



QUICK TAKE REPORT

UK Hospitality Report 2023-24



Analysis of customer experience trends as shown in Google Business Profiles, consumer sentiment and more than 1.8m online reviews, for over 16,000 UK hospitality locations (August 2022 - August 2023).

Foreword

Hospitality brands are striving to improve communication and collaboration among their customer-facing teams whilst also delivering seamless experiences across a variety of digital channels and in-person interactions across all locations.

Effective feedback collection and analysis are critical to achieving these goals. By leveraging feedback data from various sources, hospitality CX and marketing teams can gain invaluable insights into customer needs and preferences, improve brand reputation, and gain a competitive edge in the marketplace.

However, managing feedback data from multiple sources requires sophisticated tools and technologies to analyse and act upon. Organisations must adopt a digital-first strategy to empower teams with the necessary tools and processes to make the most of feedback data.

Our 2023-24 UK Hospitality 'Quick Take' report, with its insights into the latest trends and best practices for leveraging feedback data, is here to help hospitality businesses navigate these challenges.

Consider the data within the report a benchmark for the industry and a reference point for evaluating your hospitality brand's performance in a competitive market. With that in mind, let's expand a little on how the reader should use the 'quick take' report:

1. Compare Sentiment Data to Your Own Feedback: Assess customer opinions and experiences as reflected in the report and contrast them with the feedback you've gathered from your patrons. Look at your review response rates. How do they compare to the rising review response rates seen across the industry?

The industry average star rating is 4.1. Is your brand exceeding this benchmark or lagging behind?

By making such comparisons, you can identify similarities and discrepancies, allowing you to pinpoint areas where your brand may excel or require improvement. This comparative analysis will provide valuable insights into the alignment of your brand's performance with industry standards.

2. Learn from the Leaders: The 'quick take' report highlights what leading brands like **Mitchells and Butlers** and **Greene King** are doing to enhance their online reputation and guest experience. These brands are successfully navigating the challenges faced by the hospitality industry, by leveraging customer sentiment data to improve operations across all locations. These recommendations can serve as actionable insights that you can implement within your own organisation.

Is your hospitality brand a leader or a laggard in online reputation and the guest experience? Use this 'quick take' report to benchmark your brand's performance and guide you towards excellence in 2023 and beyond.



Anthony Gaskell

Managing Director, Reputation

Overview

The key findings of our hospitality 'quick take' are summarised below.

- **The UK hospitality sector has seen a 2.9% rise in review volume**, mostly positive, with **76%** positive reviews this year compared to 75% last year (August 22 – August 23).
- **Star ratings have improved to 4.1/5 from 4.0/5**, indicating operators' efforts to enhance customer experiences.
- **Response rates have risen to 50% from 45%**, reflecting proactive engagement with reviews and digital transformation. However, there remains much room for improvement, especially when one considers that industries such as opticians see response rates over **60%**.
- **Key positive and negative categories** in reviews remain "Food General," "Taste/Temperature," and "Courtesy," with a concerning sentiment decline of **-5** in "Cleanliness."
- **Strengths of the brands analysed include food quality and staff courtesy**, while weaknesses encompass "Potatoes," "Bar/Drinks," and "Speed of Service," requiring focused attention and guest feedback analysis.

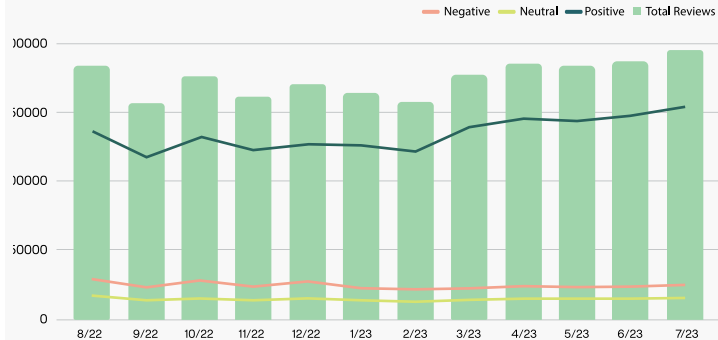


Review Volumes Trends

Our **AI-powered Natural Language Processing (NLP)** algorithms enable us to analyse guest reviews at scale and pull out critical insights around review volumes and sentiment trends for the hospitality industry.

During the period from August 2022 to July 2023, a significant 84.47% of reviews expressed a positive sentiment, indicating a prevailing sense of customer satisfaction within the UK hospitality sector.

Review volume and sentiment: August '22 – July '23



However, there is an upward trend in negative review sentiment. This could potentially be attributed to various factors, including the increasing expenses associated with out-of-home dining, prompting consumers to adopt a more discerning approach when evaluating the quality of service provided by hospitality operators.



Recommendations

- Determine what's driving positive sentiment in reviews at your hospitality brand and ensure you continue to deliver in these areas.
- Similarly, identify what it is about your guest experience that is appearing in negative reviews and take action to address these problems.
- Keep track of the sentiment of your reviews over time to identify any trends and make adjustments as needed.
- Begin review requesting to boost review volumes from the 'happy but silent' majority of your customer base. This is exactly what **Tortilla** did to achieve a **262% review volume increase** and become the UK's **highest-rated fast-casual Mexican restaurant chain**.

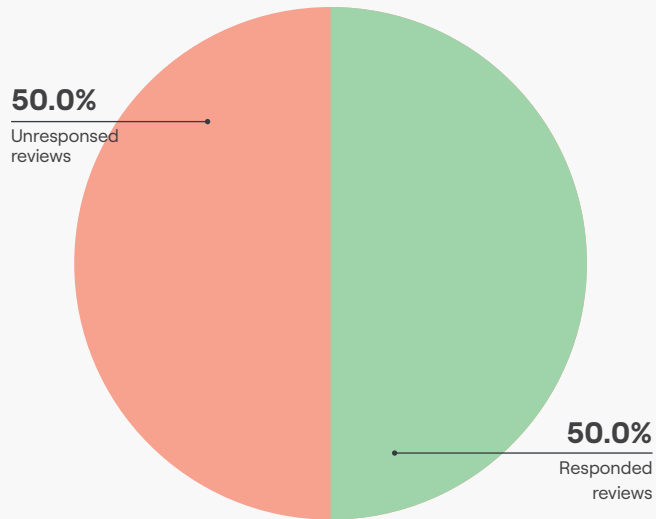
TORTILLA

Resource: How Tortilla is getting ahead of its competitors



Review Response Trends

Review response rate August '22 – August '23



Hospitality brands are inconsistent when it comes to responding to customer reviews online, as illustrated by this graph.

However, the brands analysed in our report have shown improvements from the previous year (August 2021-2022) when only 45% of reviews were responded to. This suggests that hospitality brands are becoming more responsive to customer feedback.



Recommendations

- Continue to respond to customer feedback in a timely manner to demonstrate to guests that you take their feedback seriously. Centralising sources of online feedback can make responding easier and more efficient.
- East-Anglian pub group, **Chestnut**, is making great strides in responding to reviews. By leveraging the Reputation platform, they boosted 2022's review response rate to 93% compared to just 17% in 2020 and 50% in 2021.



Resource: [How Chestnut Transformed Its Business Culture With Reputation](#)

- Track the response rate to guest feedback to see if your brand is making progress in becoming more responsive.

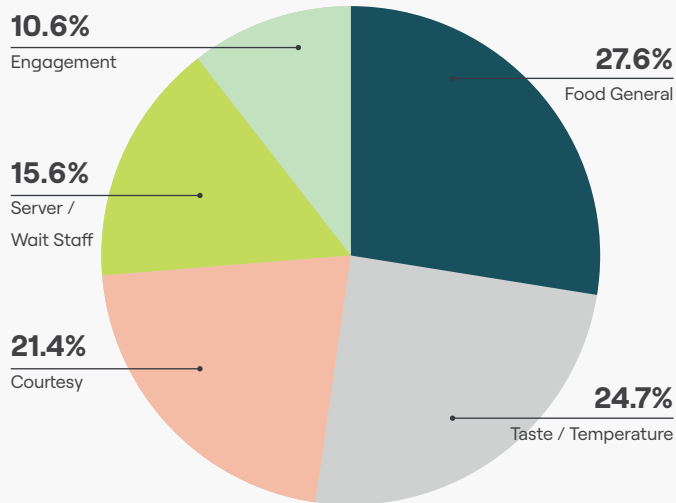
Resource: [The Ultimate Guide To Customer Review Management](#)

Guest Sentiment Trends

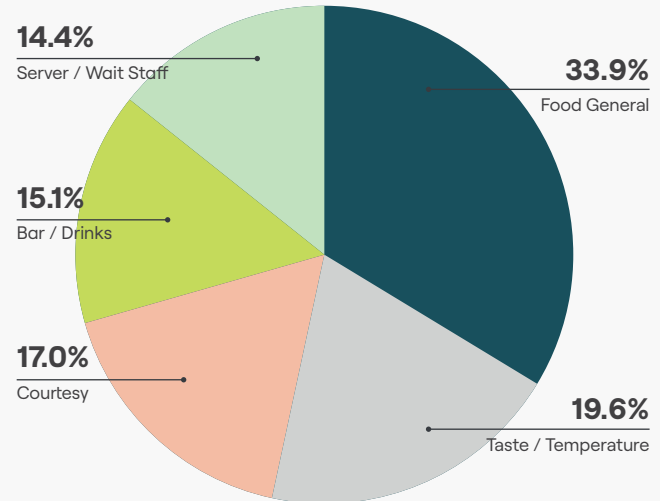
The category of 'Food General' garners the highest count of positive reviews, totalling 539,448, whilst also drawing a notable 84,903 negative reviews.

This suggests that the quality and appeal of the overall dining experience, including factors such as menu variety, presentation, and taste consistency, significantly influence customers' perceptions.

Positive Sentiment



Negative Sentiment



Similarly, 'Taste / Temperature' stands out with a substantial number of both positive (483,272) and negative (48,968) reviews, emphasising the pivotal role that taste and temperature play in shaping patrons' opinions.

Furthermore, 'Courtesy' is a key area of focus, garnering a considerable 418,318 positive reviews, but also encountering 42,660 negative reviews.

This underscores the significance of staff behaviour and interpersonal skills in creating a positive atmosphere.

Interestingly, 'Server / Wait Staff' and 'Engagement' hold substantial positive review counts (304,585 and 207,693 respectively), whilst 'Bar / Drinks' and 'Server / Wait Staff' also accumulate negative reviews (37,730 and 36,151 respectively).

This suggests that the service quality provided by wait staff and the overall engagement level with customers play a vital role in shaping customer sentiment.

Overall, these trends underscore the critical importance of well-rounded and attentive service, high-quality cuisine, and courteous interactions in driving positive customer experiences within the hospitality sector, whilst also pinpointing specific areas for improvement, such as promptness and attentiveness of bar service and wait staff.

Category Sentiment

+ Engagement (Customer service) - Potatoes (Menu items)

Reputation's platform transforms customer comments in reviews into text analytic categories. An algorithm scores each category to give a Category Sentiment score.

The highest category sentiment score for the hospitality locations we analysed was 'engagement' which includes the top positive keywords 'staff', 'friendly', and 'helpful'. The lowest category sentiment was 'potatoes' which includes the negative keywords 'chip', 'food', and 'cold'.

Engagement (Customer service)	Potatoes (Menu items)
<u>Top Positive Keywords</u>	<u>Top Negative Keywords</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Friendly• Staff• Lovely• Helpful• Service• Nice• Pub• Atmosphere• Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chip• Food• Order• Cold• Fry• Potato• Meal• Roast

Impact of Customer Sentiment on Star Ratings

Reputation's platform reveals the sentiment categories that have the highest positive impact on the star ratings of hospitality locations.

Strengths

Category	Mentions	Impact
Taste / Temperature	595,557	+0.14
Engagement	220,947	+0.12
Courtesy	531,132	+0.09

'Taste/temperature' is the main driver for a positive star average. This highlights the importance of food preparation and menu in the overall guest experience.

Here is a glimpse at positive feedback*

||

"...food came out fresh and the carvery was lovely."

||

"...everyone had a good portion of their selected meat."

Weaknesses

Category	Mentions	Impact
Potatoes	43,522	-0.03
Bar/ Drinks	203,719	-0.03
Speed of Service	185,504	-0.03

'Potatoes', 'Bar/Drinks' and 'Speed of Service' are the categories dragging down star ratings.

Here is a glimpse at negative feedback*

||

"...I tried again with a pie and chips and once again it arrived tasted horrible so took it back."

||

"...Not many staff, struggled to get served in the bar – the food after an hour wait was basically awful!"

*The feedback excerpts shown here are direct quotations from real online reviews.



Recommendations

- Brands should digitally survey their staff as part of a **Voice of the Employee (VoE)** programme as doing so could reveal barriers or operational challenges affecting staff performance, including around speed of service.
- Reduce wait times by identifying bottlenecks at locations. Surveying guests about their experiences could potentially provide you with a wealth of data to show you when and where problems arise.
- Delve into guest reviews to identify problem areas with food and particular menu items. The likes of **Greene King** and **Mitchells and Butlers** are consistently monitoring guest sentiment and adjusting their menus and offerings accordingly.

Hospitality Brand Reputation Score

A Reputation Score is a real-time calculation – based on a 1-1,000 point grading system – that measures how your customers perceive your brand.

Reputation Score offers key insights and reveals your strengths and weaknesses across nine unique metrics – data you can leverage to improve your online profile, satisfy your customers and, ideally, exceed their expectations. It also reveals how you fare in search rankings – customer sentiment is a key ranking factor in the local business search index.

The table below shows the current ‘Best In Class’ and industry average scores based on the brands and locations we analysed.

Brand	Reputation Score	Review Sentiment	Engagement	Visibility
Best In Class	828	100%	100%	69%
Industry Average	501	63%	56%	31%

Correlating Sales With Reputation Score

Reputation Score not only provides a useful snapshot of brand health but there is also a direct correlation between increasing Reputation Score and higher sales volumes.

Stonegate Group uses **Reputation Score** in conjunction with **Net Promoter Score (NPS)** and correlates its increased like-for-like sales with its rising Reputation Score.

Similarly, another major UK pub operator, found that a 100-point increase in Reputation Score resulted in significant sales growth.

“There’s a direct correlation between Reputation Score increasing and our like-for-like sales improving.”

Charlotte Smith

Customer Experience Manager,
Stonegate Group

Stonegate Group

How To Become A Top-Rated Hospitality Brand

To improve your brand's guest experience and online reputation you must...

Establish a Feedback Loop and Put Feedback to Work.

Conversion

Generate sales leads

Manage business listings effectively to increase footfall, inquiries and table bookings.

Respond to inbound messages across all channels to convert leads.

Awareness

Improve online visibility

Rank higher in Google searches by driving review volumes.



Advocacy

Drive Referrals

Amplify positive reviews; inspire customers to share experiences online.

Retention

Keep customers in-network

Improve the guest experience by identifying strengths and weaknesses to make operational improvements.

- 1. Manage all of your business listings for all your brand's locations.** Ensure all information is accurate and up-to-date and go beyond providing the bare minimum information to ensure listing views turn into actions, including clicks-to-website or clicks-to-directions.
- 2. Drive review volumes and star ratings** by actively requesting reviews to tap into the 'silent majority' and get endorsements of your brand so you stand out online.
- 3. Respond to reviews - good and bad.** Show potential guests and existing ones that you care about their feedback. This builds trust and presents your brand in the best possible light.
- 4. Learn from guest feedback.** Analyse the sentiment behind reviews to determine areas of strength and weakness which you can then address at an operational level.
- 5. Pay attention to your Reputation Score** - it's a robust indicator of your brand's overall health. Use it to benchmark performance against competitors and set about improving it by doing the basics - review requesting, responding to feedback, and managing listings.
- 6. If you're a Reputation customer,** keep in regular contact with your Customer Success Manager who will be able to guide you through processes that will improve your Reputation Score and thus your ranking in subsequent reports.

We're here to help

We work with renowned hospitality brands, including Marstons, Mitchells & Butlers, Greene King, St Austell Brewery, Stonegate, and Tortilla.



Stonegate Group



→ Scan the QR code, or contact us via the details below, to arrange a consultation to discover how you could put feedback to work to achieve top-rated status and drive revenue at your company.

Contact us at contact-uk@reputation.com,
Telephone: **0800 066 4781**



About Reputation

Reputation is the only platform that manages consumer feedback from acquisition to loyalty. Functioning as a business' eyes and ears in the spaces where customers talk, post, review, and recommend, Reputation analyses vast amounts of public and private feedback data to uncover predictive insights for companies to act on and improve the customer experience. Backed by Marlin Equity Partners, Bessemer Ventures, and Kleiner Perkins, Reputation turns consumer feedback into fuel to grow businesses around the world.

Visit reputation.com to learn more.

