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'COMMUNICATION STYLE' OF STAFF NEEDS MOST IMPROVING IN CHAIN RESTAURANTS - RESEARCH FINDS



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The majority of diners would be likely to spend more if staff had proper and effective training, according to the latest research by guest experience management specialists HospitalityGEM.

Just over a third (35%) of respondents felt independent restaurants had the best trained staff, 27% favoured chain restaurants and 22% hotel restaurants. Only 6% of diners feel bars and wet-led pubs have the best trained staff.

When asked which area of service needed the most improvement for each sector, the 'communication style' was cited as the most important, with 39% of respondents feeling this needed most improving in chain restaurants, 25% in hotel restaurants, 36% in wet-led pubs and 40% in fast food restaurants.

Whereas in coffee shops (31%), bars (29%) and independent restaurants (29%) it was overall 'speed of service' which needed most improving.

Steven Pike, managing director of HospitalityGEM, said: "Effective training represents a potential untapped source of competitive advantage in hospitality. By analysing the guest experience, we can identify plenty of opportunities to sell more as a direct result of better training. The really interesting finding from this research is that such a high proportion of people felt they would happily spend more.

"To properly capitalise on these opportunities, the research highlights three main areas: confident engagement with guests, knowledge of the menu, and a higher level of awareness. In most people these areas will be significantly enhanced with good quality training materials and practical application. The materials should be developed to match your brand identity and 'promise', onsite champions can help with scenario practice, and a good learning management system can help you to both deliver some of the materials to targeted groups and track their completion across your estate."

Diners said 'efficiency of service', 'knowledge of the menu' and 'communication style' were the most important factors when identifying the top signs that a member of staff is well trained. Other respondents answered that a well-trained team member should have 'knowledge of allergens', 'personalisation of service' and 'overall confidence and ability to gauge the kind of experience for individuals'.

Over half of people said that they would increase their spend on about a quarter of visits if the staff had been more effectively trained, with a further 30% saying they would have spent more on half of their visits.

Those aged between 46 and 55 are most influenced by effective training in relation to their spend, although this figure dropped in those aged over 65.

Written by **Nathan Pearce**