Christmas bookings: How prepared is your team?

New research from guest experience management experts HGEM has revealed that guests do like to plan ahead when it comes to organising a Christmas party, giving hotels the opportunity to cash in early on festive bookings.

Over half (56%) prefer to book at least three months in advance, with early December being the ideal time to celebrate for 74% of guests.

When searching for the perfect venue online, 75% of guests specifically look for Christmas adverts and menus, 50% actually revealed they would leave a website if they couldn't see a Christmas menu rather than call to enquire.

When choosing a venue, 60% of guests rate food options as the most important factor, this is over price and a festive atmosphere.

When it comes to the menu, of guests organising a Christmas party for family and friends, 40% prefer to order food on the day, with options from both the set and standard menu.

Yet, when organising a Christmas party for work colleagues, 44% prefer to pre-order from a set menu, indicating that ease on the day is essential for these guests where perhaps the party size is significantly bigger than when dining with family and friends.

Guests also anticipate an efficient booking process, with 58% expecting a phone call enquiry to take 2-5 minutes, emphasising the need for team members to be prepared with relevant information for a seamless process.

As the majority (81%) of guests expect to be asked to pay a deposit as standard, operators should avoid focusing on this and instead use the call to provide detailed and engaging information about their offering.

Matthew Smith, head of new business at HGEM said: "You can be bold in asking for a deposit to secure the booking. Party organisers now expect this and will be grateful that you are organised making the deposit payment process effortless – one less thing for the organiser to worry about equals more time to think about how to best spend the director's budget."