



UK operators could learn from USA and Thailand when it comes to hospitality says HGEM

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With more visitors than ever before expected to visit post-Brexit Britain, with more money to spend, now is a pivotal time for operators to review visitor expectations suggests HGEM. The Guest Experience Management expert's latest research looks at perceptions of hospitality across key international markets with America and Thailand emerging as clear winners.

The UK fared well, polling a third place position; however Steven Pike, managing director of HGEM, suggests operators could do more to capitalise on the upsurge in overseas visitors. He comments: "It's very encouraging that the UK is in the top three but, with Visit Britain forecasting 4% growth in overseas visits to 38.1 million and visitor spending increasing by 8.1% to £24.1billion, UK operators should examine why the US and Thailand stand out and what lessons can be learned."

Respondents (a split of UK residents and overseas visitors) were asked 'which country or culture stands out as being the most hospitable'; America and Thailand came out top, with Italy, the Caribbean and the UK featured in the top five. France and Mexico were viewed as the least hospitable.

Thailand also came out on top in terms of restaurants that best reflect the culture of the cuisine they offer, ahead of Indian and French.

One UK operator that may be looked at as a good example for hospitality and authenticity is Thai street food restaurant Thaikhun. The 10-site casual dining chain bases its guest experience on four intrinsic Thai values: Jai Sai - care from the heart, Samekee - togetherness, Sanook - fun, Hoa Dao - service excellence.

Pike continues, "There are lots of examples of creative practice throughout the industry – Thaikhun being just one of these. If we look at brands taking learnings from American hospitality, which led the way in our poll, Hard Rock Café stands out having built an international brand renowned for US-style service, authentic dining and memorable entertainment.

"What's important is that each member of the team is briefed to live and breathe a brand's values as part of their induction and then looks to implement them wherever possible as part of the ongoing guest experience."