



## latest hospitality news

### 80% of diners do not communicate with restaurants online

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A new survey has revealed that 80% of diners do not communicate with restaurants online, with this figure even higher in the Midlands. With some restaurants attracting over a million social media followers it appears that some of their efforts to engage with their customers are in vain, according to HospitalityGEM.

Even though the majority of diners do not communicate with restaurants through social media, 42% stated that they still keep up to date with their activity online. This is supported by 83% of those surveyed, who agreed that it was important for them to feel well informed before they visited a restaurant, potentially because diners want to guarantee they have a great experience. To further ensure that they are happy with their choice of restaurant, 94% of people actively search online for a review first.

Using online reviews to vet a restaurant before dining is a necessity for two thirds of those surveyed, with the 18-30 and 60+ age brackets utilising this facility the most. This suggests that those between these age brackets, who are likely to have more time pressures from work or family, are perhaps more inclined to go to brands or places that they know and trust.

All diners surveyed said that they would be more inclined to communicate with the restaurant if they offered more deals online for their guests. Males are more likely to communicate directly with restaurants online, but only if they are addressing a personal profile of a chef or owner, rather than the restaurant or brand as a whole. This implies that although restaurants have an online presence, they may not be communicating the right content, in the right way to their target markets – perhaps focusing too much on selling their brand, rather than interacting with customers.

Steven Pike, Managing Director of HospitalityGEM commented: "These stats have revealed some startling information that will no doubt aid restaurateurs with their online communications and encourage them to review their approach. Even though the use of social media has surged in the UK hospitality sector, it appears that this only works when using a specific type of post to a specific target market, with online reviews seen as being most reliable. Restaurants now need to apply their personal approach of engaging with guests to their online communications."