

Propel info

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One-fifth of consumers source their Christmas party venue in

September: One-fifth of consumers source their Christmas party venue in September, with one in seven choosing and booking by the end of the same month, according to research by guest experience management expert HGEM. The study found that in 2018 more than half (56%) of consumers chose restaurants as their prime Christmas party venue, while 29% opted for a pub or bar and only 8% chose a hotel. The three key priorities when choosing a venue were being able to preview the menu in advance (64%), how well the venue catered for their desired capacity (49%) and how prepared they were for those with food allergies (39%). When it came to making a booking, almost three-fifths (58%) of respondents preferred to book over the phone, 17% preferred an online booking system through the company's website, 13% opted for a traditional walk-in and 12% booked via email. During the booking process, two-fifths (40%) of consumers admitted an unfriendly tone over the phone stopped them from making a booking, with pushy sales tactics (22%) and team members lacking information (21%) also putting consumers off. More than three-quarters (78%) of respondents said they were likely to book the same venue again, with more than half (53%) also welcoming post-event marketing communications. Jason Horn, head of client success at HGEM, said: "While it may seem too early, it's important for operators to prepare for Christmas during the summer months to capitalise on those consumers looking to book their parties well in advance. Operators clearly displaying Christmas offerings and an ability to cater for a whole range of dietary needs are likely to see better take up. Our survey also reveals a great opportunity for operators to market to previous guests, with a large majority likely to book the same venue again."