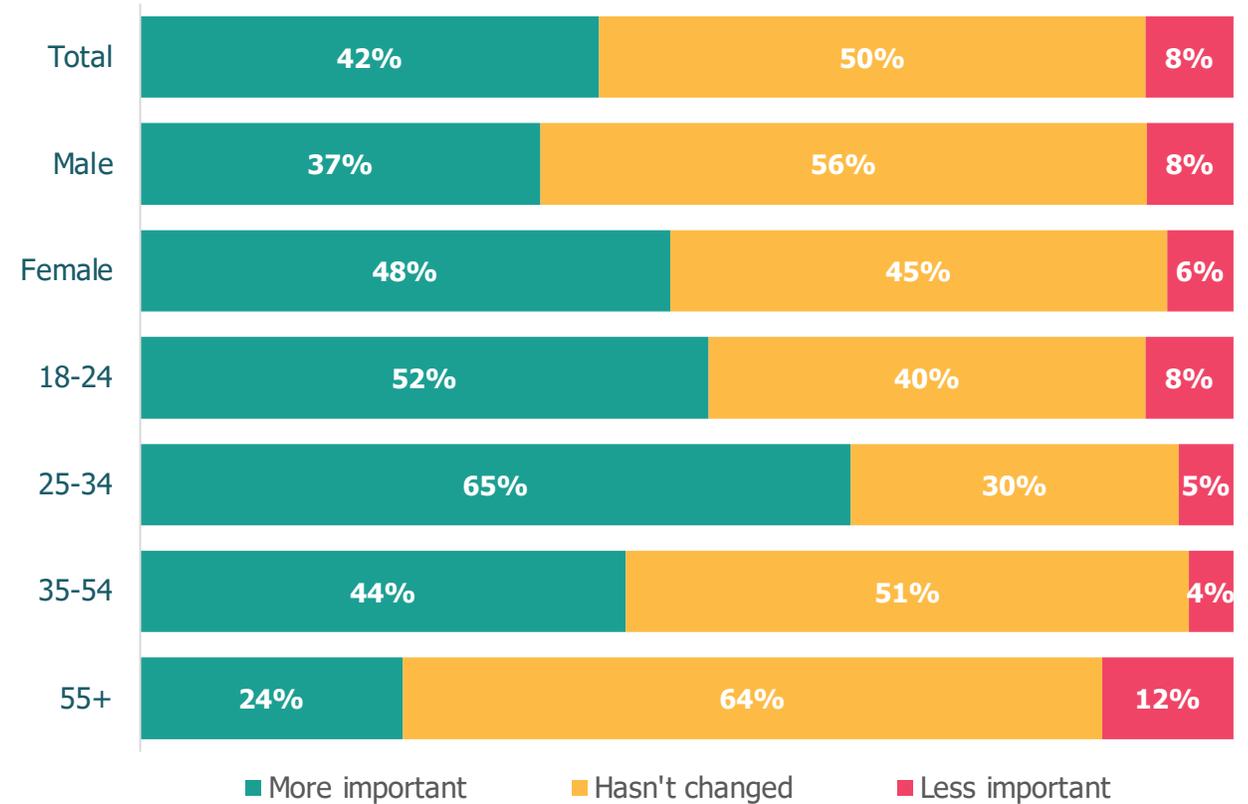
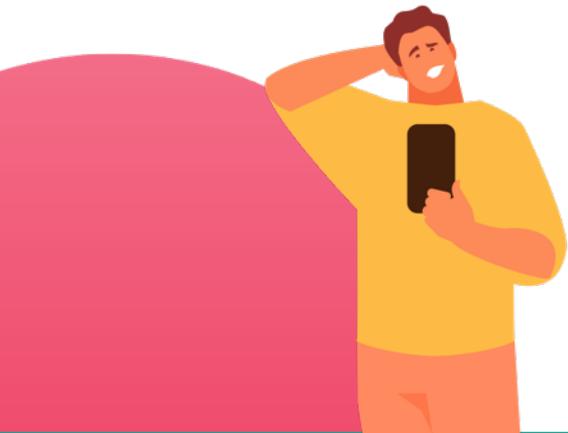


In partnership with **Zonal**

The role of digital when ordering

Covid has changed all of our lives over the last 12 months, but one thing it has also done is fast-tracked certain technological innovations into the mainstream of consumerism.

Mobile phone ordering and payment is one such thing. What would have been seen as a nice-to-have just over a year ago, now appears to be a staple demand for consumers when visiting pubs, bars and restaurants. In fact, it would now be considered as an important factor in choosing one venue over another for nearly half of the UK population. What at first may have been seen as a necessity for social distancing is now becoming a legitimate tool for venues to streamline the ordering process and creating a frictionless environment for customers to view the menu, order and pay thus freeing up staff to focus on customer service.



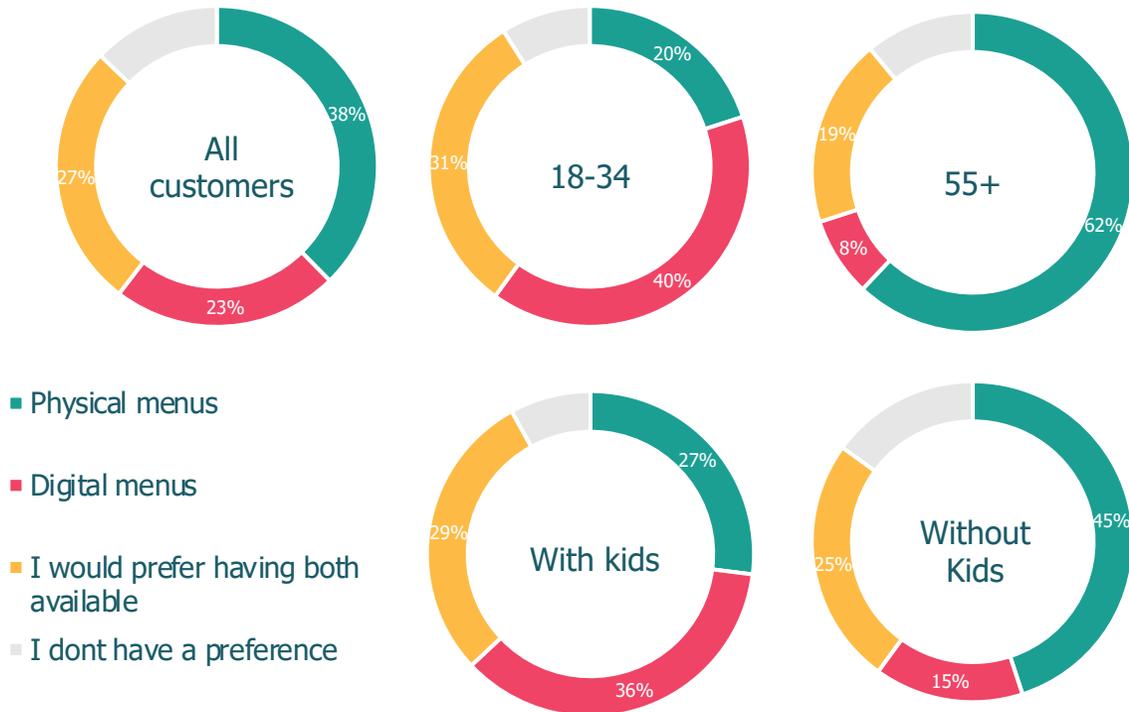
'Has having a venue which offers mobile phone ordering and payment become more or less important to you over the last 12 months?'



The role of digital within food and drink menus



'Would customers prefer physical printed menus or digital menus on phones and tablets?'



There is a place for both traditional printed menus and chalkboards to work alongside digital menus through mobile phones and tablets.

Customers want to have the option. It will depend on occasion, how much time they have and who they are with—so it's not a case or one or the other, otherwise we risk alienating our customers – and in some instances it could be the same customer from one day to the next.

For example, those with kids are more likely to prefer digital menus to physical menus. Maybe there's an entertainment factor or just the ease of being able to order as soon as you sit down.

It's no surprise to see that the younger, more tech native, demographics favour the use of digital but even the majority here would like to see both options available. The role of digital within menus is to complement the traditional methods and provide less friction points for customers when the place their orders.

Table service or bar service?

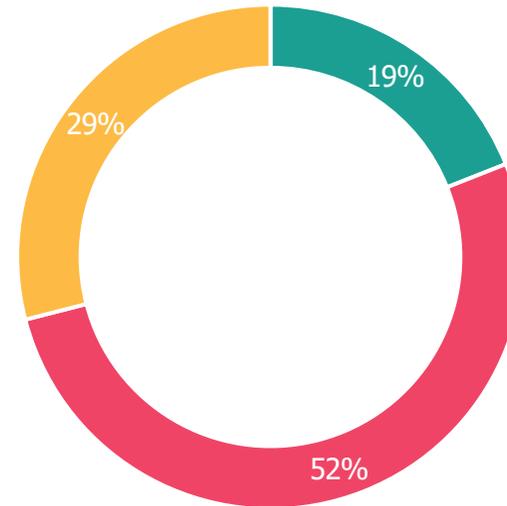
Covid restrictions have meant that pubs and bars in particular have had to offer table rather than bar service. How has this impacted the consumer?

56%

Of customers would like to see venues continue to offer table service even after they don't legally have to anymore



When pubs and bars re-open after lockdown, how would customers prefer to order/be served?



- Order/be-served at the bar
- Order/be-served at your table
- I dont have a preference

Are we seeing a fundamental shift in consumer expectations around ordering and service within pubs and bars? The tradition of ordering and being served drinks directly at the bar has been a staple of the Great British pub for as long as they have been around, however, they do say that necessity is the mother of invention, and it could be that the pandemic has opened consumers' eyes to the benefits of table service. Again, we don't believe it's a case of one or the other – but this certainly suggests that customers want the option, and that many of them actually prefer the comfort and ease of table service.

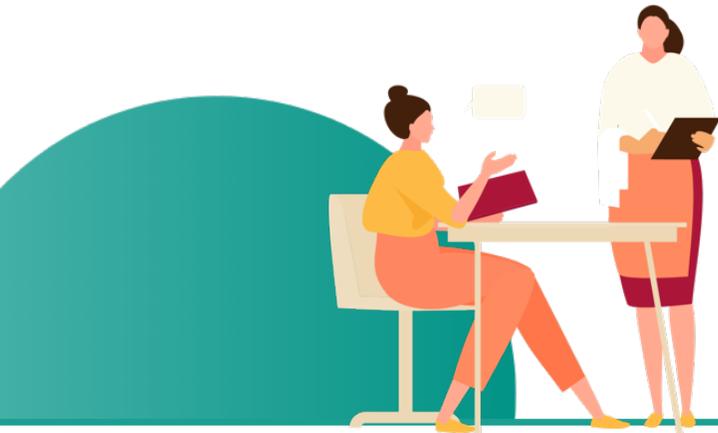
Influences on choice of food

On-menu food descriptions should be about more than just what's 'in' the dish.

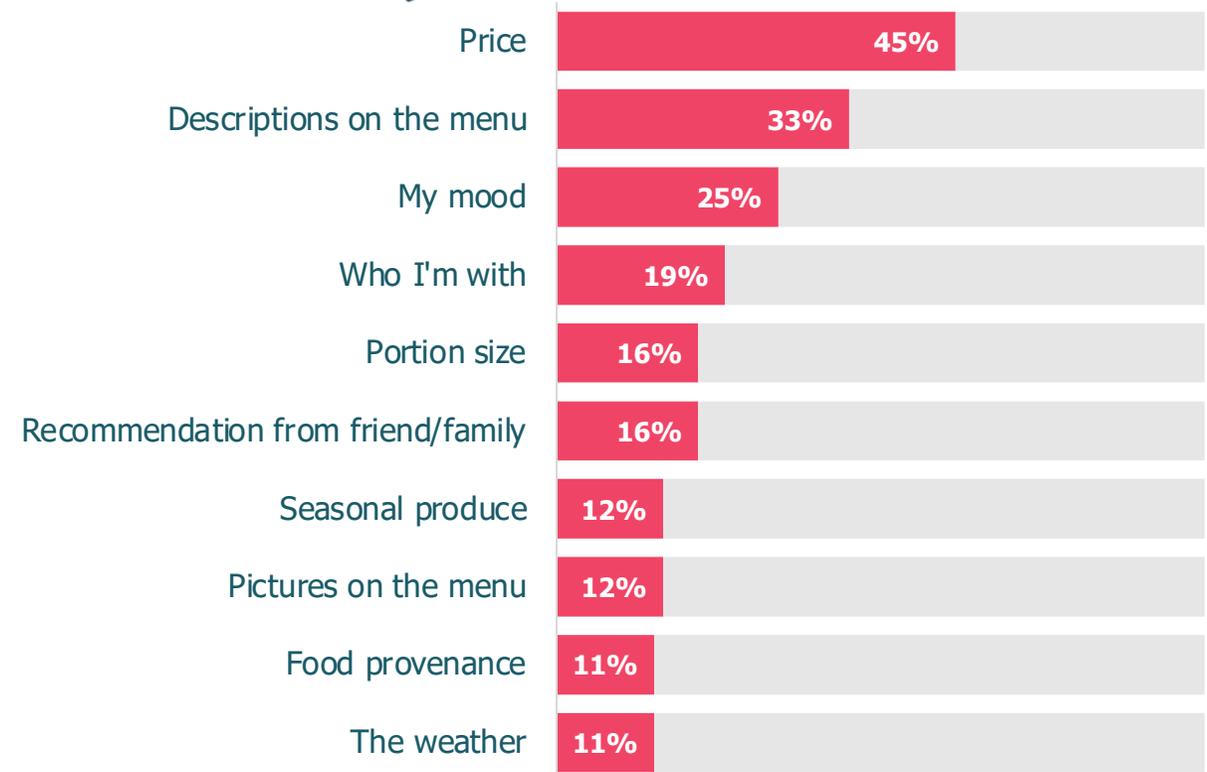
Outside price, choosing our food when dining in a pub, bar or restaurant is an emotion-led experience influenced by our mood, who we are with and even the weather. Seasonality and provenance also play a role.

The menu is your key 'sales document'. The opportunity here is for venues to utilise the space they have to describe their dishes and to speak about more than just what is in the dish. Done well, menus can tap into consumer moods and evoke the emotional connections that food can provide. Good menus can nudge customers towards certain choices.

NB. When customer reference 'price' they don't mean 'the cheapest option', they are checking it is within their expected budget for that particular occasion and or that it feels 'good value'.



'The top 10 things factors that will influence our choice of food when ordering in pubs, bars and restaurants'



“The menu optimisation process is a health check for the most important sales document in your business.”

“Menu optimisation will not only ensure that **your most important sales document** is making you as much money as it possibly can, but it will help you create a menu which appeals to your customers, helps guests have a better time in your establishment, makes life easier for your teams, boosts spend per head and ultimately puts more cash per sale in your till.

Firstly, talk to your customers and your teams and look at your sales data for each item (focus on cash in the till not GP%) to work out your 'winners' (higher than average sales, higher than average cash profit per sale), your 'crowd pleasers' (higher than average sales, average/low cash profit), your 'potentials' (lower than average sales, higher than average cash profit) and your 'losers' (lower than average sales, lower than average cash profit) and then cut your losers!

Top tips for menu design

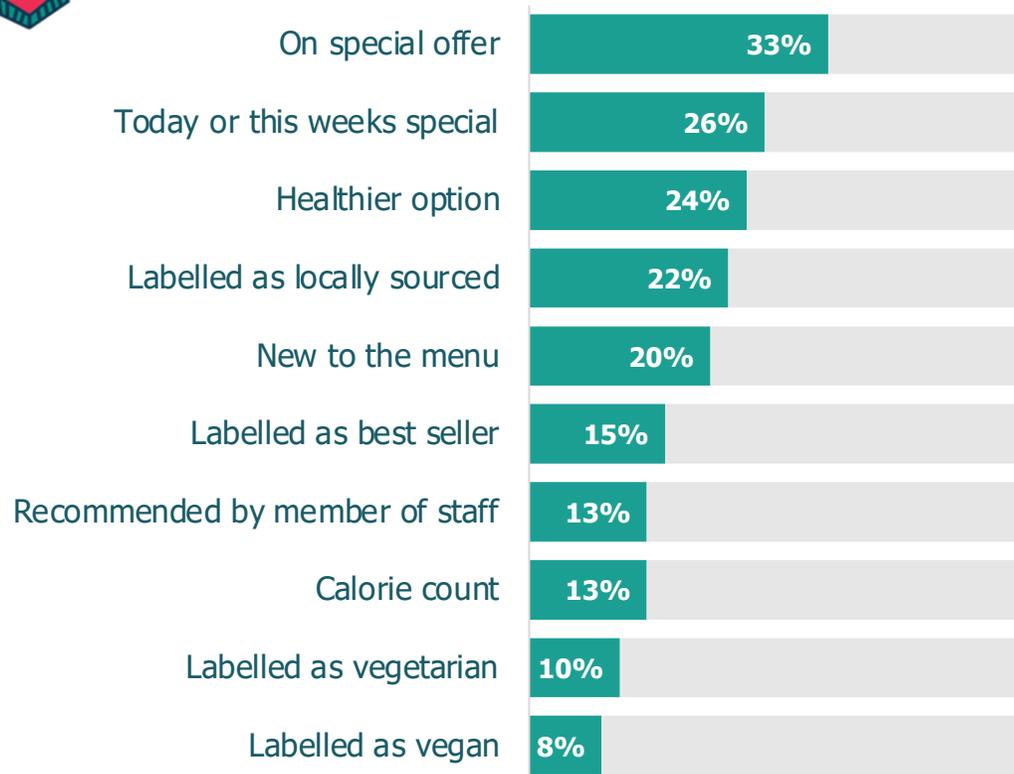
- By placing 'Potentials' next to 'Winners' and 'Crowd Pleasers' we've reliably been able to increase sales of the dishes we're trying to push time and time again.
- Menu 'hotspots' (top right corner / the first slot in each section) can also be used strategically to drive sales.
- Lending your name to a dish can really boost sales too. If your restaurant is called Harry's, try: 'Harry's Famous Burger' or 'Our Best-selling Burger'.
- A number of studies have indicated that venues can increase spend per head by removing the £ sign to make the price look less like money.
- Use words your customers understand. Choose clarity over cleverness every time. Focus on descriptive words that bring smells, sights and flavours to life.”

Annica Wainwright
Co-founder, [2Forks](#)

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media

What are we looking for on food menus?

'The top 10 that if flagged against dishes on a menu, would encourage customers to order'



We are creatures of habit so we need to be inspired to break away from what we already know and to venture out of our comfort zone.

Venues need to shout loudly about new dishes and specials in order to break the habits of regular customers. If we know that we like something it's often hard for us to take the risk and try something new, for fear of getting it wrong.

Our menus, though, are one of our greatest assets in influencing the customer. They need to take customers on a journey which breaks their traditional patterns and opens them up to trying new things, adding an extra dish and spending that little bit more.

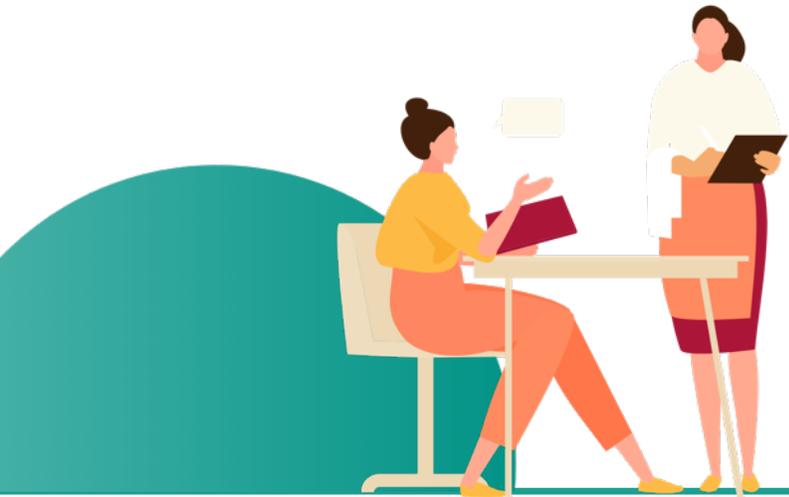
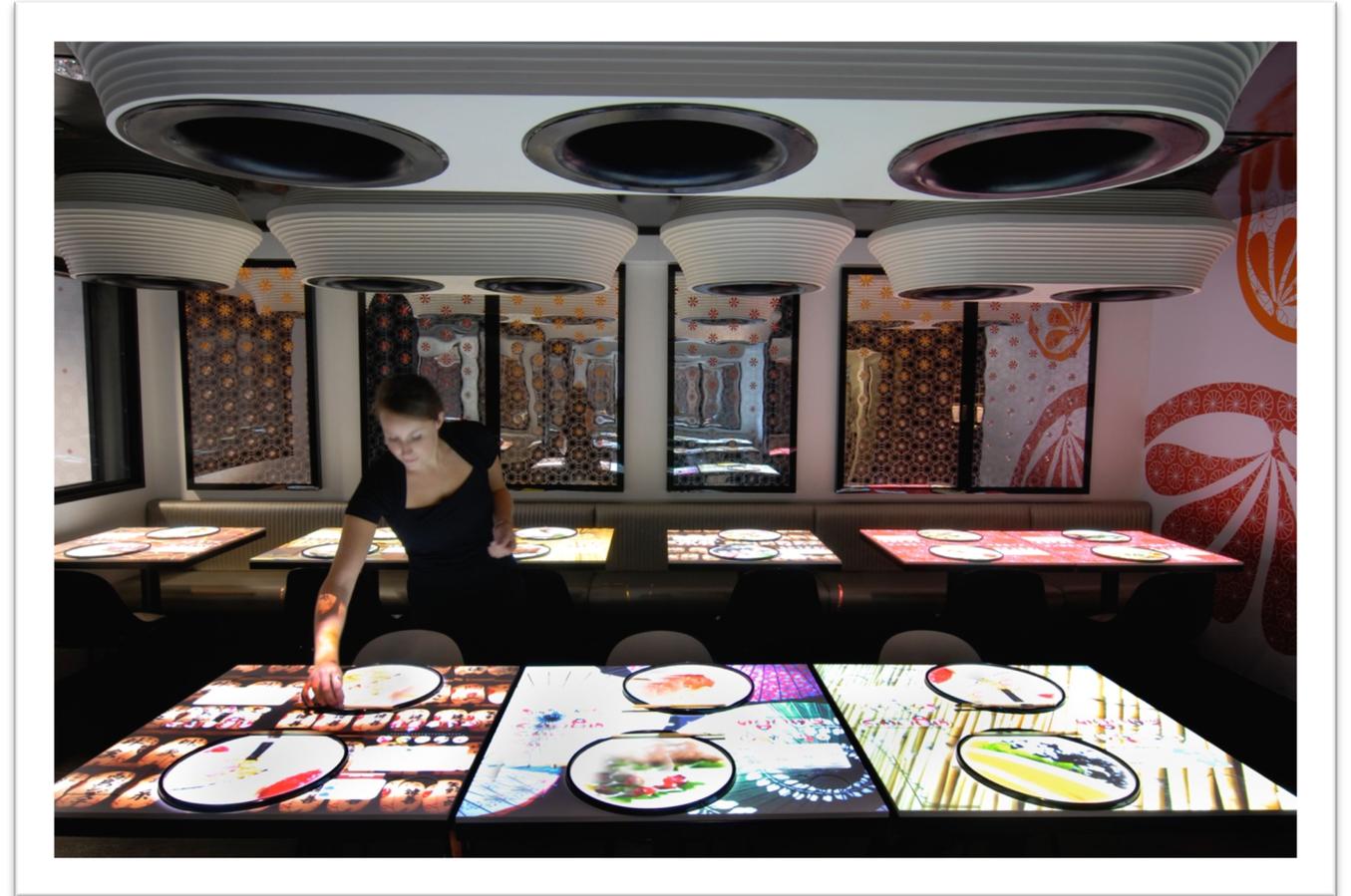


Case Study: Interactive table surfaces at Inamo

A great example of innovation when it comes to menus can be found at [Inamo, Soho](#). Here you can order your meal via interactive table surface projections and tablets, customise your virtual tablecloths, play engaging games, watch chef-cam, and even colour and draw on the table surface.

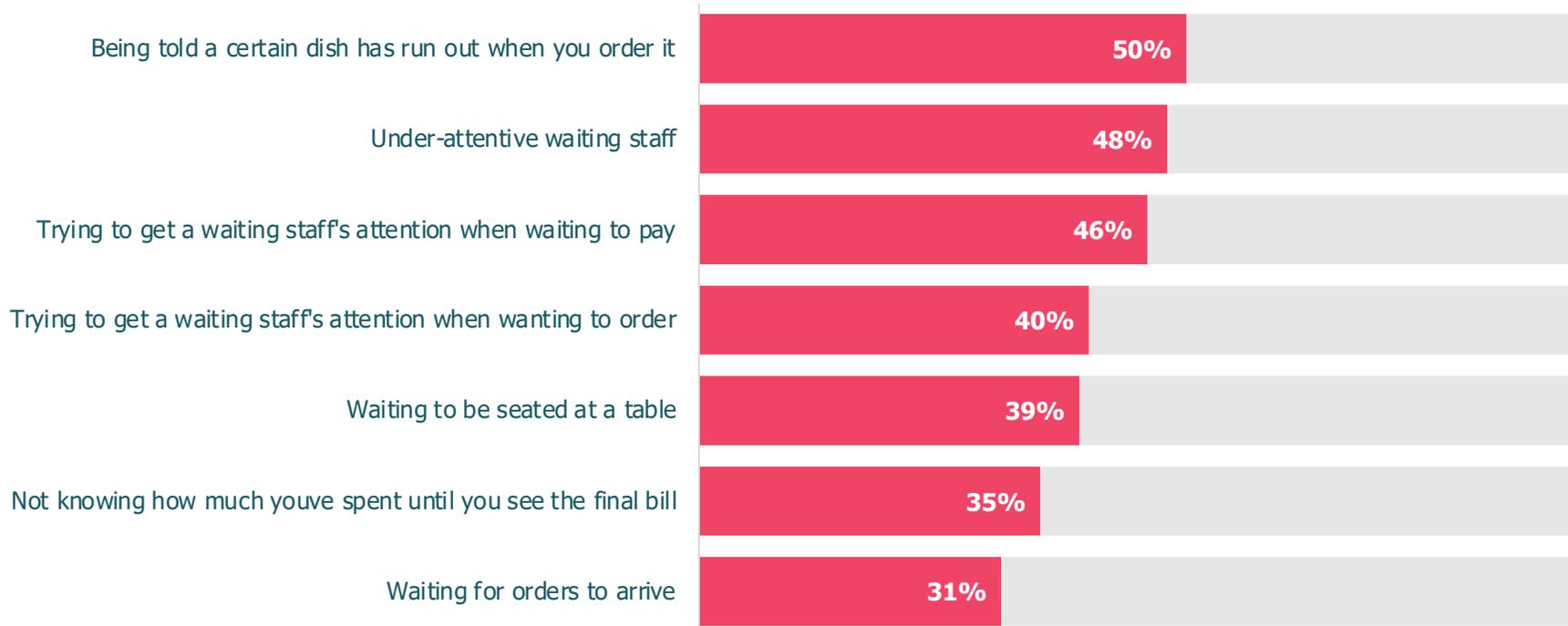
Guests can see a tasteful image of the dish/drink item they're considering projected onto the plate in front of them, with a price and description to the right. They can then decide to add it to their order, and whenever they're ready can send that directly off to the kitchen/bar to be prepared.

This innovative solution combines both interactivity and a 'fun' element whilst also improving the customer experience.



The 'pinch points' of customer service

These are the top 'turn-offs' for customers when it comes to staff service in pubs, bars and restaurants



“Information. Education. Communication. Set your teams up for success by ensuring that service isn't something that just happens every day. Treat your operations like bringing a new product to market. Make a plan based on insight and then share with your teams on a regular basis.”

"Writing service steps six years ago and hoping that they still apply today will not drive profitability or a winning guest experience. Listen to guest feedback, use it to drive your decision making and your operations, and share it with your front of house teams.

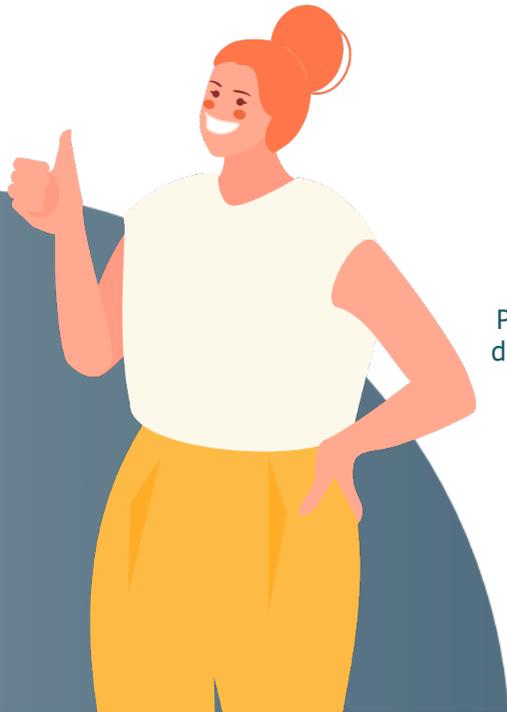
We mustn't be afraid to change and adapt. Look what the industry has achieved in the last 14 months, service must be reviewed, refreshed and respected in the same way."

Chris Fletcher
Co-founder, [Exp101](#)



We've reached the end, now it's time to pay

How likely customers are to want to do the following when paying their bill at a pub, bar or restaurant when they re-open?



Be able to see how much you are spending as you go, rather than waiting till the end when you receive your final bill

47%

31%

22%

Be able to automatically split your bill with other guests rather than having to work it out yourself

44%

33%

22%

Pay via an app on your phone rather than with server

41%

28%

31%

Pay when you order via your phone

34%

30%

37%

Pre-pay a set amount at the start (e.g. pre-pay £100 for your food and/or drinks then whatever you don't spend gets credited back to you and if you go over that amount you have to pay the difference)

30%

24%

47%

Give the venue your payment details at the start and then just get automatically charged for whatever you spend at the end

29%

31%

41%

■ Very likely / likely ■ Neither likely nor unlikely ■ Very unlikely / unlikely



"The use of digital order and payment solutions at this stage of the customer journey has increased dramatically over the past year and now have a much longer-term appeal to both consumers and operators alike."

"What is clear is that customers have embraced this technology and are now looking for new features and a personalised approach. The full potential of digital payment solutions to create a frictionless and enhanced guest experience is far from realised and it will only play an increasingly important role in the future."

Alison Vasey
Group Product Director, [Zonal](#)

Industry checklist

- ✓ Hospitality staff need to recognise when they are needed and when to leave the customer to enjoy their experience. Over attentive staff can be just as much a frustration as those that are under-attentive.
- ✓ Introduce technology that takes away the pain points of a customer's experience. Downloading multiple apps for each venue they visit, and even entering card details each time they pay – all these tiny stages can add up to a clunky customer experience. Staff should be trained on not just how to use technology to help, but when to use it.
- ✓ Remember that a menu is not just a list of the products you sell. It's one of the key assets to promote your food and drinks but also, importantly, the atmosphere and occasions that you are trying to foster in your venues. Customers are led by occasions and then purchase items that fit that need – use menus to evoke emotions and inspire occasions.
- ✓ Paying the bill at the end of the meal can often mean customers end their experience on one of the most painful moments. Think about how technological solutions can alleviate some of the most pressing issues for customers but also consider their emotional journey – you want them to leave on a high!



LOYALTY

This section will explore how hospitality brands and operators can complete the loop and encourage loyalty with their customers, to ensure they enjoy and connect with the experience, leave a review and come back for more.



Encouraging customers to leave a review

62% of customers say that they have left a review for a pub, bar or restaurant at least once.

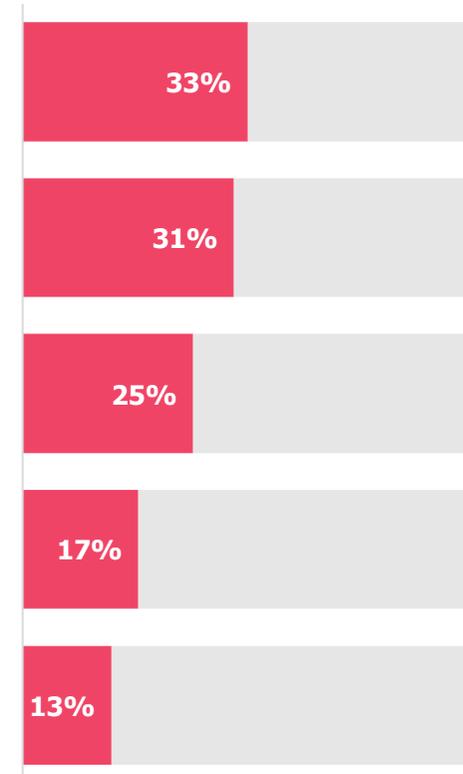
We are more than twice as likely to leave a review when we've had food than if we've visited just for drinks. Women are 14% more likely to leave a review than men, whilst under 35s are nearly twice as likely to leave reviews than those over 35.

The prevalence of smartphone usage and savviness is having an impact here, as 1 in 3 of all customers say they are more likely to leave a review if they can do it on their smartphone, when it suits them. This is as high as 44% for those in the 25-34-year-old bracket. We also see the power that rewards and a loyalty-style points scheme can have on driving reviews.



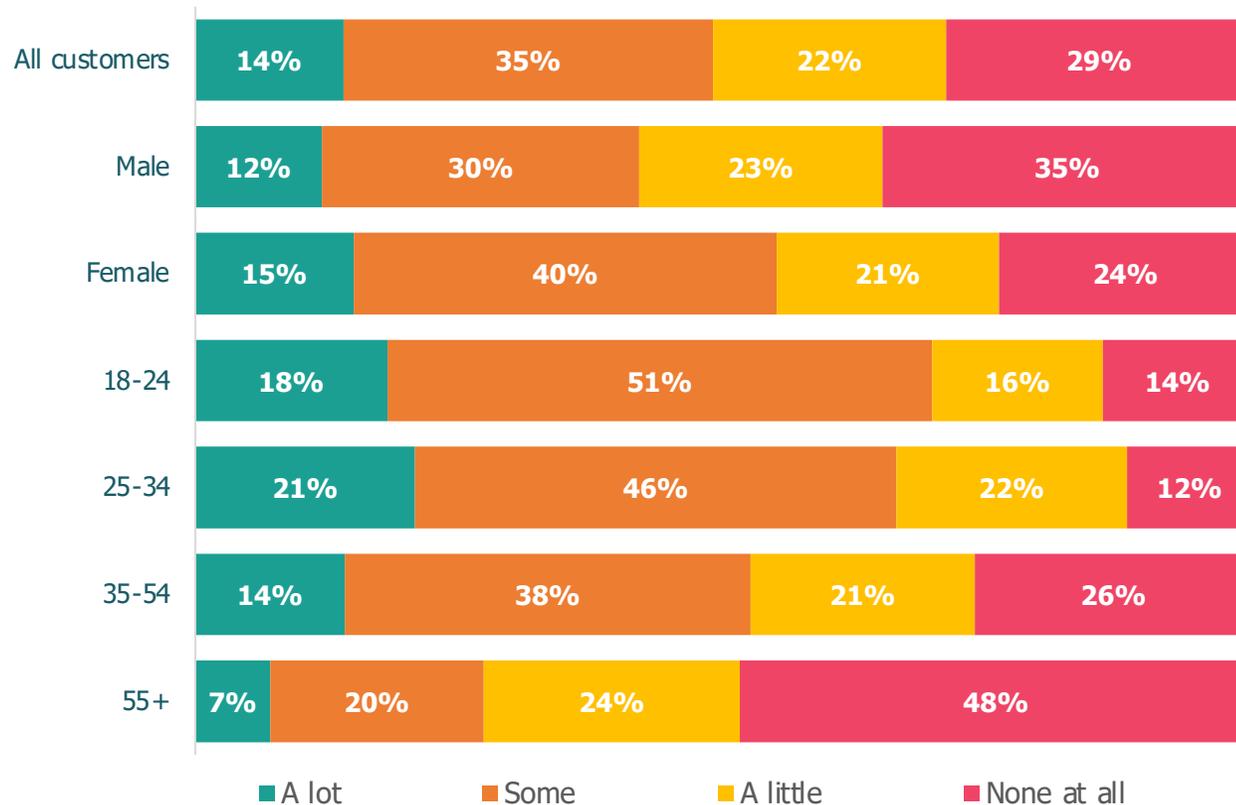
'What would make a customer more likely to leave a review?'

- If you could do it on your smartphone at your own convenience
- If you collected loyalty points/rewards for leaving reviews
- If you could do it on your smartphone at the same time you paid your bill
- If I could leave a review without having to give my email address or login
- If I can just give a rating on a device the server hands me or at exit to restaurant/pub



A loyalty scheme can be a footfall driver

'How much influence do loyalty schemes have on where you choose to eat or drink out currently?'



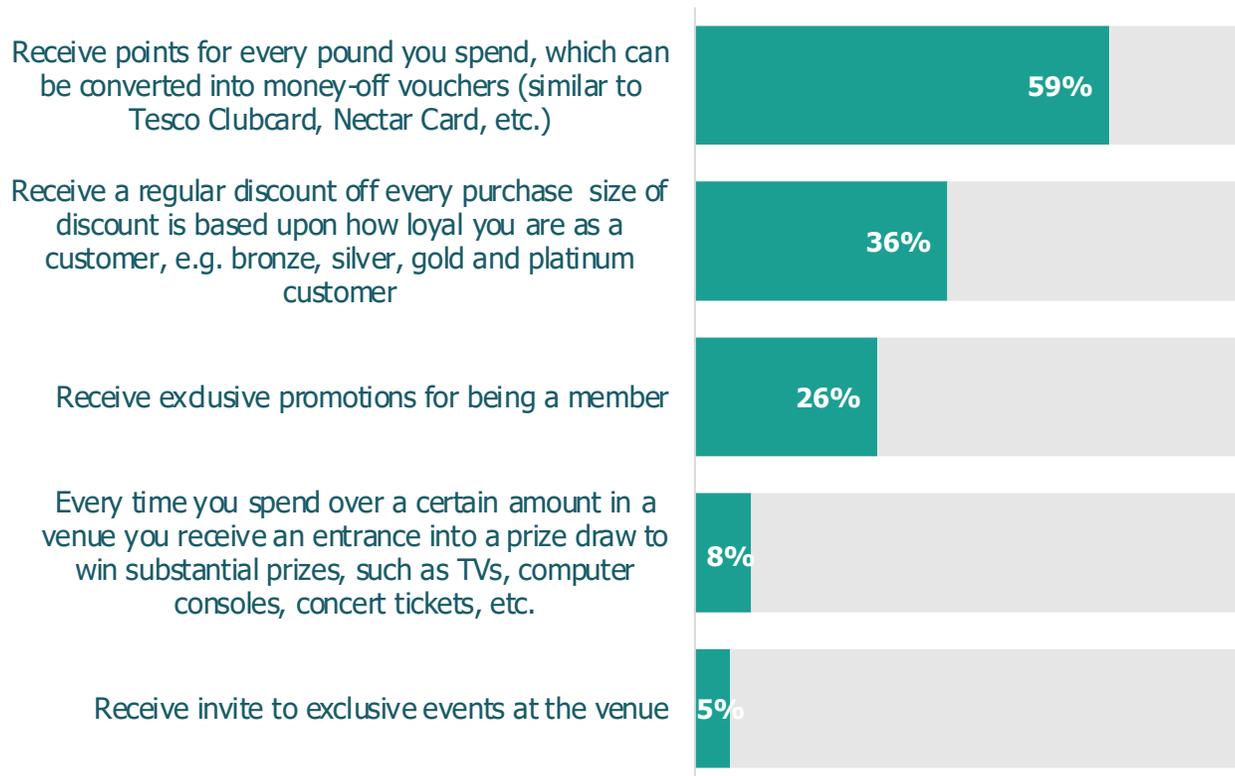
86% of all pub, bar and restaurant customers would be interested in joining a loyalty scheme if it was offered.

For 1 in 7 customers, a loyalty scheme has a significant influence on which venue they choose, this rises to as much as 1 in 5 for 25-34-year-olds. This shows the power of not only loyalty schemes, in the traditional sense, but in venues creating an environment that cultivates loyalty.

Customers, ultimately, want to be rewarded for their loyalty. In whatever form that takes, it's important to understand the behaviour that's been driven here. As customers, we know that we have options and if we have our favourites then we want to feel like that is recognised by the venue/brand – the customer has given their commitment and they need that to be validated.

Rewarding and incentivising customer loyalty

'The most popular 'rewards' customers would want from a pub, bar or restaurant's loyalty scheme'



We're creatures of habit and as so many of us have experience of using loyalty cards in supermarkets it's only natural for us to want a similar offer for when we spend money in other environments. We are also in favour of 'instant gratification' when it comes to rewards and benefits. Rather than have to wait for a 'big' reward we're more likely to prefer to benefit from regular small rewards on each visit.

Customers favour simplicity and 'useability' when it comes to being rewarded for their loyalty. "Make it easy for me to gain my rewards and easy for me to use them."

We're also happy to share personal information if it means that the rewards we receive are tailored to the things we like. 79% of customers would be willing to share their personal information in this instance.



Industry checklist

- ✓ Forging an ongoing relationship (and dialog) with your customer outside of your venue is absolutely key. It obviously helps drive repeat visits but they can also become your biggest promoters and help drive footfall to your venues via positive reviews either online or via word of mouth.
- ✓ Getting to know your customers including the collection and analysis of relevant data is critical here. It can be used to personalise your communications, evolve and improve your menus, tailor your events and, ultimately, create a better experience for your customers and help you build a long-term relationship with them.
- ✓ Try to make reviews a simple and seamless part of the customer journey – for example as part of the payment process (if using a payment app) or as part of an on-going loyalty scheme (e.g. leave a review to earn more loyalty points). Not only are customer reviews vital to ensure that the offer and service provided remains relevant and to a high standard but they are also a valuable tool to help promote your venues and to encourage new customers.
- ✓ Loyalty schemes can be a great way to drive footfall and repeat visits, but they are also a great way to collect useful and useable data on your customers. When it comes to loyalty schemes and loyalty rewards, customers favour simplicity and 'useability'. Make it easy for them to sign-up and use the scheme and easy for them to gain rewards.



FROM PLAN TO PLATE

Summarising the key influences on the
hospitality customer journey in a new world

In partnership with **Zonal**



Your checklist from plan to plate...

INFLUENCE

- ✓ Look at the things that consumers have liked about being at home and try to replicate these experiences in our venues.
- ✓ At the same time accentuate the factors that make hospitality unique (e.g. atmosphere, experience, speciality drinks, etc.).
- ✓ Make sure that your offer can straddle 'at-home' and 'in-venue' occasions
- ✓ Be fast and flexible. Be ready and able to influence customer decisions.

EVALUATE

- ✓ Invest time, effort and money into maximising your reach through marketing channels that match your target customers.
- ✓ Have quality photography across all digital - bring your 'vibe' to life.
- ✓ Booking must be quick and easy for customers. We need to take the 'hassle' out of going out – but leave some space for walk-ins.
- ✓ The decision-making process is increasingly digitally driven, at virtually every customer touchpoint. This is your chance to influence.

LOYALTY

- ✓ Forging an ongoing relationship (and dialog) with your customer outside of your venue is absolutely key.
- ✓ Collection and analysis of customer data is critical. It can be used to personalise communications, evolve menus, tailor events and more.
- ✓ Try to make reviews a simple and seamless part of the customer journey- digitalisation is key here. Reviews are vital to ensure that the offer and service remains relevant and to a high standard.
- ✓ When it comes to loyalty schemes and loyalty rewards, customers favour simplicity and 'useability'.

PURCHASE

- ✓ Staff need to recognise when they are needed and when to leave the customer to enjoy their experience.
- ✓ Introduce technology that takes away the pain points for a customer's experience.
- ✓ The menu is one of the key assets to promote your food and drinks but also, importantly, the atmosphere and occasions that you are trying to cultivate.
- ✓ Technological solutions can elevate the customer's emotional journey – you want them to leave on a high!

“Technology plays a greater role in all our lives than ever before, so it’s vital that hospitality keeps pace to remain relevant in the fight for the leisure pound. As the sector rebuilds after the challenges of the past year, tech will play a leading role in powering the recovery through helping to deliver fantastic and memorable experiences for customers.

Increasingly, we’re going to see hospitality businesses borrow from the playbooks of the likes of Amazon and Netflix to drive profitability, but ultimately a balance needs to be struck between the values of traditional hospitality and a tech-first approach. The major advantage of the shift to digital are the valuable insights gained from harvesting data along the customer journey. Visiting patterns, purchasing habits and general customer behaviour can help inform and deliver personalised deals and rewards. It’s a virtuous circle that enables operators to make smarter decisions and future-proof their business. Moving forwards, consumers will take their use of tech to the next level, using the likes of voice-search and voice-ordering features, so operators must be ready to meet that challenge and satisfy their demands.”

Alison Vasey
Group Product Director, Zonal

Zonal

Innovative technology empowering
hospitality businesses

www.zonal.co.uk



“We’ve been enjoying the ‘hassle-free’ experience of entertaining at home over the last 12 months and it has given customers time to reflect on what frustrates them most about going out versus staying in.

Details are very important right now and venues need to look at every single potential stress point to ensure the customer experience isn’t compromised. And customer experience and engagement with our brands starts well before they walk through the doors and should continue long after they say goodbye.

The customer journey is multi-faceted, with various decisions that are made along each step – both conscious and unconscious. The challenge for brands and operators is to understand the journey and to understand how and where they are best placed to influence the customer decisions that are made, whilst utilising the best tools and technology to help.

The last 12 months may have altered the consumer landscape but our behaviour triggers and barriers are ingrained, and it are these natural instincts that we are trying to influence. Alleviate the frustrations and accentuate the positive emotions. Cracking these two elements will ensure that the ideal customer journey leads straight to your venue’s door.

Blake Gladman
Strategy & Insight Director, KAM Media



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