

A woman with blonde hair tied back is working behind a bar counter, looking at a tablet. In the foreground, a person with red hair and glasses is partially visible. The background shows a bar with various bottles and lights.

Sona. KAM

People & productivity insights

What's stopping your people from being productive in 2025

Contents

Why onboarding fails	02
Is two-way feedback encouraged?	03
Time well spent...or time wasted?	04
Which processes impact customer service?	05
Employee wellbeing drivers	06
Shift scheduling & employee satisfaction	07
Four key takeouts	08



Hospitality employees **waste an average of 1.2 hours per week** due to inefficient systems. This equates to **£2.7 billion lost** each year.



Join us to discuss the insights in this report!

In this exclusive session, hosted by Paul Watson, VP of Hospitality at Sona, we'll unpack the latest "People & productivity insights" research, together with KAM co-founder and MD, Katy Moses, and leading operator voice, Kimberley Handy, Head of People at Nightcap.

You'll also have the chance to put your questions directly to the panel and take away actionable strategies to improve productivity, retention, and service quality across your business.

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People & productivity insights

What's stopping your people from being productive in 2025

WEBINAR | NOVEMBER 12 | 12:00PM GMT

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Katy Moses
Founder & MD, KAM



Kimberley Handy
Head of People, Nightcap



Paul Watson
VP of Hospitality, Sona

Foreword from Sona

The goal of our partnership with KAM Insights was to shine a light on aspects of the employee experience that aren't talked about enough. We all know the customer is king and that guest experience is critical to success, but we also know that in order to convey the latter, employees also need to feel like they're at their best.

In this study, we looked at onboarding, communication, and technology. The results point towards something Hospitality leaders have long suspected: outdated systems aren't just slowing teams down, they're holding the entire sector back. When frontline staff spend over an hour a week chasing information, repeating manual tasks, or battling broken tech, it's not just time lost, it's energy, engagement, and service quality too.

The £2.7 billion cost, revealed in this study, is striking. However, the real story lies in the human impact: half of Hospitality employees have considered leaving their job because of frustrating systems and more than six in ten say it's affected customer service. In an industry built on people and experiences, that's an urgent call to action.

Hospitality is about connection, but too often the tools meant to empower teams end up creating friction. The solution isn't just more technology. It's better technology: intuitive, integrated, and designed around the needs of those delivering great guest experiences, every day.

Our hope is that these insights help the sector re-evaluate how technology supports its people because when we remove the everyday friction, we unlock the full potential of hospitality's greatest asset: its people.



Ben Dixon

CTO & Co-Founder, Sona

Methodology

The research referenced within this study is taken from a bespoke research study, specifically conducted by KAM for the purpose of this project. A sample of 300 Hospitality employees were interviewed online, all during September 2025.



Why onboarding fails

How well prepared did you feel to do your job after initial training/onboarding?



- 44% felt 'very well' prepared to do their job after initial training/onboarding and 46% 'quite well' prepared
- 86% said they felt 'fully confident' in their roles a month after starting - but this means **14% said they didn't feel fully confident in this time period**
- 87% felt improvements to the onboarding process were needed – and this equated to:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Clearer explanation of company policies and procedures | 38% |
| 2. More hands-on training or shadowing opportunities | 38% |
| 3. Better integration with the team and workplace culture | 36% |
| 4. More structured training programmes | 35% |
| 5. Ongoing support beyond first few weeks | 30% |
| 6. Longer or more gradual onboarding period | 20% |

Once an employee has been recruited, that's only the very beginning of their journey with your business; getting onboarding right is critical to success for both the employee and employer.

Whilst generally our respondents felt well prepared to do their job after their initial training and onboarding, 1 in 7 didn't feel fully confident even after a month. There were some clear needs for improving the process, with the top two requirements being a clear explanation of company policies and procedures, and more hands-on training or shadowing opportunities.



Is two-way feedback encouraged?

A positive employee experience includes the opportunity for the employee voice to be heard and for an employer to actively listen and respond. This builds higher job satisfaction, increased motivation, and a stronger commitment to the organisation. This is why we asked respondents to tell us about their opportunities to provide feedback:

How often does the following happen at your place of work? (Daily, weekly, monthly, occasionally, never)

24% lack info monthly

15% lack info weekly

Thinking about a typical working week, how often do you have a meaningful check-in with your manager or a colleague about how work is going?

13% have 'meaningful and relevant' check-ins with their manager less than once a month

45% feel they can give totally open and honest feedback about their shift or work in general

80% felt that in-person meetings were the most effective method of communication

71% selected messaging app as their preferred method of communication

Whilst it's positive that nearly half of employees felt they could be totally open and honest with feedback, not all get the opportunity to have a meaningful and relevant check in with their line manager.

This could be related to differing shift patterns however employers should ensure there is a method or process for ensuring employees have the opportunity for regular check-ins / 121s; this would be positive for aiding retention and providing support where needed.

In terms of communication, **the personal touch is most preferred with 4 out of 5 employees saying they preferred in-person meetings or briefings.**



Time well spent....or time wasted?

On average, how many hours per week do you think you waste because of inefficient systems or processes at work?



On average **1h12 mins** is wasted per employee, per week due to inefficient processes/ systems



Costing hospitality employers **£2.7bn** per year



Equivalent to **1 million** additional employees



Employees think they would be **19%** more productive each week if their company invested in better systems and processes

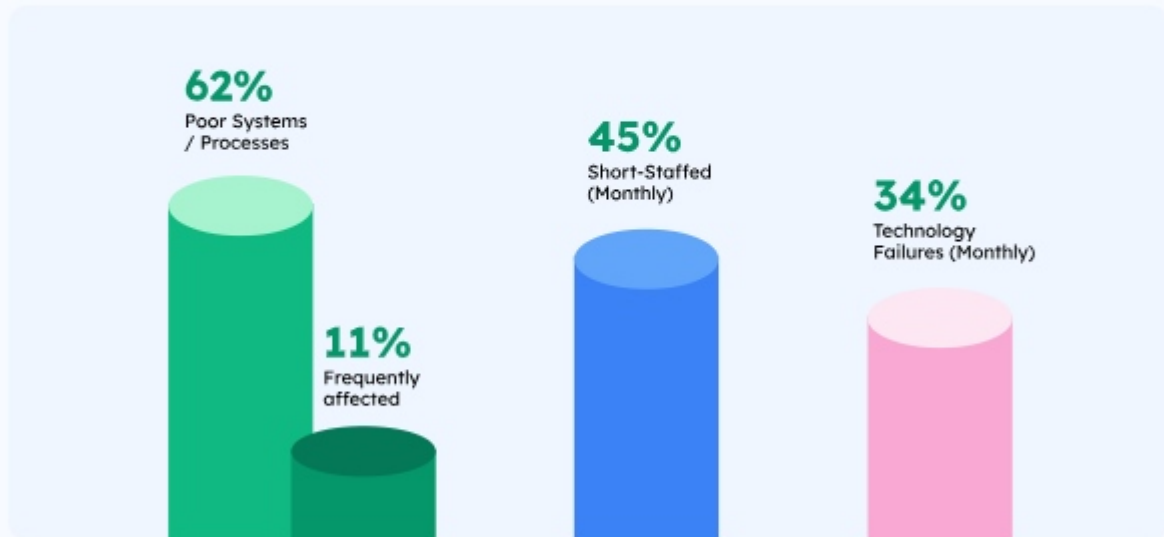
On average employees are wasting 1hr12mins per week at work because of inefficient systems or processes at work (e.g. manual paperwork, poor scheduling, chasing information, repeating tasks). With around 3.5million Hospitality employees working an average 30 hour working week, this is equivalent to 4.2 million hours wasted in the sector.

Multiply this by minimum wage of £12.21ph, and this accounts for almost £2.7bn of cost to employers – which could fund an extra 1 million Hospitality professionals.

If processes and systems could be improved, employees said they would be at least 19% more productive each week, so investing in the right tech to aid productivity is vital for businesses – to save time, cost and make their staff and business more efficient.

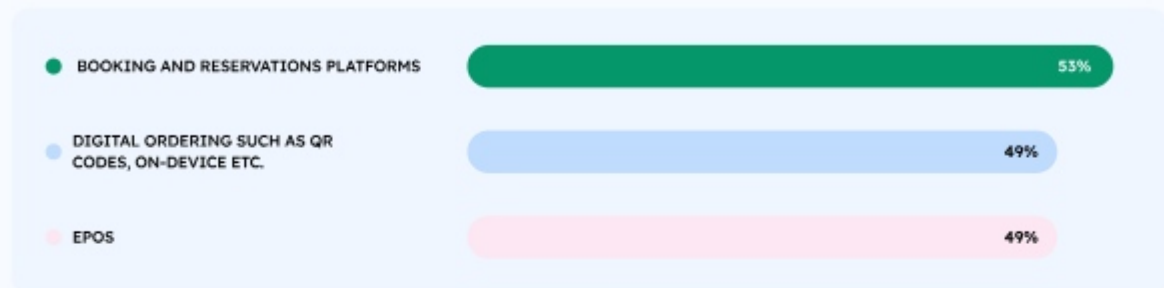


Which systems & processes impact customer service?



When technology starts to affect how your employees can adequately serve your customers, it's time for a rethink. We all know that great customer service is the backbone of the Hospitality sector, and that the consumer is not generally forgiving of poor service – which could be avoided if tech played its part correctly.

The three main customer-facing areas that employees see making their job easier:



Tech failures in these areas not only affect customer service but will affect your employees as well in having to deal with the issues when they arise.

Poor shift scheduling is also having an impact on customer service, with nearly 1 in 2 employees feeling they are short staffed at least once a month.



Which systems and processes impact employee wellbeing?

50% have considered leaving their job due to poor or frustrating systems or processes

29% say that tech goes wrong at least once a month and it negatively affects how much they enjoy their job

7% of employees say they have an issue with pay every pay period

13% at least every other pay period

40% say they are short staffed least once a month and it affects how much they enjoy their job

The top 3 areas where technology goes wrong and negatively impacts your employees' job are:

- labour scheduling (45%)
- payments (34%)
- guest facing tech (30%)

The knock on effect of this is that 1 in 2 say it makes them consider leaving their jobs, with 19% feeling like they would be more productive each week if their company invested in better systems and processes.



1 in 2 (50%) have considered leaving their job due to poor or frustrating systems or processes

With turnover in Hospitality is amongst the highest across all sectors and considered to be around 40%, even if a fraction of this churn is driven by fixable processes, such as investment in better systems and processes, this could save employers significant sums in having to re-hire, re-train, and continuing to retain their staff. Figures from [UK Hospitality](#) indicate that the average cost to recruit and train new staff is approximately 6-9 months of salary.



The connection between shift scheduling & employee satisfaction

Rota scheduling and 'switching shifts' causes frustration for in-venue colleagues with lack of notice and due consideration for life-work balance being considerable factors.

Interestingly, while employers are putting greater emphasis on employee wellbeing including mental health, financial, emotional or physical wellbeing, a lack of forward planning of rotas, frequent and late changes, and difficulty in being able to change or swap shifts is negatively affecting employees experience.

1 in 2 (52%) employees receive their rota less than six days in advance, with 15% getting it less than two days before

27% say their shift schedule is then frequently or very frequently changed after publication

Only **54%** find it easy to request shift changes, get cover or swap a shift

80% must contact a manager directly to do so

Technology that manages shift scheduling and productivity creates a seamless experience for both managers and employees. By combining human control with AI insight, it can predict staffing needs much more accurately than traditional, machine learning-based forecasting.

New technology takes into account historical factors such as sales and bookings, but also checks live data such as weather changes, local events, school holidays, and more. This gives employees greater visibility into their upcoming schedules, helping them plan ahead and achieve a better balance between work and life. With almost a third of respondents feeling like their personal needs aren't taken into account, updating scheduling technology alone could significantly impact employee wellbeing.



Almost 1 in 3 (30%) feel their availability, preferences and work-life balance aren't considered in scheduling decisions



Four key takeouts

This research reveals how getting the basics right—onboarding, communication, and technology—can transform the employee experience in Hospitality.

1

Employee onboarding impacts productivity. Whilst most employees feel confident after training, almost 9 in 10 say the onboarding process could be improved, especially with clearer guidance and more hands-on learning.

2

Poor tech, systems, and process cost the industry around £2.7 billion a year in admin time. Half of employees say they've considered leaving because of clunky or unreliable tech, and many say it's even affected the level of service customers receive.

3

Shift scheduling that doesn't take into account personal needs is driving the majority of employee frustrations. By giving more notice and allowing for working preferences, businesses can improve engagement and, ultimately, the customer experience.

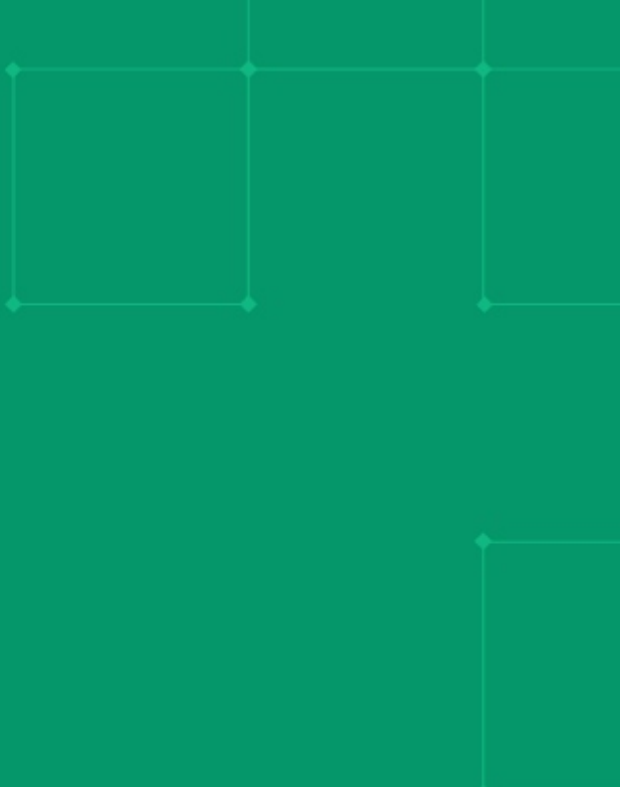
4

The good news? Smarter systems can fix much of this. By adopting better technology for scheduling, communication, and day-to-day operations, businesses can make life easier for their teams, which means happier staff, better service, and stronger long-term performance.



Katy Moses

Founder and Managing Director, KAM



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Sona is the next-generation workforce management solution, solving complex Hospitality challenges with consumer-grade user experience and enterprise grade AI. Sona makes it easier than ever to ensure you have the right people, in the right place, at the right time, delivering the best experience for customers and staff every shift.

KAM

www.kaminsight.com

KAM is a research and insight consultancy helping Hospitality businesses understand what really drives their customers, teams and performance. From bespoke studies to industry-wide reports, KAM brings data and insights to life with clear, practical takeaways, giving operators and suppliers the confidence to make smarter decisions and create better experiences.

