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GUESTS PREFER TO BOOK VIA PHONE FOR CHRISTMAS PARTIES - RESEARCH FINDS



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Almost half of consumers would choose to call and book their Christmas party over the phone, rather than book online or walk in, according to new research by guest experience management specialists, HospitalityGEM.

Data collected from the Christmas Call report found 42% would rather call, with 92% of consumers stating they would book up to three months in advance, indicating September as the month to start taking control of bookings.

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

"The feedback we provide has previously added to the service our clients have delivered, so that they can secure multiple bookings for an extremely successful Christmas!"

The greatest areas for improvement were identified as answering the phone in good time, building rapport with the caller and checking the guest's special requirements.

The top reasons guests become disengaged when calling to make a Christmas booking are; an unfriendly tone, hurried/abrupt responses and a lack of knowledge/information.

However, with the process often left for team members to manage themselves, answering the phone and taking bookings during this period is an essential aspect of seasonal preparation.