



Christmas Is Calling!

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HOSPITALITYGEM RESEARCH REVEALS 42% OF GUESTS PREFER TO BOOK THEIR CHRISTMAS TABLE OVER THE PHONE

Christmas has the potential to be the busiest time in the hospitality industry, with the first interaction on the phone being key. Research from guest experience management experts, HospitalityGEM, has indicated that a significant proportion of guests (42%) would choose to call and book a Christmas party, rather than book online or walk in.



When calling to book a Christmas party, 92% of guests stated they would book up to three months in advance, indicating September as the month to start taking control of managing guests' booking experiences.

Data collected from HospitalityGEM's 2015 Christmas Call program specified that the greatest areas for improvement included; answering the phone in good time, building rapport with the caller and checking the guest's special requirements.

The top reasons guests become disengaged when calling to make a Christmas booking are; an unfriendly tone, hurried/abrupt responses and a lack of knowledge/information. However, with the process often left for team members to manage themselves, answering the phone and taking bookings during this period is an essential aspect of seasonal preparation.

The highest scoring sector in the 2015 Christmas Calls Report was restaurants, whilst also revealing that 3-5* hotels need the most improving, with staff missing out most frequently on offering overnight stays as part of a Christmas package.

Ollie Navias, Head of Business Development, HospitalityGEM commented: "Phoning a venue to book a Christmas party may be a guest's first ever interaction with that brand. This is why the first impression a business portrays here is so crucial to whether they secure that booking, and potentially more in the future. During our trials, we called multiple venues throughout August, which were all part of larger restaurant and pub groups and advertised Christmas menus online. To our amazement, none were able to give detailed responses about menus, however all talked about taking a deposit and none successfully followed up our enquiries. The feedback we provide has previously added to the service our clients have delivered, so that they can secure multiple bookings for an extremely successful Christmas! "

Sample calls have again been conducted as part of HospitalityGEM's 2016 research. Transcribed is an excerpt from a call demonstrating how team members may be representing your brand.

CALLER: What are the Christmas menus that you have available?

TEAM MEMBER: Give me one moment darling (...) we have already got some Christmas menus available, the thing is I can't give you a price now, it's coming from head office in a couple of weeks...but it is around £17 2 courses and £20 3 courses. It's very nice though, so don't worry about that. Do you still want to book, darling?

CALLER: I think I'd like to wait until the menus are available so that I can check with my friends that they are happy with them.

TEAM MEMBER: Ok, cool. Do you want me to send you an email? Can you give me your email address...?

CALLER: Sure it's.....

TEAM MEMBER: Listen to this X, can you please send me an email? It's a lot better that way.

CALLER: Ok sure

TEAM MEMBER: Thank you my love.