

## Diners spend more if staff have effective training

17 February 2016 by Helen Edmonds



New research by Guest Experience Management experts HospitalityGEM has revealed a real opportunity for hospitality operators to increase potential sales through better training, as a staggering 96 per cent of respondents indicated that effective staff training has an impact on their spending when dining out.

Over 50 per cent of people said that they would have increased their spend on about a quarter of visits if the staff had been more effectively trained, with a further 30 per cent saying they would have spent more on half of their visits. Those aged between 46 and 55 are most influenced by effective training in relation to their spend, although this figure dropped in those aged over 65.

After breaking training down into individual sectors, 35 per cent of respondents felt independent restaurants had the best trained staff, 27 per cent favoured chain restaurants and 22 per cent hotel restaurants. Only six per cent of diners feel bars and wet-led pubs have the best trained staff.

When asked which area of service needed the most improvement for each sector, the 'communication style' was cited as the most important reason, with 39 per cent of respondents feeling this needed the most improvement in chain restaurants, 25 per cent in hotel restaurants, 36 per cent in wet-led pubs and 40 per cent in fast food restaurants. Whereas in coffee shops (31 per cent), bars (29 per cent) and independent restaurants (29 per cent) it was felt overall 'speed of service' required the most improvement.

Diners said 'efficiency of service', 'knowledge of the menu' and 'communication style' were the most important factors when identifying the top signs that a member of staff is well trained. Other respondents answered that a well-trained team member should have 'knowledge of allergens', 'personalisation of service' and 'overall confidence and ability to gauge the kind of experience for individuals'.

Steven Pike, managing director of HospitalityGEM, commented: "Effective training represents a potential untapped source of competitive advantage in hospitality. By analysing the guest experience, we can identify plenty of opportunities to sell more as a direct result of better training. The really interesting finding from this research is that such a high proportion of people felt they would happily spend more.

"To properly capitalise on these opportunities, the research highlights three main areas: confident engagement with guests, knowledge of the menu, and a higher level of awareness. In most people these areas will be significantly enhanced with good quality training materials and practical application. The materials should be developed to match your brand identity and 'promise', onsite champions can help with scenario practice, and a good learning management system can help you to both deliver some of the materials to targeted groups and track their completion across your estate."