

# PUB ROADMAP



# CREATING PUB SUPERFANS

**KAM**



BRITISH INSTITUTE OF INNKEEPING

Supported by



# FOREWORD.



*Our nation's pubs are a unique part of our nation's heritage and highly valued by their communities. Equally, it is clear that over recent years, pub customers have significantly changed their expectations of what a great pub experience is for them. To ensure pubs remain a place for everyone they must continue to evolve. We are proud to work with KAM on this Pub Roadmap – Creating Pub Superfans, to bring you the latest insight to successfully develop your pub businesses and create long term Superfans.*

Steve Alton, CEO  
The BII

The data provided in this report, unless otherwise stated, is sourced from the KAM Pub Roadmap Report November 2024. Research methodology consisted of a survey of 1,000 nationally representative UK adults (+18), who have visited a pub at least once in the last 12 months, and 97 BII Member publicans. Research was conducted in September 2024.

All data sourced in this report is provided by KAM unless otherwise stated. No data or charts within this report can be reproduced or shared outside of your company without prior permission from KAM.

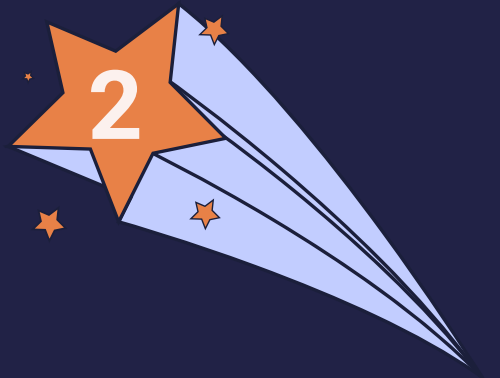
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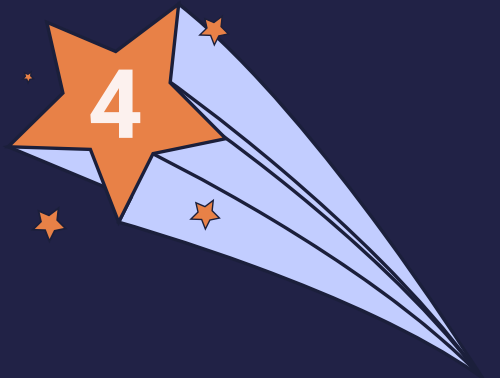
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# CREATING PUB SUPERFANS

# DRIVING FOOTFALL

## HOW TO ENSURE YOUR POTENTIAL FANS FIND YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE

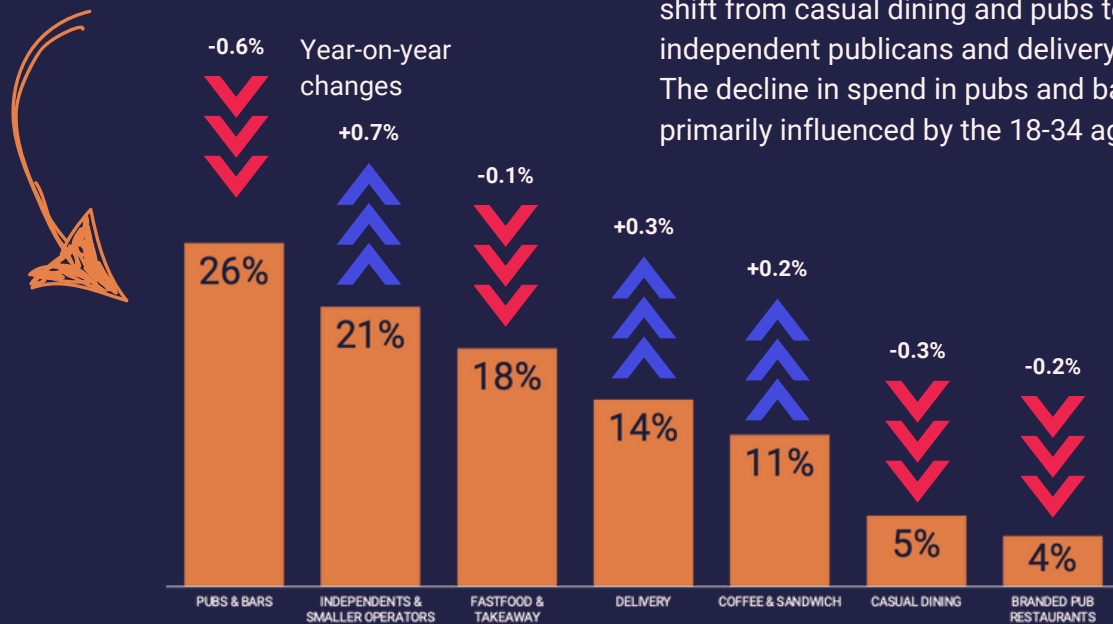
A silhouette of a hand forming a heart shape, set against a background of a sunset or sunrise with warm orange and yellow tones. The hand is positioned on the right side of the frame, with the fingers curled to create the heart's outline. The background features a gradient from deep orange at the top to a lighter, more yellowish-orange at the bottom, with some soft, out-of-focus light spots suggesting a sunset or sunrise scene.



# SETTING THE SCENE



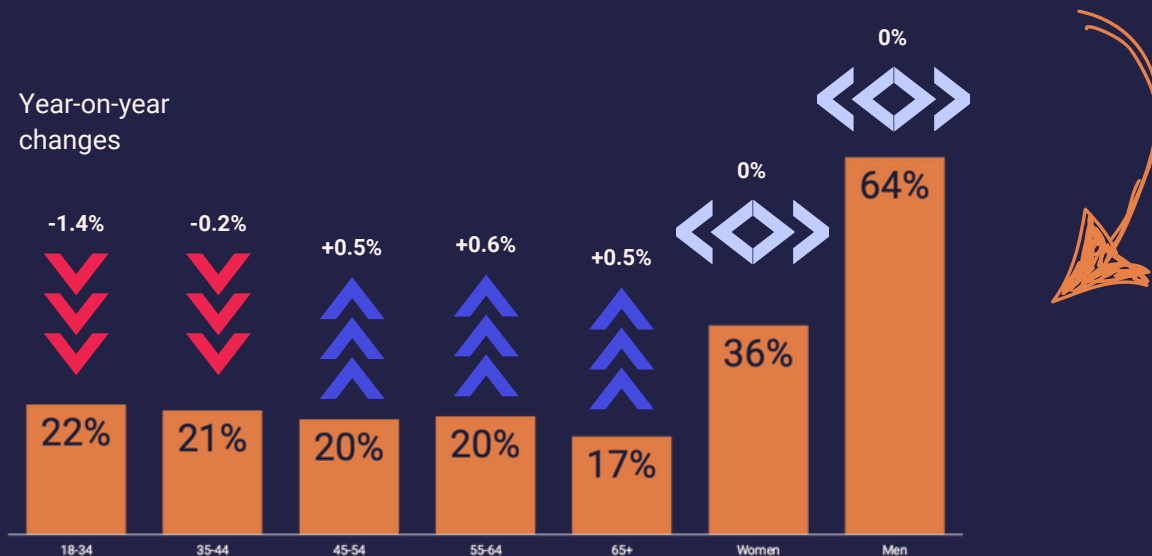
Share of hospitality spend by channel (compared to previous year) for the last 52 weeks ending 1/10/24 - from HDI



Consumer spending in core hospitality channels has remained stable, with a slight shift from casual dining and pubs to smaller independent publicans and delivery services. The decline in spend in pubs and bars is primarily influenced by the 18-34 age group.

Share of pub spend by demographic (compared to previous year) for the last 52 weeks ending 1/10/24 - HDI

Year-on-year changes



# CHOOSING WHERE TO GO



**These are the top 10 occasions that consumers are visiting pubs, bars and restaurants for this year:**



**When choosing a pub, bar or restaurant to visit – these are the top 10 factors which are influencing consumers' decisions this year:**



Think about what occasions you want to attract rather than the type of people. Marry the target occasions with the factors that influence customers' choice of venue and you've got the combination of range, service and vibe that will drive customers to venue and deliver the expected experience.

# RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY



These are the top pieces of information that customers are 'researching' before they choose a venue to visit...

And this is where, and how, they are discovering this information...

What's on the food menu

54%

Reviews from other customers

42%

Speaking to friends/family

28%

General internet search

26%

Photos of the food/venue

29%

How popular it is

23%

Social media

26%

Google's 'near me' search

17%

# 20%

Of customers have visited a venue specifically because they saw a special deal on food

Think about how your potential customers will be discovering/researching venues – and be all over it! **Invest resource and time in ensuring you are getting the correct messaging and information out there** – and that it's in the right places so that it will be seen by your potential customers, and actually influence them at their decision-making stage.

# 14%

Of customers have visited a venue specifically because they saw there was an event advertised (e.g. live music, quiz, etc.)



# THE ROLE OF RESERVATIONS



36%

Of customers make reservations when dining out, and 29% make reservations for drinks 'most of the time or more'. This rises to 44% (drinks) and 41% (food) for 18-34's

77%

Of customers would expect to have to book in advance on the busier days of the week



49%

Of customers find it annoying when they can't reserve a table online for food and/or drinks

47%

Of customers would only book for drinks if they were a large group (e.g. 5+)



37%

Of customers would like to be able to pre-order when they reserve a table online to save time when they get to the venue

29%

Of customers say that having to book a table in advance stops them from using a particular pub – so always leave some room for walk-ins on the day.



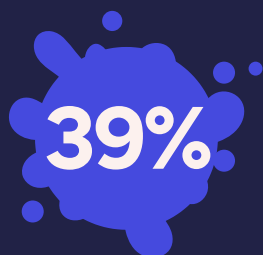
# I'M REVIEWING... THE SITUATION



# 38%

Of customer have written a review of a pub, bar or restaurant in the last 3 months

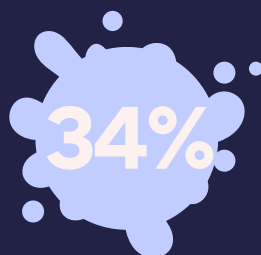
Here are some reasons that customers NEVER leave reviews after they visit a specific pub, bar or restaurant...



Just can't be bothered



Say it's only worth leaving a review if they've had a really good/bad experience



Say they just don't have the time



Say that the process to leave a review is often too complicated

# 35%

Of customers say they would be more likely to leave a review if they could do it on their smartphone at their own convenience



# 31%

Of customers say they would be more likely to leave a review if they collected loyalty points/rewards for doing so

Convenience is crucial for encouraging customer reviews. Simplifying the review process leads to a more balanced representation of customer experiences, capturing both positive and negative feedback. This benefits businesses by providing a clearer understanding of customer satisfaction.

# A GUIDE TO...

## ENSURING YOUR POTENTIAL FANS FIND YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE

### BUILDING AN **ONLINE PRESENCE** (AND REPUTATION)

How visible and where you need to be visible online will depend on your customer base but if you don't have a credible online presence you are invisible to a huge proportion of potential customers.

1

#### Create and optimize a Google business listing

- Claim your Google business profile [here](#)
- Add address, phone number, opening hours, website AND menu
- Use high-quality photos of your pub, food, drink and ambiance
- Keep information up-to-date, including holiday hours or special events

Check out the [BII guide here](#)

2

#### Build and MAINTAIN a user-friendly website

Check out the [BII guide here](#)

3

#### Grow your online reviews

- Encourage customers to leave reviews on Google, TripAdvisor, or Yelp (prompt via your feedback email or include a QR code on receipts)
- Respond to reviews - both positive and negative - promptly and professionally and share learnings with your team
- Search engines like Google reward businesses with a high volume of RECENT positive reviews, making your venue more visible to potential customers
- Use your team to encourage guests to post their photos with online reviews and look to include positive reviews on your website or in email marketing.

4

#### Offer online AND telephone reservations

- Especially if you offer food, not having the ability to book online will put many customers off. An email contact form on your website is the absolute minimum you should be offering

5

#### Connect with potential customers via Social Media

- Focus on platforms where your target audience spends time (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok)
- Encourage customers to tag your pub in their posts (known as user-generated content) by providing 'Insta-worthy' experiences/setting and/or encouraging your team to Post regularly and use photos and short videos to keep your audience engaged

Check out the [BII guide here](#)

# THE PUBLICAN PERSPECTIVE



*We are a family-friendly pub that welcomes dogs, serves great food and has great staff – that's our niche. We are constantly looking at ways to grow our business and find new customers.*

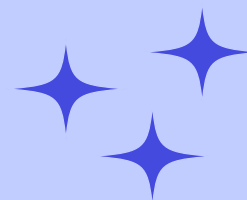
*Joe, my co-owner has started his own TikTok page, called Pub Life, where he gives viewers a behind-the-scenes look at the pub, with footage of everything from making Yorkshire puddings to giving dogs their roast dinners. It's his new passion and people are loving it.*

*We are big on social media, but we also invested in advertising on the roundabout off the A14, which has brought in fresh faces. They'll see the sign and call in. It's costing us £300 a month for four signs – two explain what we are, and the others promote Tollyfest.*

*Tollyfest is our summer festival and it brings in lots of new people every year. Last year, we made £15,000 profit – it's a sell-out with more than 2,500 tickets sold and we give free tickets to everyone who lives in the village. We bring in local businesses to provide the food and we have more than 13 bands playing.*

**Flo Pearce MBII**  
**Tollemache Arms, Harrington**  
**2023 LOYA Winner**


*Interview featured in BII Magazine - Spring 2024*



Of customers say they've had a positive experience in a pub, bar or restaurant in the last 3 months



## After their memorable experience, customers will...



Activity	Percentage
Tell friends & family	64%
Recommend this venue for when they next go out	44%
Visit more often than they used to before	26%
Leave a positive review on a website	24%

Good food, a good atmosphere, friendly staff, quality service etc. There are many factors that go into creating a memorable experience for customers, and the reward for getting it right can echo far and wide. Not only will it make their immediate experience a good one, but it will influence their future behaviour and the future behaviours of friends, family and a wider





# 12%



## After their negative experience customers will...

Tell friends & family	57%
Avoid going back to the same venue again	41%
Leave a negative review on the website	23%
Leave a negative review directly with the venue	23%

Issues with food, poor service, rude and unhelpful staff, issues with cleanliness and with drunk and rowdy customers- these are just some of the negatives that customers have experienced. As with the positives, these negative experiences won't just have an impact on that customer and their visits but they will tell other people about it - which has larger implications for future footfall and overall perceptions.



# THE PUBLICAN PERSPECTIVE



*Our success has been about our flexibility. We've created a unique sports bar that tries to cater for everyone. We continue to evolve and change our model to the things that work the best and we have been highly adaptable over the past five years.*

*We have heavily invested in having the best AV system – we have 24 TVs in the building – and are able to control each television individually, allowing us to customise our customers' experience.*

*People come here for the experience, whether they want to watch live sport or have the kids' channel on. Our 12 private booths are equipped with a TV with full audio control and customers travel from all over to visit us.*

*On days when there is live sport showing, the atmosphere here is amazing. We crossover from the football and rugby to cricket and can show different sport in different areas at the same time.*

*To get to where we are today, we have listened carefully to our customers, taking on board their feedback, including any negative comments, and always keep adapting and remaining positive to keep improving on the customer experience.*

**Chris Michaelas MBII & April Reeves**  
**The Dartford Sports Bar**

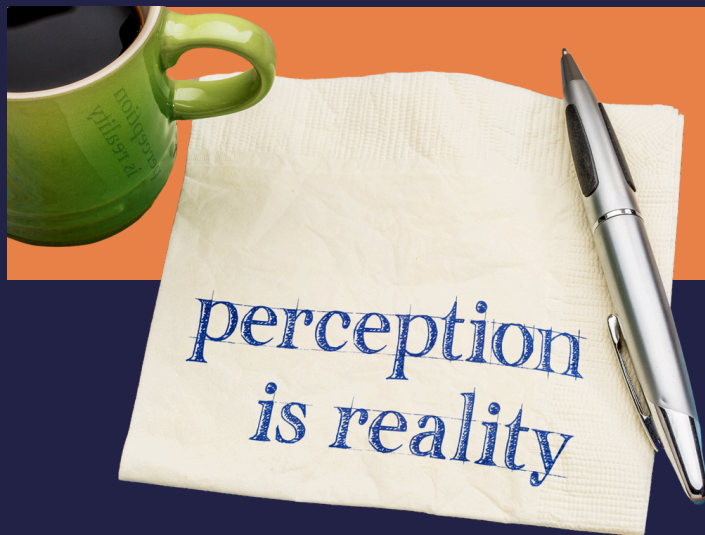
Interview featured in BII Magazine - Summer 2024

# THE POWER OF PERCEPTIONS



## 38%

Of customers say there is a pub near them which they've consciously never visited before



**So, what is putting them off even going one time to see what it's like?**

Put off because of the customers hanging out outside the venue which can be intimidating



Put off because the exterior of the pub looks old and tired



Put off because they've heard negative things from friends & family



Put off if they can't see through the windows easily to see what it looks like inside



First impressions count and perceptions are truths for customers who don't ever set foot inside your venue. **Put yourself in your customers' shoes and take a walk around your local area and walk up to and past your pub at different times of the day and days of the week – what impressions do you get? How can you ensure that you make that first impression count and create a welcoming and enticing place to attract customers?**

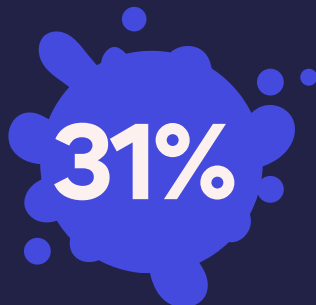
Check out the [BII guide to Exterior & Interior promotion here.](#)

# BEYOND BOOZE



Alcohol is increasingly less of the core reason for visiting UK pubs, instead of simply 'going for a pint' Brits are now looking for different ways to socialise and spend their money (they may well still drink alcohol while they're there, but it's not the primary reason for going out!)

For the following events, games and activities that you might find in a pub, these are the ones that would make customers CHOOSE THAT PUB OVER A PUB THAT DOESN'T HAVE THEM...



Live music



Live sport on TV



Food takeovers



Quiz nights



Comedy nights



Unusual/unique  
pub games



Drinks  
masterclasses

Are you focussed on driving footfall and looking to get ahead of the local competition? These events can be effective tools. Nearly 1 in 3 customers say they would choose one pub over another if they had live music on for example. Not only do events drive footfall but they also help to create that elusive atmosphere that makes the pub such a unique cultural experience.



# A GUIDE TO...



## ENSURING YOUR POTENTIAL FANS FIND YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE

### GROWING YOUR VISIBILITY (AND REPUTATION) LOCALLY

How will new customers find out about you - if they're not looking online then it's word of mouth, physically seeing your pub, hearing about you in local publications, the list of opportunities to get the word out is endless!

1

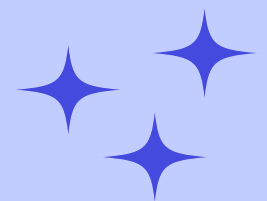
#### The exterior of your pub is literally your 'shop window' - make it irresistible!

- Seat customers near the window (if feasible) to help show you're the place to be! (Have you heard of FOMO...)
- Communicate specials, new menu items and drinks, seasonal messaging and upcoming events on A-boards outside but let your personality shine through, keep it fresh and up-to-date.
- Do a daily (and nightly) check that your exterior is clean, attractive and welcoming to turn passers-by into customers.
- Check out the [BII guide here](#)

2

#### Become integral part of the local community

- Host local events - trivia nights, karaoke, live sports, live music featuring local bands, tasting events or open mic nights. Check out the [BII guide here](#).
- Encourage local groups (e.g., book clubs, sports teams, gaming meetups) to use the pub as a meeting space.
- Support local charities and community events - donate raffle prizes, offer the pub as a drop-off point for food banks, and encourage staff to join in local volunteer initiatives
- Collaborate with local businesses eg bakeries, breweries or showcase local artists and tap into their social and local presence
- Promote your events and share stories on your social platforms (and theirs!), both inside and outside your pub and research local directories where people may search for 'upcoming events'.



# THE PUBLICAN PERSPECTIVE



*We are locals and we keep the pub local. We support the kids' football team, the preschool and we do a lot for charities – we run lots of events.*

*We listen to what our customers want. When we took over the pub eight years ago, it was boarded up and known as a trouble-spot. So, we asked the people in the village what they wanted and they told us; everything from no grey paint to good pub grub.*

*We also did a lot during Covid to support the village and it's true to say that you reap what you sow.*

*We are family-friendly with lots of things happening: we have a free port and cheese night every Tuesday, show sport on both Sky and TNT, live music with local musicians, we have a large outside decked area, and after our Sunday roasts we offer street food every Sunday night from 5pm.*

*We are a high volume, high footfall pub and people travel from other villages to visit us.*

**Paul Dexter & Keith Goddard MBII**  
**The Old Swan, Earls Barton**

Interview featured in BII Magazine - Summer 2024

# THE PUBLICAN PERSPECTIVE



*The key to The Cherry Tree's success is largely down to the, perhaps, slightly unorthodox metrics that we measure our business by.*

*While we are committed to running a successful operation, we see beyond the profit and loss columns of our accounts. It is massively important to ensure our business model has a sound trading footing, but we are also inspired by qualitative values and the positive long-term impacts these have on our customers and our community.*

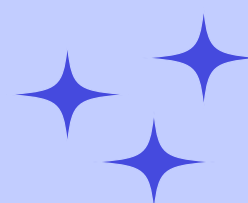
*We are developing a model that has **a clear vision to provide a cost-effective, welcoming establishment that is understood by our community to be more than a pub.***

*Taking a 'place-based approach' makes the pub the central component to any thriving community, fulfilling the role of Heart of its Community – I feel that this is something that has been lost over the past two decades, as profit has taken a more central role in our society. Our vision is to ensure we meet this role in our community and provide a place where the various chapters of lives can be lived out; the successes, the challenges, the celebrations and the commiserations.*

*The pub is where all aspects of life are endured and enjoyed, and this ethos is reflected in our company tag line that: Everyone is welcome at The Cherry Tree.*

**Helen & Sandy Paterson MBII**  
**The Cherry Tree, Wishaw**

Interview featured in BII Magazine - Summer 2024







**CREATING  
PUB  
SUPERFANS**

The background is a solid, vibrant orange color. In the lower half, there are several hands reaching up from the bottom edge, some holding small, colorful objects like confetti or streamers. The overall aesthetic is energetic and celebratory.

# IN VENUE EXPERIENCE <<<<<

## CREATING AN EXPERIENCE FIT FOR A SUPERFAN



# FANCY A DRINK?



Here are just some of the pubs that customers said were their favourites to go to for a drink...

The Boot, St Albans, Herts



Inn on the Green, Stanford-Le-Hope



The White Horse, Aberystwyth



The Queen Vic, Aberdeen



...and this is what makes these their favourite pub to go to for a drink

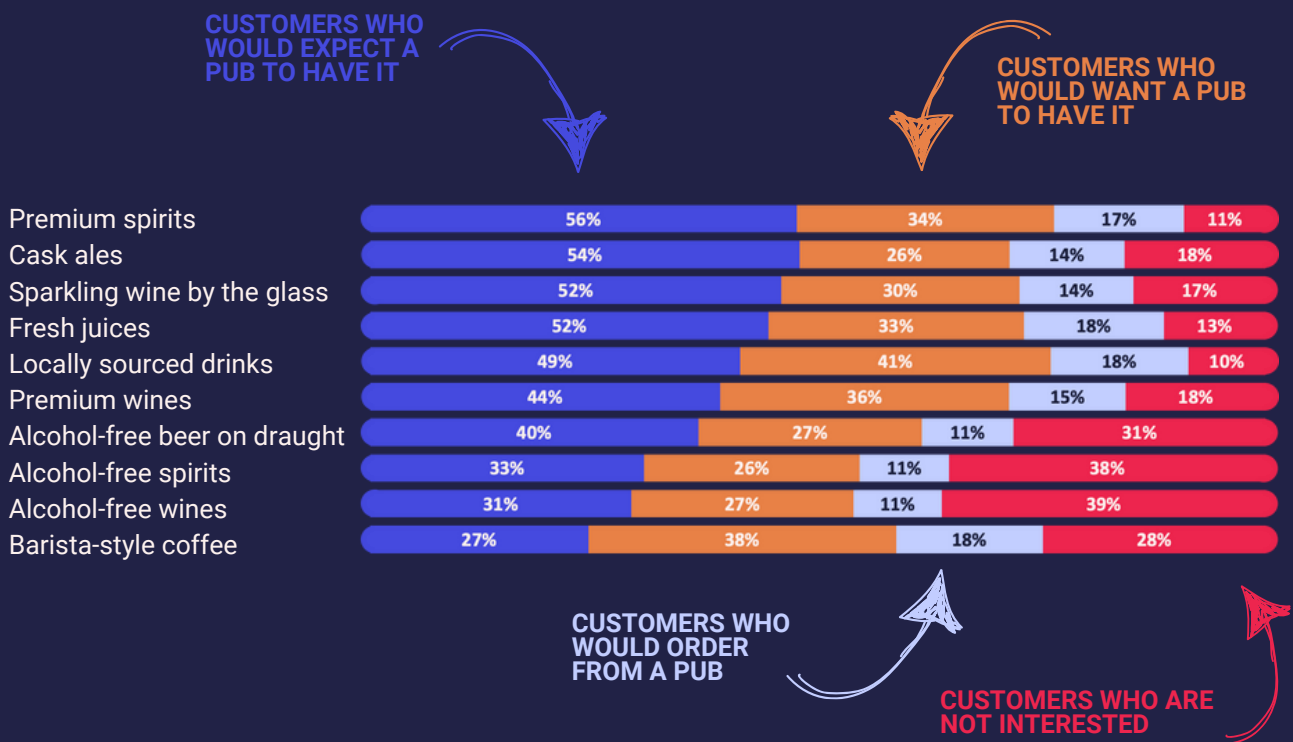




# GETTING THE DRINKS RANGE RIGHT



These are the types of drinks that customers EXPECT a pub to have, WANT a pub to have, and whether they would ORDER it from a pub...



When it comes to drinks, outside of price, value for money means the following to pub customers...



Getting the basics right – clean taps, clean glassware, correct temperatures, etc. – to deliver a quality of serve that elevates the customers experience above and beyond one they can easily replicate at home. We're not just serving a drink; we're serving an experience.

# THE CURRENT DRINKS OFFERING



The following are what publicans have told us they currently offer in their pub(s) regarding their drinks offer...



# 17%

Of publicans surveyed believe that the quality of the drinks range and serve is the number one factor that will create a memorable experience for their customers

# A GUIDE TO...



## GETTING YOUR DRINKS OFFER RIGHT

1

### **Regularly review and refresh your range**

- Review your top sellers and give them pride of place on the bar and menus. Your pub company, drinks wholesaler and drinks partners should have advice on what will sell in your location to your customer base.

2

### **Don't forget your alcohol-free range**

- Customer now expect a credible alcohol-free choice ensure you have them available and visible (otherwise people will default to water)

Check out the [publican training guide for low & alcohol-free from Drinkaware and Club Soda here](#)

3

### **Be known for something! (and shout about it!)**

- Yes, you need your best sellers but whether you're the only pub in your area that serves a Guinness, or a specialist local brew, or an infamous hot chocolate, or a go-to alcohol-free menu, having something you're 'famous for' can create a connection with customers

4

### **Quality of serve (and service) is absolutely key**

- Clean lines, clean glasses, clean bar area and table are the bare minimum you should be aiming for!

Check out the [BII guide to serving quality drinks](#) on BII Workforce

# THE PUBLICAN PERSPECTIVE



*"Purchasing is key. Really scrutinise every price you are paying for every product and see if you can find it cheaper. Spend a bit of time working on that and you'll see a massive difference to your margins."*

*We've upped our liquor margin by about 2% just by working harder and being smarter about where to buy from – and not accepting the price offered. We bought 50 cases of CocaCola Ikon recently at really good price, it saved us £300-£400. It all adds up. Google and look online to keep abreast of what the supermarkets and other outlets are offering.*

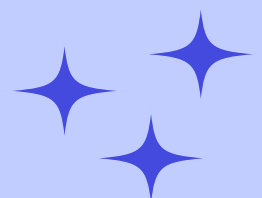
*Your business needs to be in decent like-for-like growth, that's absolutely critical. If you're not growing your business, you'll be going backwards, particularly given where inflation has been and that in our sector, food inflation is still running relatively high. Be all over your margins and costs.*

*As an operator, it's about taking time out of the business to work on your business, to keep moving forward. Everyone needs to take a morning or an afternoon out to work on the business – to look at how to improve your marketing or procurement; understand your current position; your cash flow; general bookings, and so on.*

*This is what it takes to be successful in our industry these days. If you have a flat Friday, ask yourself why? Did someone down the road have a music night? Don't just accept it – find out why and counter it."*

**Mark Robson, CBII**  
**Co-Founder and Director of New Dawn Pubs and the Chair of the BII**

Interview featured in BII Magazine - Winter 2024



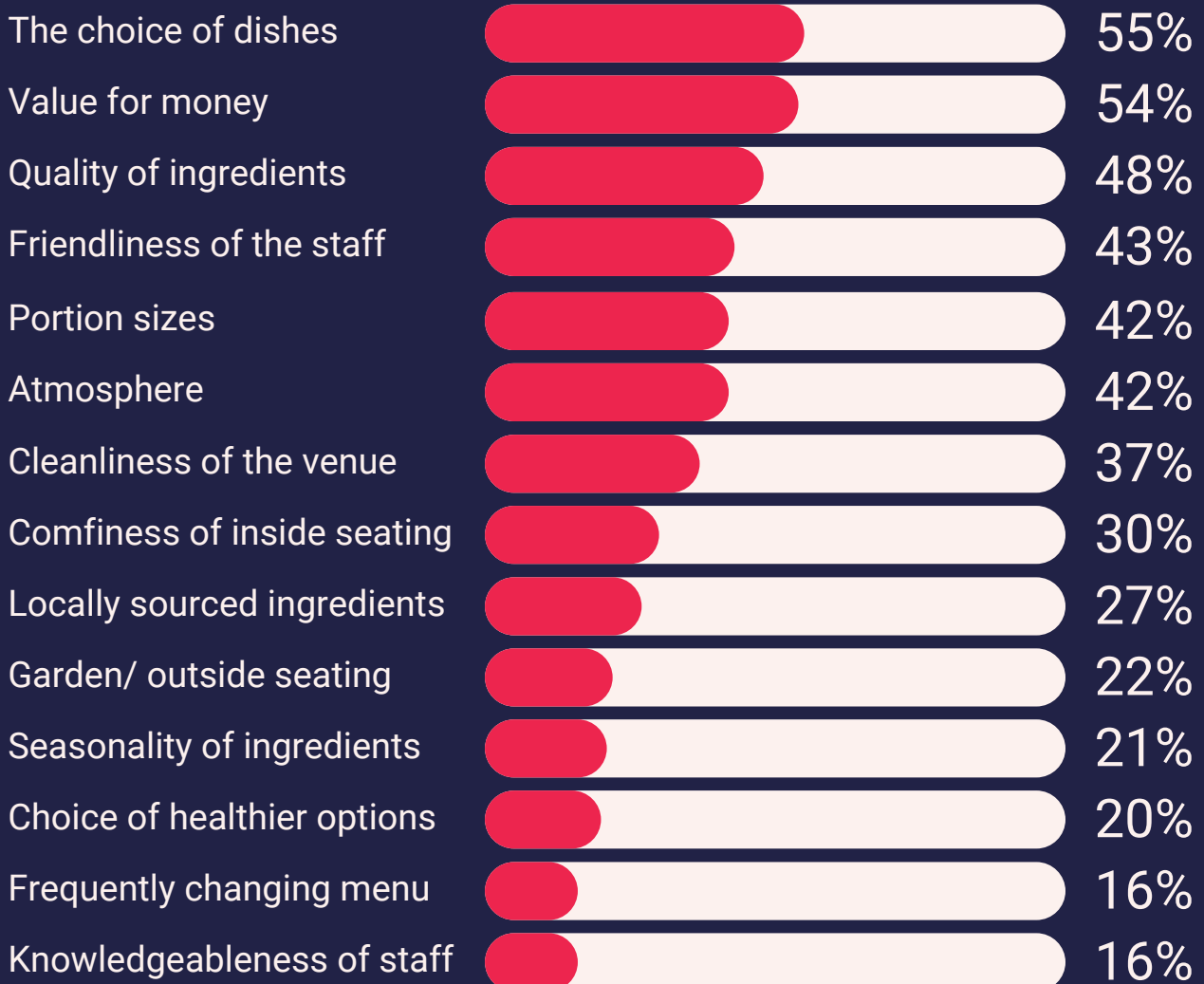
# FANCY A BITE TO EAT?



Here are just some of the pubs that customers said were their favourites to go to for food...



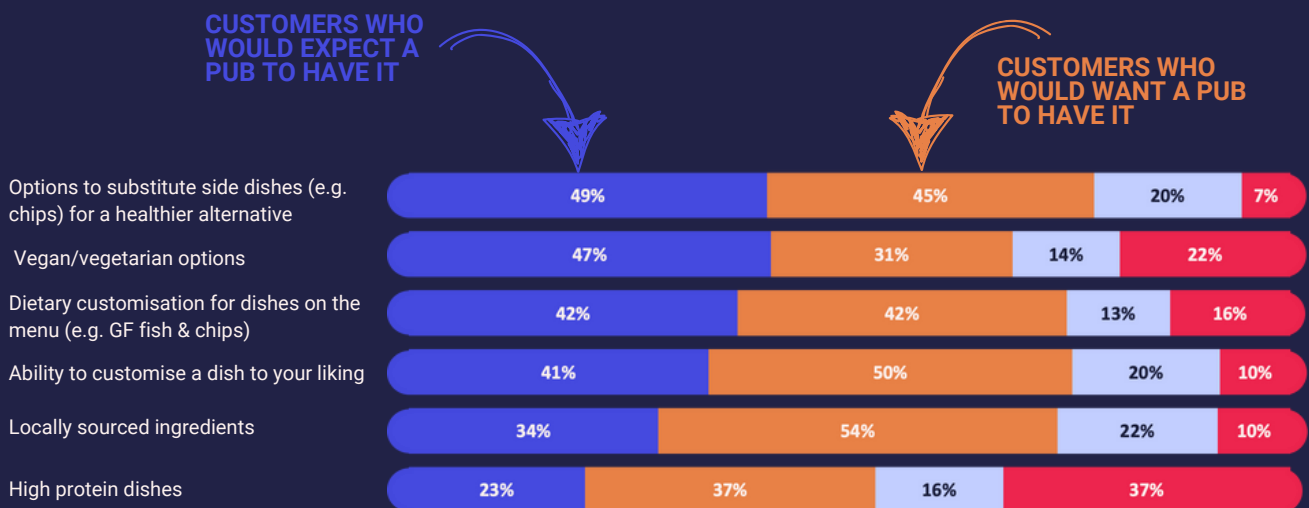
...and this is what makes these their favourite pub to go to for food



# GETTING THE FOOD RANGE RIGHT



These are the types of food that customers EXPECT a pub to have, WANT a pub to have, and whether they would ORDER it from a pub...



**CUSTOMERS WHO WOULD ORDER FROM A PUB**

**CUSTOMERS WHO ARE NOT INTERESTED AT ALL**

When it comes to food, outside of price, value for money means the following to pub customers...



High-quality ingredients are essential for customer value, while customisation is expected by patrons. Dining out at a pub is often seen as a treat, so **customers seek assurance in both the quality of ingredients and the ability to tailor their meals**, enhancing their experience beyond what they can prepare at home.



# THE PUBLICAN PERSPECTIVE



*"It really is challenging out there and a very different world to 15-20 years ago, when we took on our first pub. Today, you have to adapt to what your customers want and look at the bigger picture to attract different people, especially those who won't drop in just for a pint."*

*The Fox hosts different street food traders each week. We find it's not our normal clientele as people will travel for it. Having 200 people in the garden on a Monday is great for business!*

*We make a feature of the range of drinks we sell. We rotate our second ale, for our beer drinkers, and serve local gins in our cocktails. The menu changes regularly, while the specials cater for people's love of Indonesian and Far Eastern cuisine. Our bao buns literally fly out of the door."*

*We work hard to keep food affordable and have cut down on waste eg. not serving salad and chips with the lasagne (which comes with garlic bread) means the usually uneaten salad isn't being thrown away. If customers want the extras, they can order and pay for it.*

*We aim for 70% GP on food and are currently achieving 71%. We're being clever about wastage and control our ordering better, so we're not wasting money. The plates are coming back empty and our customers are happy."*

**Vikki and Gavin Hunt FBII**  
**The Fox at Lyng and The Lodge at Tuddenham**

Interview featured in BII Magazine - Summer 2024



# THE CURRENT PUB FOOD OFFERING



The following are what publicans have told us they currently offer in their pub(s) regarding their food menu...



# A GUIDE TO... GETTING YOUR FOOD OFFER RIGHT



Food is a defining factor of what customers believe makes a great pub, and with more than half of customers researching the food offer ahead of booking, getting the menu right is key to your ongoing success. Consider these five key points when looking at your menu.

- ✓ **1 Occasion**  
Focus on creating the right offer for the occasion. Your food will differ depending on the occasion that you are targeting. Whether it's an indulgent weekend dinner date, a generous Sunday lunch, a milestone celebration, or a spontaneous midweek meal, your menu should reflect your customers' expectation of choice, quality, and value; for the occasion that you believe holds your biggest opportunity.
- ✓ **2 Quality**  
When food is the main reason for visiting, the quality of the food is more important than the drinks or even the atmosphere, when assessing the overall customer experience. The customer perception of quality is driven by the visual appeal of a menu item, the care that is taken to cook and present the dish or by the focussed use of specific ingredients, whether seasonal, best in class, local, or premium cuts and species. Investing in the right ingredients can turn a menu item from boring to brilliant.
- ✓ **3 Flexibility**  
Your customers will have a range of requirements, from lifestyle choices to medical restrictions and every step in between. Menus that are flexible with easy swap outs ensure that all customers feel included, appreciated and valued rather than singled out with limited choices. From offering gluten free batter on your fish and chips, or switching the fish for jackfruit, there are a myriad of ways that your menu can be inclusive and appeal to all.
- ✓ **4 Responsibility**  
You care about your people, your pub, your community, your food and your supply chain. Make sure that you are communicating all the great things that you do, and tell your customers about the purchase decisions you are making that reflect your commitment to being a socially and environmentally responsible publican. Whether it's donating a percentage of sales of a particular dish to a charity, sourcing more sustainably produced ingredients, or improving welfare in your supply chain, customers care that you care.
- ✓ **5 Refresh**  
Regularly reviewing your sales and talking to your customers will give you a rounded picture of which menu items are popular with your customers and why. It will also show which dishes could benefit from a bit more investment in quality, which dishes need to be changed, and which dishes are not driving the revenue that they should be. Using this "stick, twist, bust" method provides a great foundation for managing your menu. Consider sales, margin and simplicity in this process – a dish not scoring highly in at least two of these categories needs to be reviewed.

We wish you all the best creating a menu fit for a superfan - if you need further assistance, visit [www.brake.co.uk](http://www.brake.co.uk).

# BIGGEST FRUSTRATIONS



What would ruin the experience for a pub customer / i.e. what NOT TO DO!

The following are also turn offs that mean your customers won't come back as often, or at all...



High quality food is by no means easy, it takes knowledge, skill and consistency to execute. You're also at the mercy of customer's tastes. However, what is simpler is to ensure that cleanliness is on point – 3 of the top 4 biggest turn-offs to pub customers are cleanliness and hygiene related. Failure to take care of the basics could be costing valuable footfall.





# THE ROLE OF STAFF



69%

Of customers say that friendly staff can make them forgive making the occasional mistakes

58%

Of customers say pub staff should be able to answer simple questions about the food and drinks that they serve

38%

Of customers like it when staff engage in conversation with them in a pub

58%

Of customers say that great staff would make them choose one pub over another whilst 50% say bad staff would make them avoid a pub and choose another one



Not only can great staff attract customers to your pub over another in the area, but bad staff can drive them away. Getting the right people for the job and training them properly is essential.

# THE PUBLICANS' VIEW ON STAFF



94%

Believe that staff should be able to answer simple questions about the food and drinks that they serve

92%

Think bad staff would make customers avoid a pub and choose another one

88%

Say great staff would make customers choose one pub over another

83%

Think staff should be encouraged to engage in conversation with customers in a pub

79%

Believe friendly staff can make customers forgive them making the occasional mistake

78%

Say staff should be expected to know the names of regular customers

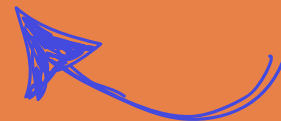
75%

Say staff should be expected to know the favourite drinks/ usual drinks of regular customers

73%

State that it's becoming harder to find quality staff

The following are what publicans have told us about their staff....



75%

Of publicans currently provide staff training on how to deliver a **memorable experience** to their customers

40%

Of publicans currently provide staff training on how to build an **emotional connection** with their customers



# THE PUBLICAN PERSPECTIVE

“



*Build the business and the team to be as inspired and as driven as you are.*

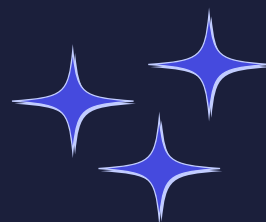
*We enjoy having people around us who want to succeed as much as we do. We encourage them to bring their ideas to the table and, when it's good, we will help them run it – 9/10 times it's a huge success.*

*We train and support our teams to be multi-skilled, so they can work across all areas of the business, and all of our senior staff are on training courses – they can pick what they do, as long as it's beneficial for the role. We are very transparent with our targets and figures, so the team know, for instance, how many people we are looking to get in for lunch or dinner, and they come in with the mentality to beat any target.*

*At Christmas, we ran an incentive to see how many team members could get a mention on review sites, such as OpenTable, TripAdvisor and Google – we had a cash prize and there were three winners. A lot of our front-of house team are young and it was great for their confidence. We find that our staff are quite competitive and are excited by this – they like to smash targets, so when we're expecting mystery diners, staff have a go at guessing the table they are at – it's all very motivating.”*

**Flo Pearce MBII**  
**Tollemache Arms, Harrington**  
2023 LOYA Winner

*Interview featured in BII Magazine - Summer 2024*



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The logo for brakes, a Sysco company, is displayed. It features a stylized green leaf icon to the left of the word "brakes" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. Below "brakes" is the text "a Sysco company" in a smaller, lowercase, sans-serif font.

## A group of young adults are gathered around a table, laughing and socializing. In the center, a man with glasses and a beard is laughing heartily, holding a glass of beer. To his left, a woman with long blonde hair is also laughing, wearing a light-colored scarf. To his right, another woman with blonde hair and glasses is laughing, holding a glass. The table is set with plates of food, glasses of beer, and a bottle of wine. The background is a solid orange color.

# AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION



# 14%

Of consumers say that there are hospitality brands and businesses with which they feel an emotional connection to

## THE TOP FACTORS WHICH CREATE AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH A BRAND/BUSINESS



Your customers are your friends. This isn't just a commercial cliché, it's also a representation of how you should, ideally, engage with your customers in order to create a connection that goes beyond being purely transactional. If you can create an emotional connection then you can start to unlock the secrets to sustained loyalty and superfandom!

# BUILDING THAT CONNECTION



**89%** Of publicans say it's important that they build an **emotional connection** with their customers

## TOP WAYS IN WHICH PUBLICANS TRY TO BUILD AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH THEIR CUSTOMERS CURRENTLY...



Larger brands often offer superficial connections through broad marketing messages (email campaigns, social media, public company culture, how they treat their staff etc), while smaller independent publicans thrive by forming personal, genuine relationships with customers.





# LOYALTY SCHEMES



27%

Of customers are currently part of a loyalty scheme for a pub, bar or restaurant

Of these, 77% have been influenced to visit a specific venue because of the loyalty scheme



Less than 1-in-5 publicans currently offer a loyalty scheme. With a further 25% saying they are considering offering one in the future

18%

## THE BEST TYPES OF LOYALTY SCHEME INFLUENCES/ MECHANICS ARE



Loyalty can be fostered without points and freebies, but these incentives do attract customers to choose your venue over others. Consider effective strategies for your establishment that encourage additional spending, such as promotions for a free drink or starter that lead to further purchases.

# A SOCIAL CONNECTION



26%

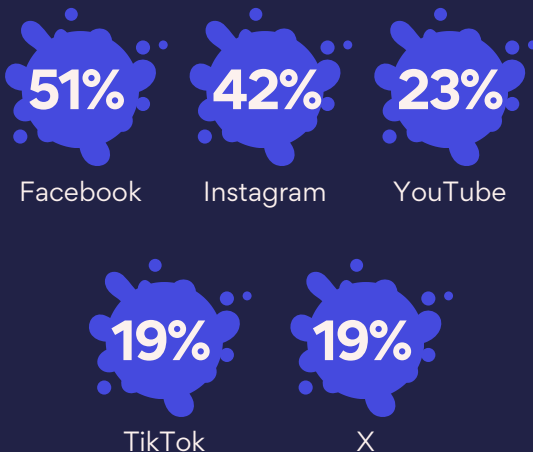
Of customers say they currently follow pubs, bars and/or restaurants on social media



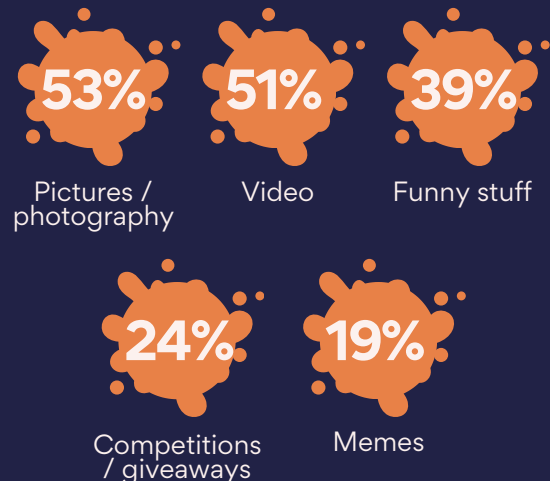
96%

Of publicans' businesses are currently on social media

Which social media channels do they use most to follow trends in pubs, bars, and restaurants?



What social media content do they prefer from the brands they follow?



Around 1-in-4 customers engage with brands on social media, highlighting the potential for these platforms to enhance brand awareness, engagement, and loyalty. **Building digital connections can translate into physical ones** while sharing your unique values and making the experience fun and entertaining.





# CREATING PUB SUPERFANS

KAM

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BRITISH INSTITUTE OF INNKEEPING

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brakes  
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## SUMMARY



## KEY TAKEOUTS



# GUIDE TO CREATING A SUPER FAN



To thrive in 2025, pubs need to focus on key strategies that drive customer loyalty, satisfaction, and business resilience.

- ✓ **Elevate the Customer Experience**  
Pubs must deliver more than just food and drink—they need to offer memorable, quality experiences that stand out and to become true superfans, your customers need to feel an emotional connection with your pub.
- ✓ **Become obsessed with securing the 'next visit'**  
Whether its a automated email the following day to all reservations offering them a free drink when they book again, or informing customers about upcoming events before they leave, or introducing some kind of loyalty scheme, don't let customers walk out your door without a plan as to how you'll bring them back! Collect feedback or use digital tools to understand regulars' preferences, offering tailored promotions, birthday rewards, or special incentives for loyal customers.
- ✓ **Engage the community**  
Hosting local events, supporting grassroots initiatives, and creating inclusive spaces will strengthen loyalty and help build connections with your customers and potential customers, even when they're not physically in your pub.
- ✓ **Embrace seasonal and big event marketing**  
Seasonal events and key calendar moments drive footfall and profits. Pubs that create 'must-attend' experiences for Christmas, bank holidays, or major sports events will capture more customers.
- ✓ **Innovate your food offer**  
From quality pub classics to on-trend dishes, food is the cornerstone of driving visits for many pubs. Highlight premium offerings, shareable plates, and vegetarian/vegan choices to appeal to wider tastes.
- ✓ **Refresh your drinks offer**  
Review and update your offer regularly. Look at sales data to identify top-performing drinks and underperforming items. Rotate offerings seasonally to include drinks that align with current trends and customer preferences. Ensure you never slip on quality of serve, which means staff training is key.
- ✓ **Empower your team**  
Your teams are the beating heart of the pub. Training, supporting, and rewarding employees will enhance customer service, reduce turnover, and improve overall pub performance.
- ✓ **Create a digital connection**  
Engaging with customers online keeps your pub top of mind and allows many to find you in the first place. Authentic social content and community storytelling will resonate with many customers and most people are open to receiving emails from businesses they love. Also ensure your potential customers can find you online, read reviews online and make reservations.

# THE LAST WORD.



Being a superfan of something takes customers beyond casual enjoyment into emotional investment and a desire to engage with the community surrounding it. For many, being a superfan becomes a key part of their identity, shaping their personal experiences and creating a sense of belonging within a larger group of like-minded individuals. There's often a danger for businesses to focus on 'types of people' they want to attract. "How do we attract Gen Z?", is often a phrase that is bounced around boardrooms. However, we believe that it's occasions that drive behaviour and not demographics. Think about what occasions you want to deliver against rather than the type of people. Marry the target occasions with the factors that influence customers' choice, and you've got the combination of range, service and vibe that will drive customer behaviours and deliver the perfect experience.

The quality of the drinks (range, serve, etc.) is the number 2 factor that defines a 'great pub' in the eyes of the UK consumer- the aim is to deliver a quality of serve that elevates the customers' experience above and beyond one they can easily replicate at home. We're not just serving a drink; we're serving an experience. However, as we know with superfans, the product is just a part of the package, there's also the emotional connection that enables brands to build a relationship that moves beyond a purely transactional one, into something that creates a longer lasting bond of loyalty. Nobody is perfect, and in hospitality especially it's easy to make mistakes or to miss the mark, and with such heightened competition there's a greater risk of losing customers for good. Tighter connections with customers gives us a greater leeway when it comes to slip-ups.

Your customers are your friends. If you can create an emotional connection then you can start to unlock the secrets to sustained loyalty. Pubs are the perfect business model in which to turn this theory into reality, with countless customer touchpoints and community engagement giving numerous opportunities to build connections with customers. Couple this with offering a range of drinks (with the quality of serve to match) that create a unique experience, and you can start to see how the humble pub can elevate itself into being a mecca for the superfan.

Blake Gladman  
Strategy & Insight Director, KAM.



# ABOUT.



## BII



The British Institute of Innkeeping has been running for over 40 years, and today exists to provide its 13,000 members with key support to help their businesses thrive, take their voices to Government to champion our incredible sector and share best practice from across our diverse and talented membership. Helping free traders, lessees and tenants from every area of the pub industry, be part of something bigger and join the BII.

## KAM



So much more than just a research agency, KAM is the supportive voice of the UK hospitality industry. We take pride in offering cutting-edge consultancy backed by deep insights. We thrive on providing our clients with valuable and actionable insight solutions that drive real results and purposeful change. If you're ready to be informed, educated, and inspired, hop on board and let's embark on an exciting journey together. [www.kaminsight.com](http://www.kaminsight.com)

## Brakes



Brakes is a food and distribution company that supplies food, drink, and other products primarily to the catering industry in the UK. With over 20 distribution centres, Brakes is the leading wholesale foodservice supplier in the UK. We offer a wide range of products, including fresh, refrigerated, store cupboard and frozen food items, as well as non-food supplies. We have been a significant player in the foodservice industry since our inception in 1958 and have grown to be the preferred catering and food supplier for thousands of chefs in the industry. We are a proud part of Sysco, giving our customers confidence that we will continue to deliver on a local level with the strength of our global partnership.





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# PUB ROADMAP 2025



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