

## Word Of Mouth Beats Social Media In Influencing Eating Out

A survey by leading hospitality management specialists HospitalityGem has revealed that 80% of respondents see word of mouth as having the greatest influence on their assessment of different places to eat out, which is four times greater than social media.



Personal recommendations are twice as persuasive as a previous experience, special offers or TripAdvisor.

Also, 56% of respondents have opted to visit somewhere they have previously had a great experience.

However, when visiting a town or city for the first time 71% of respondents would seek somewhere they have never heard of, simply because it might be interesting.

Three quarters of respondents (75%) would be 'very likely' to stay longer than planned, perhaps opting to have another course if they were having a great meal experience, while just 5% of those asked responded 'not very likely.'

Steven Pike, managing director of HospitalityGEM, said: "The survey provides fantastic insight into what influences consumer thinking when choosing where to eat out.

"Remarkably, despite all the fuss surrounding social media, four times as many respondents felt they were influenced by face-to-face discussions, which demonstrates how vital it is for operators to manage the guest experience to ensure consistent delivery of their offering.

"Operators also cannot ignore the impact first impressions have on consumers, and especially amongst those looking to experience something new.

"Maximising the guest experience is not solely about the quality of the product offering. It is also about the organisation, timing and how a team engage with the customer, which must all work seamlessly in harmony with an operators brand values.

"A great experience can help to increase dwell time, which will then encourage a team to upsell, as well as encouraging customers to return again and again."