



QUICK TAKE

Trends in the UK Hospitality Industry

Leveraging Reputation's AI-powered natural language processing algorithms, we analysed over 4.1 million reviews for over 80 unique operators across the UK to learn how customer feedback is reshaping the hospitality industry. This report shows how business owners are leveraging their reputations to increase online visibility, enhance product and service quality, and grow foot traffic across their locations.





Reputation: A Critical Asset in the Restaurant & Hospitality Industry

Whether choosing a local café, a fast-food chain, or a pub, diners are relying more than ever on online reviews to make their decisions. In this highly competitive space, a strong, credible reputation can make or break a business.

While quality food and convenient locations are important, **the real influence comes from customer experiences shared through reviews.** These reviews offer potential patrons valuable insight into speed of service, staff friendliness, food quality, and overall ambiance.

For restaurants, bars, and coffee shops, responding to guest feedback is key to building trust and credibility. Establishments that actively engage with customers—addressing concerns and celebrating praise—demonstrate a commitment to customer satisfaction. In contrast, ignoring reviews can lead to missed opportunities for improvement and growth.

In the hospitality industry, reputation management isn't just a nice-to-have; it's a necessity. Reputation can be the difference between a bustling, successful establishment and one that struggles to keep its doors open.

Here are the Highlights:

- 4 The Methodology Behind Reputation Scoring
- 5 Review Volume Growth Drives Sentiment, Star Ratings Higher
- 7 What Consumers Are Talking About
- 9 Review Response Rates
- 12 Seven Ways to Improve the Guest Experience
- 14 The Reputation Platform

For a deeper dive into Reputation's UK Hospitality survey findings, or to see a live demo of how we can help your business maximise your reputation and drive business growth, visit us at [Reputation.com](https://www.Reputation.com).



The State of the Hospitality Industry

The hospitality industry faces both challenges and opportunities in 2025. While consumer demand for dining and social experiences remains relatively strong, the sector is under considerable pressure due to rising operational costs and shifts in consumer behavior.

Consumer trends:

- With less disposable income, consumers are more selective in their spending, with many opting for fewer visits.
- Those that are eating out are seeking more memorable, experience-driven outings.
- Many are looking for eco-friendly restaurants that source locally, reduce waste, and offer plant-based menu options.

Operator trends:

- Operators are facing rising producer prices, energy costs, and rent, cutting into already thin profit margins.
- Inflation is forcing businesses to increase menu prices, which can further deter price-sensitive consumers.
- Online ordering, food delivery platforms, and digital reservations continue to assist the industry.
- Staff turnover remains a major issue, with many businesses struggling to retain workers.
- Restaurants are adopting technology to streamline operations, improve customer service, and increase their reach.

Among the more notable casualties is TGI Fridays, which has recently gone into administration, putting 4,500 jobs across 87 of the chain's restaurants at risk, and highlighting the growing trend of closures across major chains. At the same time, some mid-size restaurant brands are expanding, eager to capture the market share left behind.



Benchmarking Performance:

The Methodology Behind Reputation Scoring

Using Reputation's AI-powered natural language-processing capabilities, we analysed over 4.1 million reviews for over 80 unique hospitality operators across the UK. We measured the industry as a whole as well as the top 20% and bottom 20% of performers to see what these sub groups were doing differently.

All were assigned a Reputation Score – a proprietary indicator based on publicly available review data that rates brand performance on a scale of 100 to 1,000. The Reputation Score provides a real-time, single metric to gauge brand perceptions. It is awarded based on a variety of weighted criteria:

Sentiment

The thoughts and opinions expressed in reviews

Engagement

Social media activity levels and interactions; review responses

Visibility

Search rankings, review volume and spread, and business listings

The Reputation Score uses analytics to uncover actionable insights for each location, offering tailored recommendations that help business owners streamline operations, improve efficiencies, and increase revenue. This makes the Reputation Score into a strategic tool, and makes the Reputation platform a key partner in driving continuous brand and operational improvement.



As Review Volumes Increase Industry Wide, Ratings Rise

Review volume increased by nearly 60,000 (2.9%) in 2024 compared to the previous year. This surge is happening even as many locations are closing, suggesting businesses are soliciting more reviews and customers are growing more vocal.

The top 20% of locations receive nearly double the review volume of the industry overall, and over 7.5 times the review volume of the bottom 20%. As review volumes grew, the percentage of negative and neutral reviews decreased while the percentage of positive reviews increased, underscoring the importance of customer engagement.

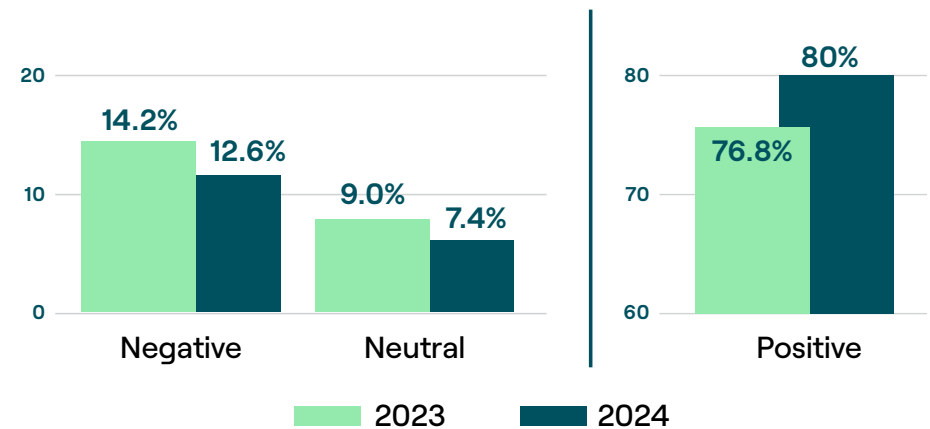
Top pub operators like Stonegate and Mitchells & Butlers have found a direct correlation between higher site ratings and increased sales, showcasing how a good reputation translates into revenue.

Review volume increased 2.9% in 2024

Pro Tip:

Just like Stonegate, businesses should prioritise soliciting reviews and engaging with customers through them. Increasing review volume can drive higher ratings and better sales performance.

UK Hospitality Industry - Sentiment





Star Ratings Move Upward with Volume

The industry-wide average star rating increased by 2.9% to 4.23. This result mirrors the 2.9% increase in review volume. The top 20% of locations boast an average star rating of 4.56, one-third of a star higher than the industry average.

The gap between the top performers and the rest of the industry illustrates how a slight increase in star ratings can reflect a substantial improvement in customer sentiment.

The gap between the top and bottom tiers is a full 1.3 stars, depicting a clear difference between businesses that carefully manage their reputations and those that do not.

Average Star Rating

UK Hospitality Industry - Star Rating Score



Pro Tip:

Don't underestimate the impact of small improvements in star ratings. Closing the gap from 4.2 to 4.5 can elevate foot traffic, but often requires more effort than raising a rating from 3.2 to 4.2. Prioritise continuous improvements to methodically edge out competitors.



What Are Consumers Talking About?

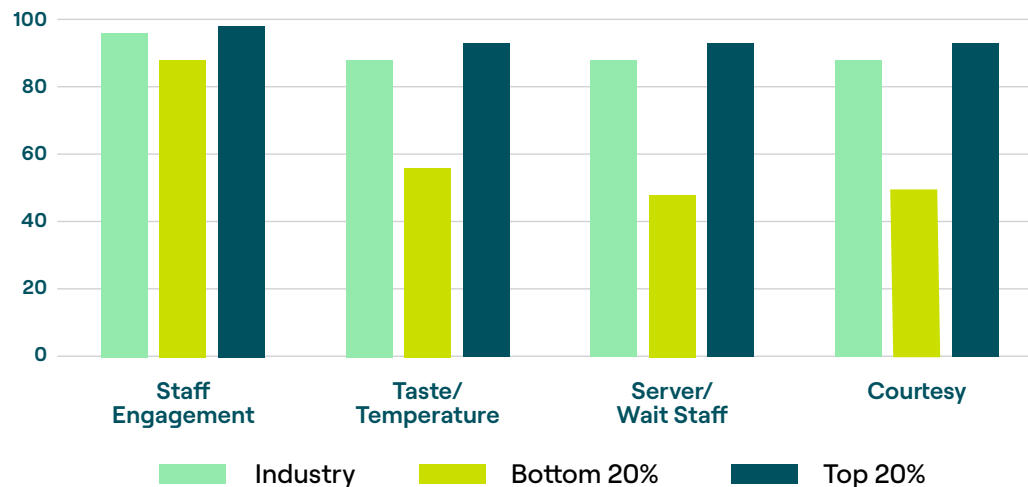
As review volume increases, the conversation has expanded beyond food quality and flavor, although “potatoes,” “chips,” and “fries” continue to drive negative sentiment. While these categories remain prominent, an increasing number of reviewers are highlighting staff engagement, courtesy, and the server's tableside manner.

Customers are placing increased value on how they're treated, often citing kindness and helpfulness as deciding factors in their overall dining experience.

This trend also shows that improving customer service — without even changing the menu — can lead to more positive reviews, which in turn elevate a location's overall reputation score.

Reviewers are Seeking Affable, Pleasant Interactions with Staff

What Consumers are Talking About



Pro Tip:

A reputation management system monitors and analyses customer reviews. This allows you to track food and service feedback, helping your business take actionable steps to improve performance. Here, a small investment in training could yield significant improvements to the bottom line.



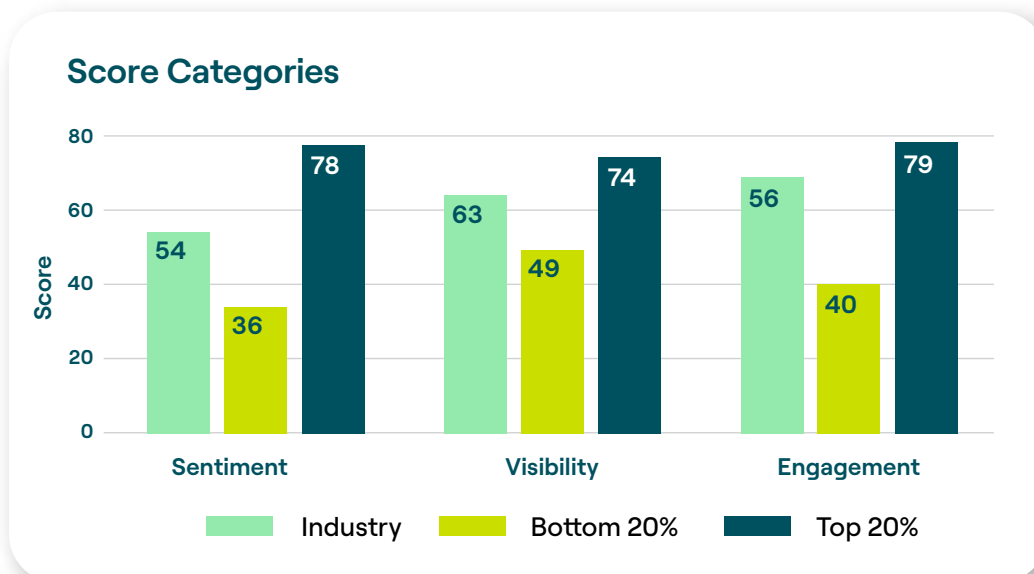
The Greatest Opportunity for Hospitality: Sentiment

While the top tier of hospitality businesses enjoys relatively high scores in Sentiment, it remains the lowest-scoring category across the industry – particularly true for the bottom 20%.

Sentiment is the most heavily weighted category in the overall Reputation Score. The top tier master it with a score 24 points above the industry average and 42 points above the bottom 20%.

Sentiment reflects the thoughts and opinions expressed in reviews, making it a critical area for improvement and the greatest opportunity for growth across the industry.

Hospitality Scores By Category



Pro Tip:

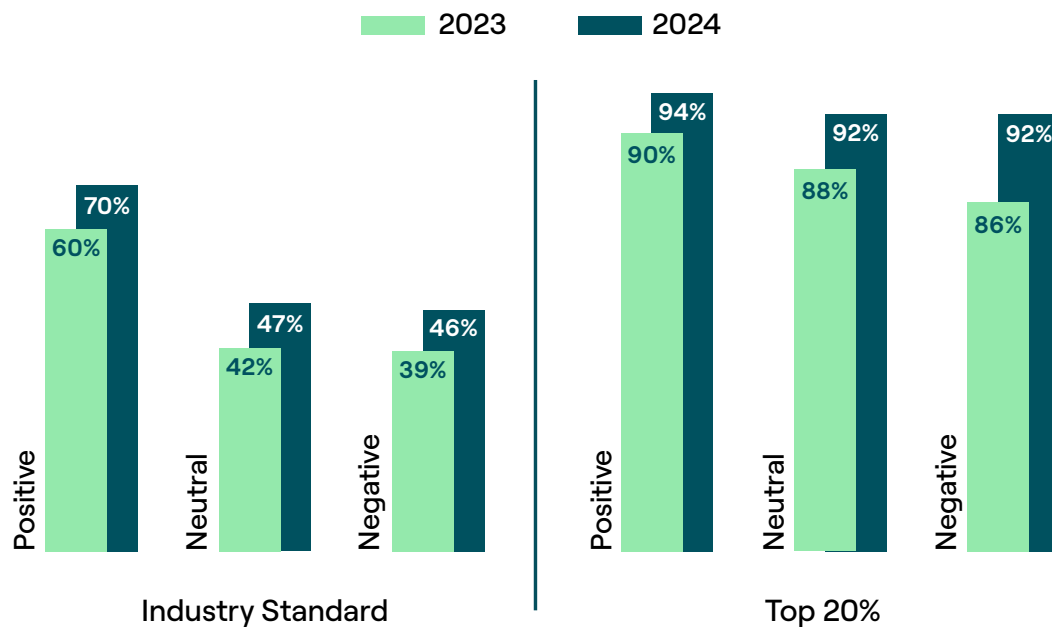
To improve the customer experience, businesses should focus on the lowest scoring components of Sentiment, such as cleanliness, value for money, and speed of service. Additionally, the entire industry can benefit from enhancing the bar and drinks experience, which consistently scores the lowest across the board.



Response Rates Show Room for Improvement

The top tier is setting the benchmark for engagement by responding to over 90% of all customer reviews – positive, neutral, and negative. This high response rate is directly linked to their high Engagement scores, illustrating the importance of staying active in conversations with customers.

Across the industry, more businesses respond to positive reviews, leaving neutral and negative feedback largely unaddressed. This represents a missed opportunity for improving customer relationships and boosting reputation scores.



Pro Tip:

Respond to all feedback, not just those that express positive sentiment. Engaging with negative reviews allows businesses to turn potentially damaging experiences into opportunities for growth. Studies show that responding to complaints can increase customer advocacy by up to 16%, highlighting the power of timely, thoughtful responses.



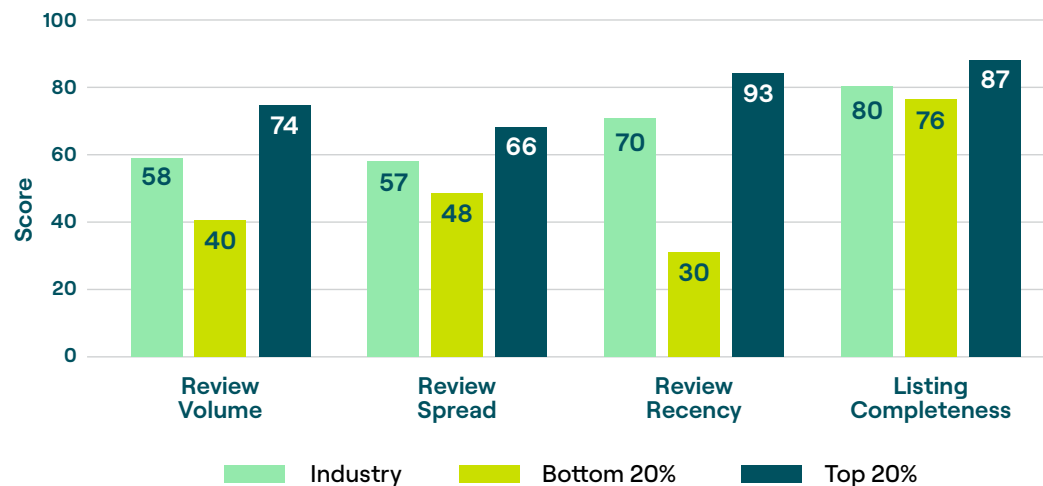
Visibility: A High-Impact Marketing Tool

The Listing Completeness score is the highest-ranking component within the Visibility category across the industry, signaling that businesses are doing a good job of keeping their online profiles accurate and up-to-date.

However, the industry struggles with Review Volume and Review Spread, particularly in the bottom 20%, which lags far behind.

While review recency remains strong across the industry, the gap between the top 20% and the rest underscores the importance of effective review management for maintaining visibility. The factors that shape your Visibility score aren't just metrics—they serve as powerful marketing assets, driving awareness and drawing potential customers to your business.

Visibility Components



Pro Tip:

Boost Review Recency and Spread by making it easy for customers to leave feedback. Leverage tools like QR codes on receipts or WiFi login pages to prompt reviews immediately after a visit. This strategy will help improve your review performance across multiple platforms, ensuring your business stays visible.



Reputation Scores Move Higher

The Reputation Score serves as a holistic KPI, encompassing key metrics such as visibility, sentiment, and engagement, making it an essential tool for tracking year-over-year progress.

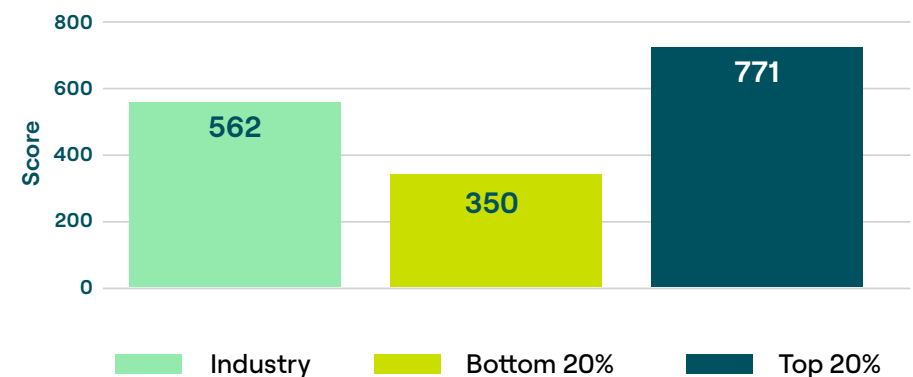
The average Reputation Score for the hospitality industry has risen from 538 in 2023 to 562 in 2024, reflecting a positive upward trend in customer feedback and overall performance.

While the industry as a whole is advancing, the gap between top and bottom performers highlights the need for lower-ranked locations to focus on boosting review quality, recency, and engagement.

There's a significant gap between the Bottom 20%, which holds a Rep Score of 350, and the Top 20%, scoring 421 points higher at 771.

This gap illustrates how crucial review volume and sentiment are as drivers of reputation, with the lower performers struggling due to fewer reviews and more negative feedback.

Reputation Score





Seven Ways to Improve the Guest Experience Today

- 1. Enhance Tableside Manner:** Ensure employees are trained in customer service skills that emphasise attentiveness, politeness, and engagement. Positive staff interaction often translates directly into better reviews and repeat business.
- 2. Leverage Customer Reviews for Menu Optimisation:** Operators should regularly analyse customer feedback to make data-driven changes to the menu, removing items with consistent negative feedback and doubling down on customer favorites. This also shows customers that their voices are heard.
- 3. Boost Visual Engagement:** Posting more reviews, photos, and videos online—especially on social media and Google Business Profiles—helps potential customers choose your venue and decide what to try. Guests appreciate the visual representation of dishes and ambiance, making it easier for them to make informed decisions about where to drink, dine, and enjoy themselves.
- 4. Encourage Courtesy and Guest Engagement:** Encourage staff to take an interest in guests' preferences, offer suggestions, and ensure a welcoming environment. A friendly atmosphere can lead to higher guest satisfaction and loyalty.
- 5. Mid-Visit Surveys for Immediate Feedback:** Implement quick feedback surveys using QR codes on receipts or Wi-Fi login pages to collect real-time feedback. These surveys can capture immediate thoughts from guests and help address any negative experiences before they result in poor reviews.
- 6. Use Reviews to Improve Customer Experience:** Regularly review guest feedback to identify and address recurring issues. Addressing these pain points will lead to a more seamless experience for future guests.
- 7. Promote Online Engagement with Photos and Updates:** Encourage customers to share their experiences via photos and reviews on social media. By showcasing their experiences, you increase your visibility and credibility online, while also influencing the decisions of potential diners.

By applying these strategies, operators can not only improve the guest experience but also enhance their overall reputation and encourage more positive reviews.



Case Study

Young's Pubs and Hotels Sees 124-Point Growth in Reputation Score with 99% Review Response

Young's, a leading hospitality company managing pubs and hotels across the UK, aimed to enhance customer engagement by improving response rates to feedback and gaining valuable insights from customer reviews. They sought to maximise online search visibility while reducing the effort required to maintain consistent, up-to-date listings. Their ultimate goal was to boost conversion rates from their listings and improve overall business performance.

Young's initially tried Reputation's Listings and Reviews platform for their bedroom profiles in 2020. Following its success, the program was expanded across the entire estate in 2022. Young's positioned their partnership with Reputation as a key pillar of their revamped customer strategy, using the

Reputation Score as a core KPI. By leveraging the platform, they identified actionable insights to inform decision-making and implement operational changes. Young's committed to increasing review volume and improving business listing accuracy across their portfolio.

Today, Young's has fully implemented the Reputation platform across its entire estate of 268 profiles throughout the UK. The estate-wide Reputation Score has risen by 124 points since 2021, now sitting at 803. Within its estate, 145 pub and bedroom profiles hold scores above 800, with 15 exceeding 900. The average star rating increased from 4.3 to 4.5, and the review response rate has improved significantly, growing from 83% in 2021 to an impressive 99% today.

99%

review response rate (2023)

803

Rep Score, up from
675 (2021)

4.5 out of 5

Average star rating (2024)

The Reputation Platform

Ready to take control of your brand's reputation and thrive in the digital landscape?

The Reputation platform gives hospitality operators the ability to manage and showcase customer feedback from a single platform, across all locations. They can:

They can:

- **Generate, respond to, and engage** with customer reviews
- **Track review volume, quality, and real-time sentiment** at the brand or location level
- **Measure/report on key review metrics** with customizable dashboards and automated reporting

Hospitality providers use the Reputation solution to enhance their online presence, gather reviews, manage social media, increase customer engagement, and use feedback to create better customer relationships — all at scale.

For more information on how Reputation can help your organisation thrive, visit [Reputation.com](https://reputation.com).

Reputation is the only platform that empowers companies to fulfill their brand promise by measuring, managing, and scaling their reputation performance in real-time, everywhere. Functioning as a business' eyes and ears in the spaces where customers talk, post, review, and recommend, Reputation AI-powered product stack analyzes vast amounts of public and private feedback data to uncover predictive insights for companies to act on, and improve their online reputations. Visit reputation.com to learn more.