

ONE IN FIVE SOURCE CHRISTMAS VENUE IN SEPTEMBER

One in five consumers will source their Christmas party venue in September, research by guest experience management company HGEM finds.

One in seven consumers will also choose and book their venue by the end of September.

The study shows in 2018, more than half of consumers (56%) chose a restaurant as their Christmas party venue, with 29% opting for a pub or bar, and just 8% choosing a hotel.



The research shows consumers prioritise three key factors when deciding on a venue: whether they can preview the menu before booking (64%); how well the venue caters for their party number (49%); and how prepared a venue is for those with food allergies or intolerances (39%).

When it comes down to making a booking, 58% of consumers still prefer to contact a venue over the phone, 17% like to use an online booking system, 13% visit a venue, and 12% book via email.

An unfriendly tone over the phone would put 40% of consumers off making a booking, with 22% put off by pushy sales tactics, and 21% put off by team members not knowing important information.

For operators, HGEM's research shows it can be worth marketing to previous Christmas party guests: 78% of consumers said they are likely to book the same venue again, and 53% welcome post-event communications.

Jason Horn, head of client success at HGEM says, "While it may seem too early for most, it's particularly important for operators to be preparing for Christmas during the summer months in order to capitalise on those consumers looking to book their parties well in advance. Operators that are clearly displaying Christmas offerings and an ability to cater for a whole range of dietary needs are likely to see better take up. Our survey also revealed a great opportunity for operators to market to previous guests, with a large majority likely to book the same venue again."