

OVER 40% OF GUESTS OPT TO BOOK CHRISTMAS BY PHONE

Operators need to ensure team members are ready to take Christmas bookings by phone, as new research by HospitalityGEM reveals that 42% of guests would choose this method over walking in or booking online.



In the lead up to this traditionally busy time for the hospitality industry, 92% of guests stated they would book a Christmas party up to three months in advance, suggesting that operators should already be managing bookings.

With calling still a popular method of booking, HospitalityGEM's 2015 Christmas Call program found that answering the phone in good time, building rapport with callers, and checking for special requirements could still be improved.

The top reasons guests become disengaged when calling to make a Christmas booking were found to be an unfriendly tone, abrupt responses, and a lack of knowledge from the member of staff.

"Phoning a venue to book a Christmas party may be a guest's first ever interaction with that brand," says HospitalityGEM head of business development Ollie Navias.

"This is why the first impression a business portrays here is so crucial to whether they secure that booking, and potentially more in the future.

"During our trials, we called multiple venues throughout August, which were all part of larger restaurant and pub groups and advertised Christmas menus online.

"To our amazement, none were able to give detailed responses about menus, however all talked about taking a deposit and none successfully followed up our enquiries."