

WHAT MAKES A CUSTOMER FALL IN LOVE WITH A RESTAURANT?

According to a new study from guest experience management platform HGEM, brands that focus on honesty, reliability and willingness to go above and beyond are valued by customers twice as much as brands that focus on being fun and social.

More than seven out of 10 (72%) customers believe that one single team member has the power to influence their decision to fall in love with a restaurant brand, or not, suggesting that operators should focus on staff training.

The survey revealed that 30% are willing to overlook bad reviews for a brand they are already invested in.

However, a good personal experience is paramount, with 82% saying they would dump a restaurant brand after a bad customer experience and 66% of millennials saying they would never stand for slip-ups when it comes to speed of service.

Also on millennials, 60% apparently fall in love with a brand through Instagram, compared to 17% on Facebook and 4% on Twitter, while baby boomers prefer more traditional forms of marketing such as magazine advertising (32%) and emails (25%).

"It is vital that restaurant operators understand their customers' needs at all points of the consumer journey," says HGEM founding director Sally Whelan. "While an individual's reasons to fall in love with a brand are not always obvious, the survey clearly demonstrates the importance of customer experience in the process. A positive experience can drive loyalty and strong brand engagement, driving repeat visits and sales.

"Front of house teams are often the key to unlocking the hearts and minds of customers; operators should make the most of this influence by introducing effective staff training and reward schemes."

