

## Only 7% think pubs give best greeting

31 Jan 2017 | Hannah Thompson

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A personalised experience is key to how much customers enjoy visiting a restaurant, with 83% of diners considering the welcome they get to be one of the most important factors, new research has shown.

In a new report, guest experience management firm HGEM said that the quality of the welcome is one of the most important factors for diners when eating out at a restaurant. with 44% prioritising personalised human

interaction, such as additional conversation, or staff going above and beyond standard service.

A similar percentage of diners (42%) said that not being greeted with a smile or a lack of eye contact would make them feel unwelcome when visiting a restaurant. Slightly older respondents especially (24% of those aged over 55) said that an "impersonal or generic greeting" would make them feel most unwelcome.

When it comes to giving the best greeting, hotels won out in the poll, with 31% saying they offered the best welcome, versus 29% saying casual dining restaurants, and only 7% stating pubs and bars.

HGEM suggested that the results showed that demand for a personalised service was growing within hospitality, and that recruiting genuinely welcoming members of staff should be businesses' focus.

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Steven Pike, managing director of HGEM, said: "While personalisation has been gaining popularity recently in the context of products, it will always be important in a service context...A focus in recruiting the right people and investing in their development will encourage genuine welcoming behaviours and memorable guest interactions to encourage repeat visits and convert customers into brand advocates."

The report comes in light of the increasing importance of loyalty schemes in restaurants, the rise in personalisation according to nationality and other differentiating factors, and the increase in technology that seeks to improve customer experience both before, during, and after arrival.