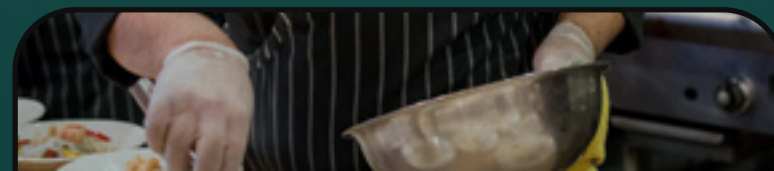
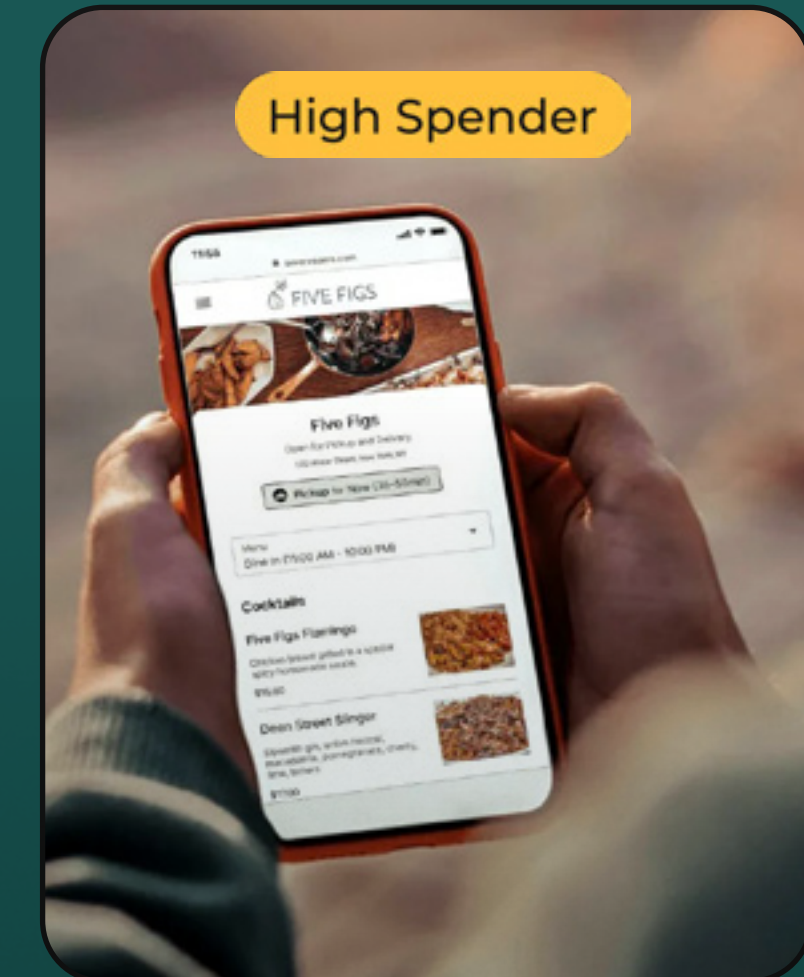


SEVENROOMS

Restaurant Trends and Diner Expectations

An inside look at how restaurants are delivering better guest experiences in the age of AI and automation.

2024 UK Annual Report



What's ahead in the report



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INTRODUCTION

Restaurants are the ‘third place’ people crave

Over the past few years, consumer habits and routines in the United Kingdom have shifted due to social, economic and technological changes.

Today, the [UK economy appears to be on an upswing](#). Despite lingering inflation concerns and a desire to save in certain areas, Brits are back to enjoying [third places](#) – “places outside your home, which is your first place, and work, which is your second place. They're places we go to socially connect with other people.”

To paint a full picture of the hospitality scene in 2024, we gathered insights from 250 operators and 1,000+ consumers across the country and looked at product analytics from over 2,000 SevenRooms customers in the United Kingdom.

We found that when restaurants really get to know their customers while offering great experiences and value, people will prioritise them over their competitors. Read on for detailed findings and actionable insights to grow your business.



DINER EXPECTATIONS

What matters most to diners today

Across generations and cities, consumers share a few key expectations when they dine out — they're looking for **convenience**, **personalisation** and **value** from brands they trust. And when they're happy with the service, communication and meal or drink experience — they're more than just happy customers (who are willing to pay more), but brand ambassadors.

After a massive adjustment to remote work and then a readjustment back to the workplace, **82% of UK workers** have returned to the office full-time or part-time as hybrid workers. People are excited to be back in the world, taking a proper lunch break or staying out after work for cocktails.

Let's walk through the trends we're seeing among UK consumers and the opportunities for hospitality businesses.



☆ The trend

Gen Z consumers are fueling a restaurant revival

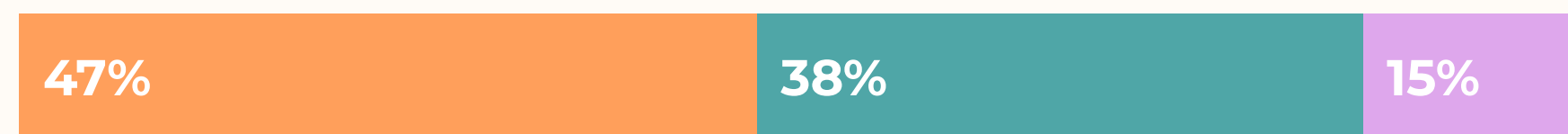
Younger generations in the UK are dining out more often, making restaurants part of their weekly routine.

Of all the generations, Gen Z dines out the most, with **more than half (53%)** saying they dine out at least 3 times per month, and **15%** dining out 5 or more times.

How often do you dine out each month, on average?

● 1-2 times ● 3-4 times ● More than 5 times

Gen Z



Millennials



Gen X and Baby Boomers



SevenRooms UK Consumer Survey, 2024



💡 The opportunity

Cater to your specific audience's dining habits

Analyse [booking data](#) over time and by generation to understand when and how different audiences prefer to dine with you. Track guest dining and visit frequency to identify "[champion diners](#)", then, adjust your marketing and promotional strategy accordingly to [improve brand loyalty](#) among this crowd.

☆ The trend

Consumers are spending a pretty penny on elevated dining experiences

Most Brits say they're willing to **spend up to £50 per person** for a meal out, with diners in London spending a bit more on average. Consumers in cities with higher costs of living (like London and Manchester) are willing to dish out more for elevated dining experiences.

Dining upgrades consumers are willing to spend above market price on by city

38%

LONDON

High-end items like caviar

62%

NOTTINGHAM

High-end items like caviar

60%

MANCHESTER

A beverage upon arrival

33%

BIRMINGHAM

High-end items like caviar, and menu items with some theatre

22%

BRISTOL

Dishes featuring heritage or heirloom ingredients



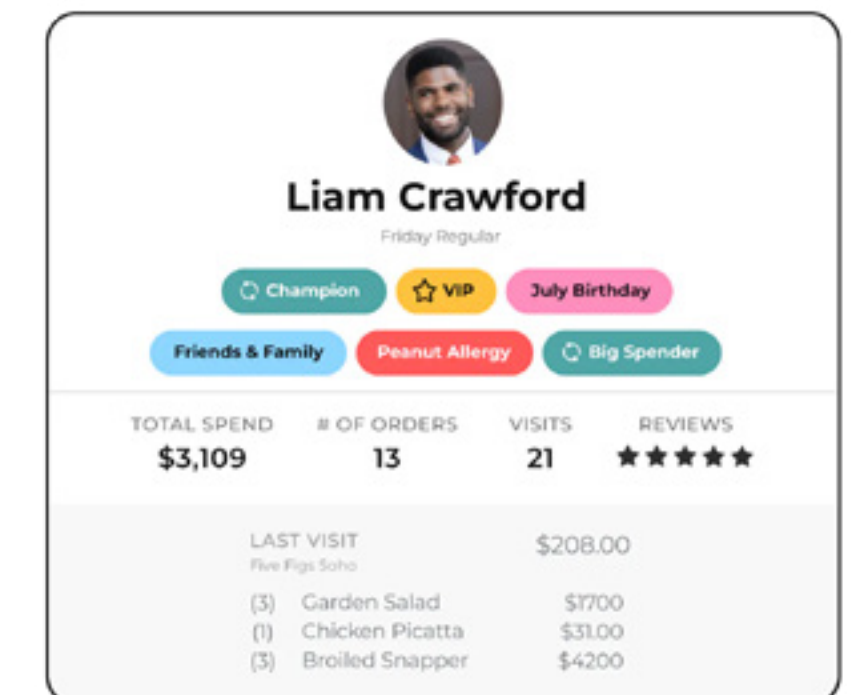
💡 The opportunity

Update your food and drinks based on your market's preferences

Evaluate your menu and product mix (PMIX) to determine if you're offering items consumers are willing to pay more for. Analyse your prices and the market preference in your city and rethink pricing for specialty items and experiences where you can.

Technology tip

Leverage a [restaurant CRM](#) to better understand your guests' preferences and plan out targeted marketing campaigns to boost average spend per guest.

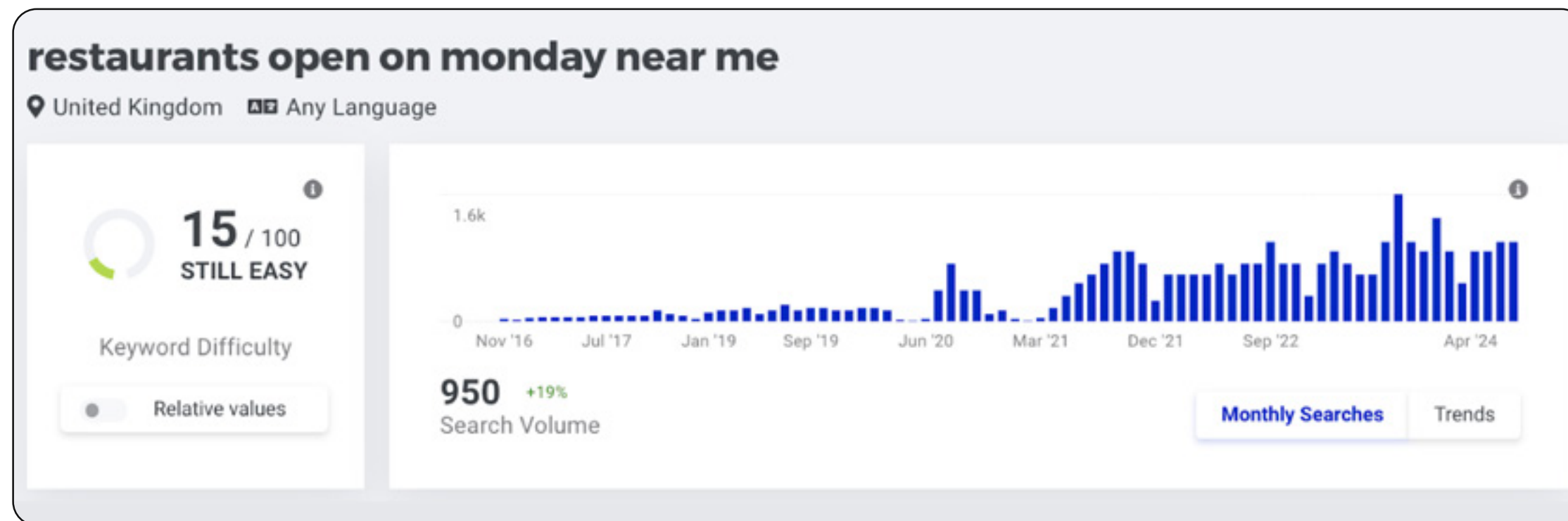


☆ The trend

The weekend now extends to Monday

To our surprise, one of the most popular days for restaurant reservations is Monday. Monday is reportedly [the most popular day for hybrid workers to travel into the office](#), so it makes sense they'd be looking for reservations – they're already out and dressed after all.

Year-over-year searches for “restaurants open on Monday near me” are up 19%.



Source: KWFinder

💡 The opportunity

Make Mondays mundane no more

If you're not open on Mondays, consider it. Use historical booking data to decide when you're most likely to be busy. With [SevenRooms](#), you can use the built-in [Search Demand report](#) where you can see how much search volume there is for reservations on certain days and times.

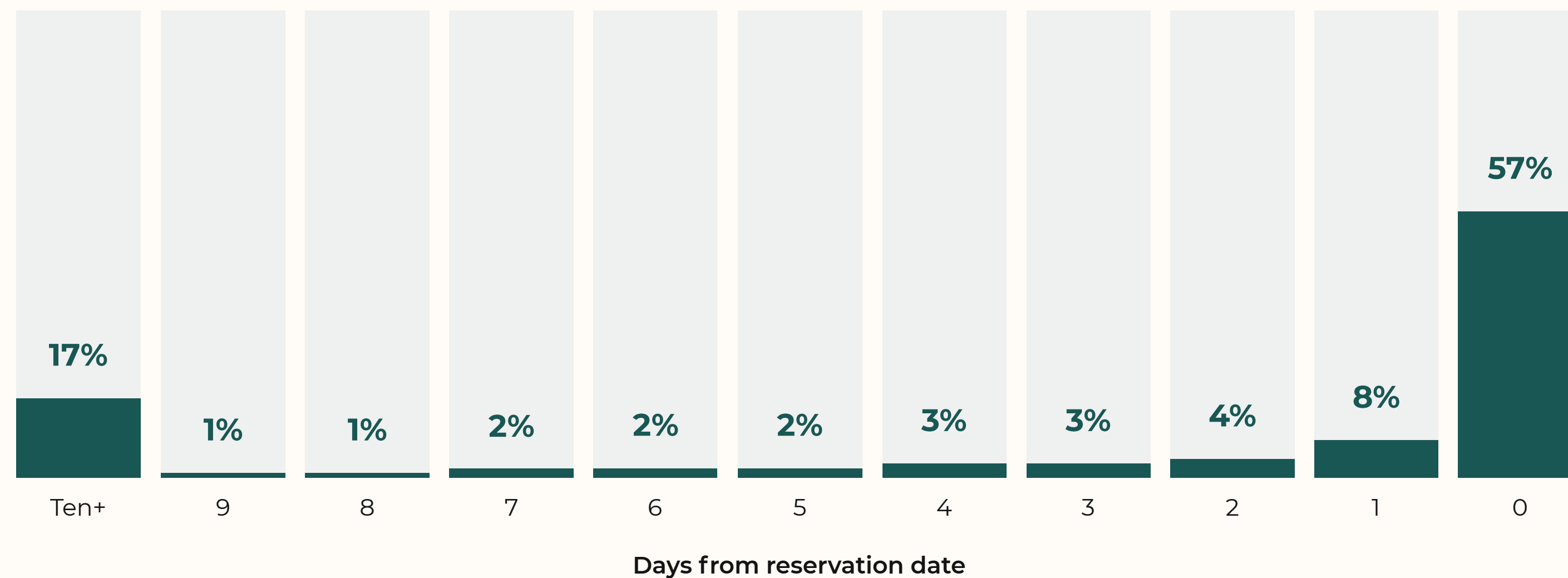


☆ The trend

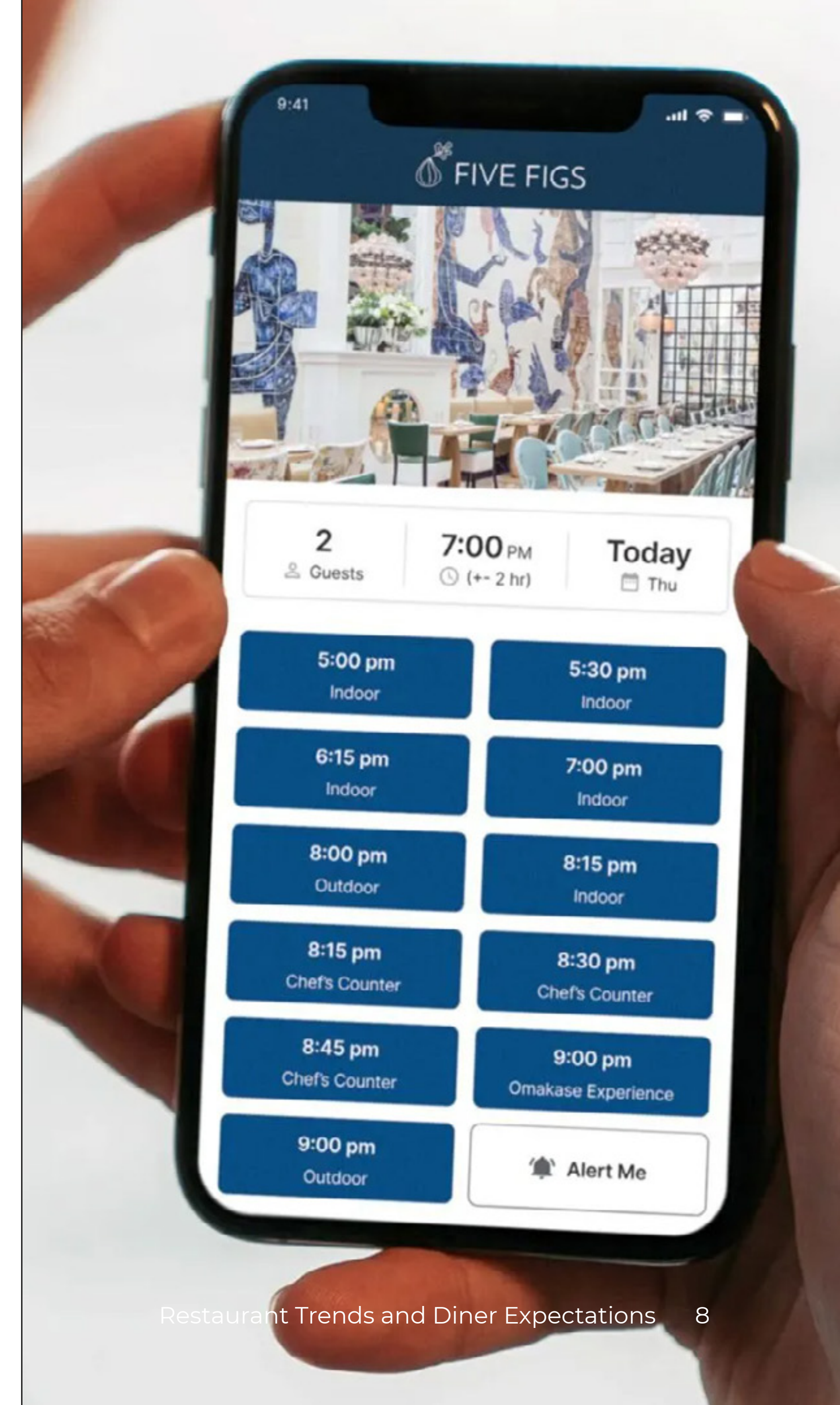
More than half of reservations are booked day-of

People have figured out that booking same-day is often the best way to get a reservation. **More than half (57%) of SevenRooms reservations in the UK are made day-of**, with the second-most popular time to book at 10+ days from the requested date (17%). Most people are either dining spontaneously or making important plans well in advance.

How far in advance do guests typically book reservations?



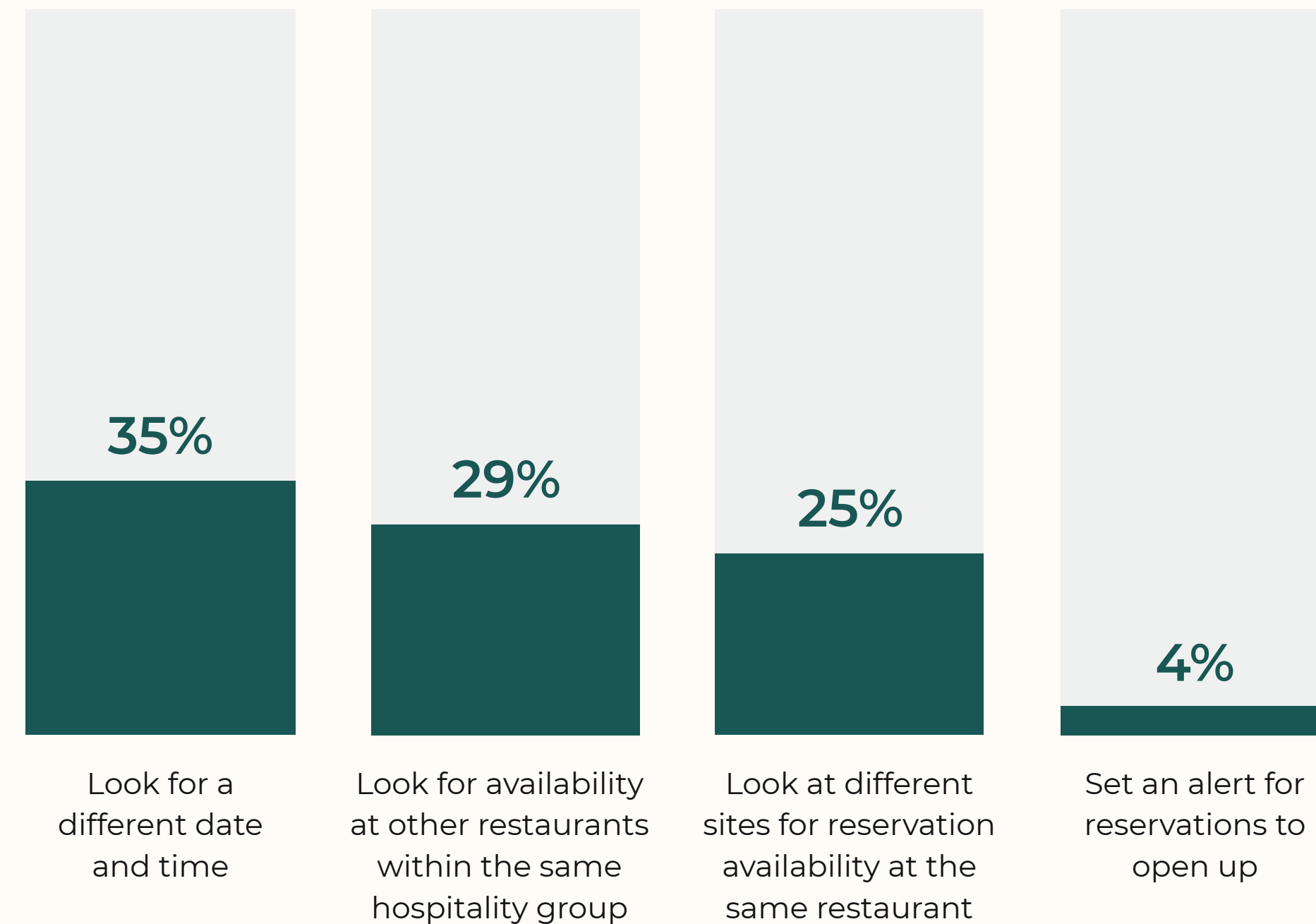
SevenRooms Platform Data, 2024



Consumers have a strong intent to dine with their favourite brands

Guests will go to great lengths to book with their favourite brands — proving it's not just about eating out, but being in preferred 'third places'.

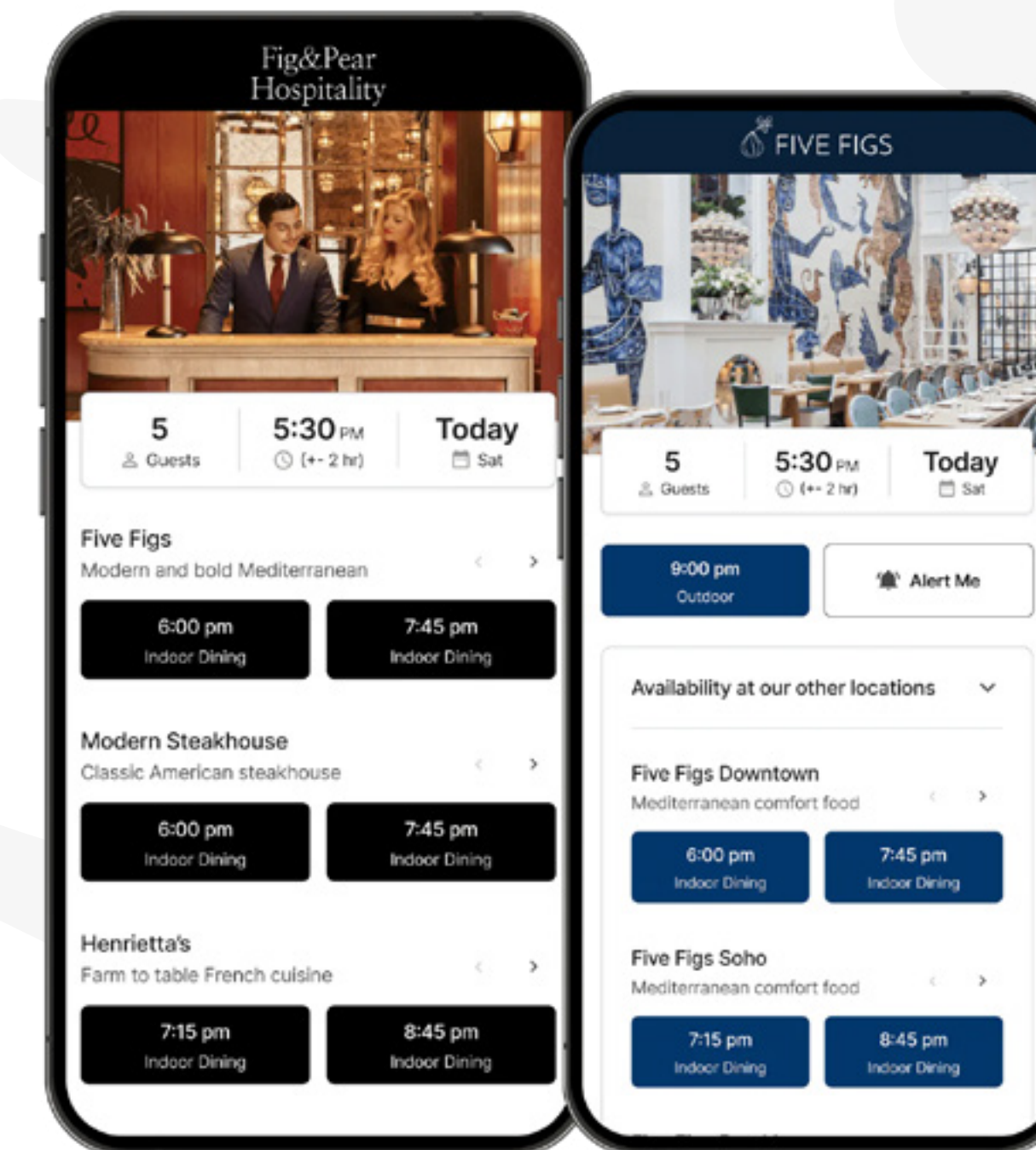
If guests can't get a reservation, here's what they do:



The opportunity

Streamline reservation management for a full house every shift

Make sure you have an easy way to book unfilled inventory using [reservation tools with real-time availability notifications](#) to capture last-minute requests. Also, [cross-promote sister properties](#) directly on your reservation page so guests can make reservations without leaving your site.



☆ The trend

Guests want a taste of what's coming

For consumers, it's just as important to know what specials and offers are available ahead of dining, as being able to easily find the restaurants' food and cocktail menus. Name a better workday distraction than browsing the restaurant menu for later... we'll wait...

Most diners like hearing about restaurant promotions and offers via email. However, Gen Z and Millennials also like text messages – with 21% and 22%, respectively, citing it as a preferred restaurant communication channel.



What, if any, information do you wish was shared ahead of time that would make your dining experience at a restaurant more enjoyable?

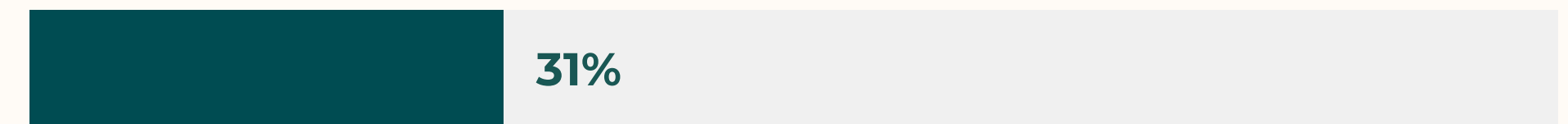
Full food and cocktail menu



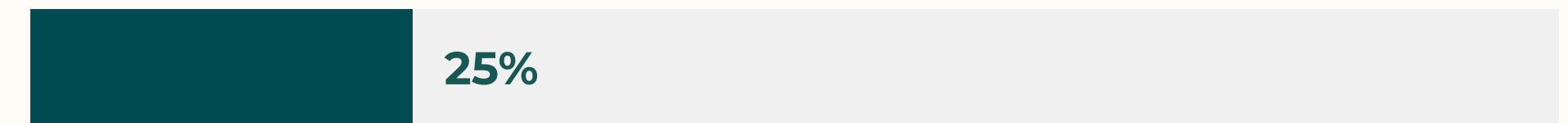
Specials or promotions currently offered



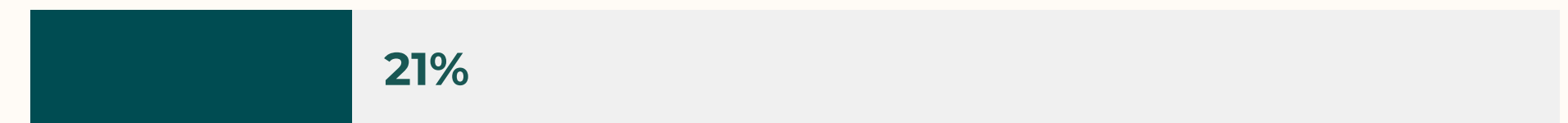
Dietary options for vegetarians, vegans, or gluten-free diets



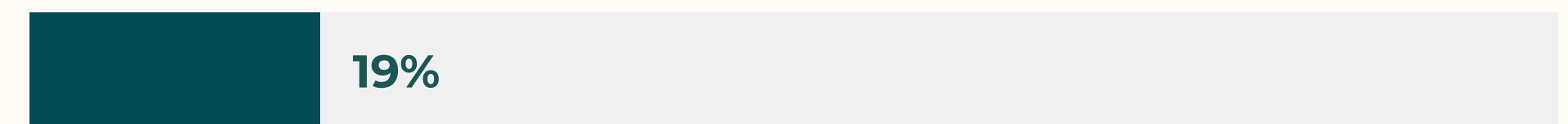
Reviews or testimonials from previous diners



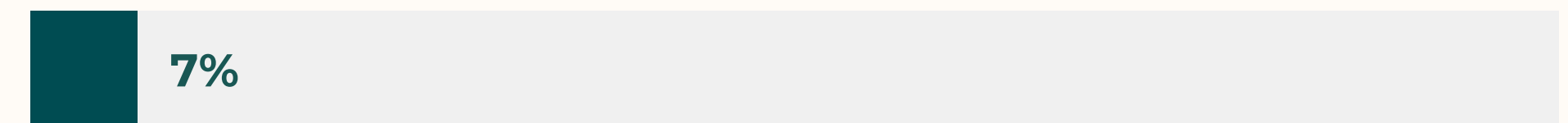
Any restaurant amenities (i.e. valet parking, coat check, etc.)



Dress code and ambiance description



I don't expect anything to be shared with me in advance

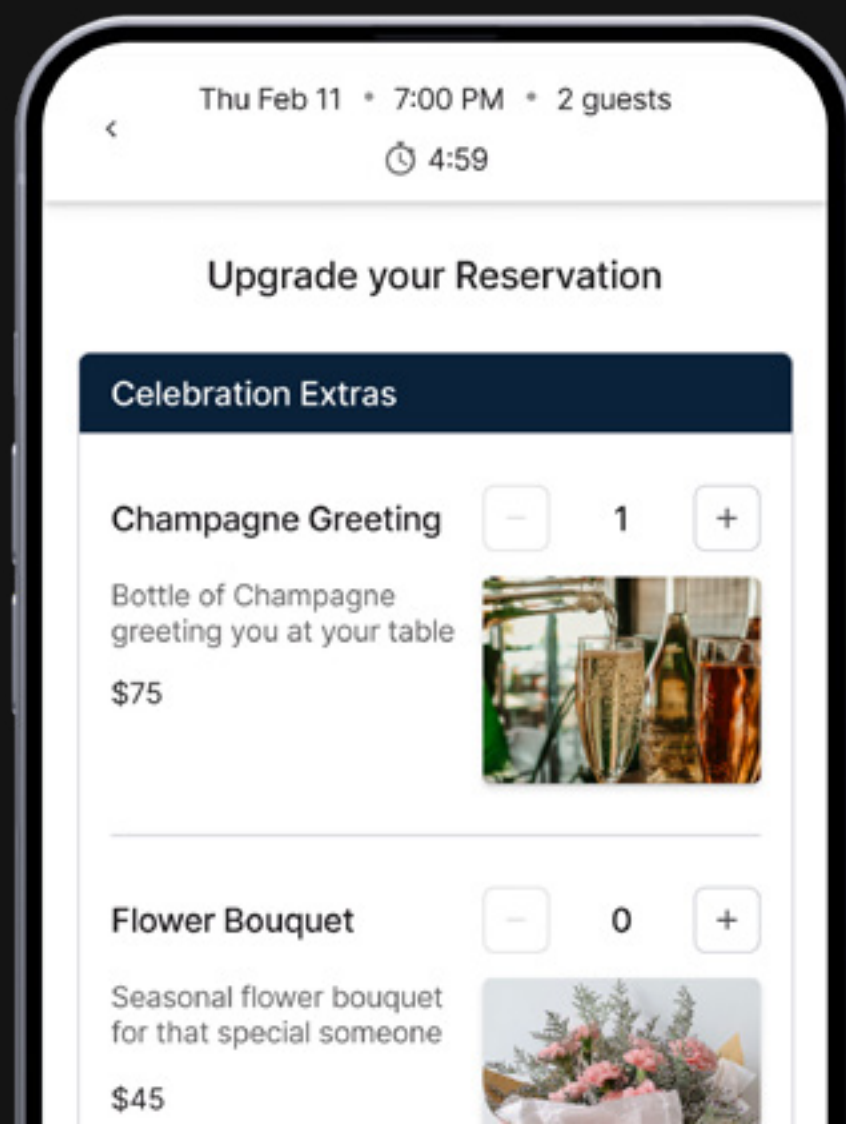


SevenRooms Consumer Trends Survey, 2024

📍 The opportunity

Think before you dish out marketing offers

Choose your [restaurant marketing tools](#), communication channels and content based on your target demographic and the specific offers you're sharing. Use email to highlight specials [during the reservation process](#) and ahead of guests' arrivals to keep guests engaged and drive more sales. In the UK, [SMS is one of the most impactful channels for business communication](#), so you may also want to experiment with text messaging to cater to emerging preferences among younger generations.



Tailored vibes bring guests back

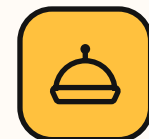
When thinking about what drives people to return to restaurants and choose them as a 'third place', elements that help restaurants stand out and attract new customers vary by gender and generation.

Younger consumers and women are more influenced by personalised surprises for anniversaries and birthdays when deciding to return to restaurants than older generations and men. But men are more likely to care about restaurants knowing them well and honouring their dining preferences.



42%

of women are more likely to be influenced by restaurants offering personalised surprises for birthdays and anniversaries.



45%

of men are more likely to be influenced by restaurants knowing and honouring their dining preferences than women.



Get to know your unique demo

Given the **average repeat visit rate for restaurants is 23%**, there are ample opportunities for operators to hone in on areas consumers care about to improve this number. [Capture guest data](#) to better understand your guests' preferences, and provide the same quality and ambiance in every experience.

Influential factors for returning to restaurants by generation

Gen Z

21%

consider the rapport they develop with the front-of-house team like servers or bartenders.

Gen X

27%

are influenced by the ease of making a reservation.

Millennials

59%

care about the atmosphere and ambiance.


Baby Boomers

25%

are influenced by the ease of making a reservation.

Thurs, 25 Apr · 2 Guests · 16:45







Your information

First Name*	Last Name*
Email Address*	
 Phone Number*	
Birthday	Postal Code

Payment

First Name*	Last Name*
Card Number	MM/YY CVC

Summary

 Five Figs	
 Thurs, 25 Apr · 16:45 - 18:45 · Dining Room Reservation	
 2 guests	
 Upgrades	
2x Champagne Greeting	£140
 Dietary Restrictions	<input type="button" value="+ Add"/>
 Special Occasstion	<input type="button" value="+ Add"/>

The strategies making restaurant profits rise

In the UK, there was a **21% year-over-year increase in reservations** comparing Q1 2023 and Q1 2024 — and the future looks promising for restaurants. The UK restaurant industry is predicted to be valued at £19.5B by 2026. The cost of living crisis appears to be lessening with an upturn on the horizon, as inflation rates fell to a two-year low in April 2024. Guests are prepared to book meals out and have set aside the funds to enjoy leisure activities.

This year, to reach their goals of increasing revenue, reducing operating costs and training or hiring new staff, operators plan to rethink their tech stack and how they run their businesses. They're relying heavily on social media as their main marketing expense and trying to appeal to diners and establish VIP relationships with those who will become loyal, lifetime customers.



Operators are dropping a pin where it's hot

Operators' main goals for 2024 are to **drive more revenue** and **reduce operating costs**. When seeking out new regions and revenue opportunities, guest dining preferences help provide a blueprint for growth.

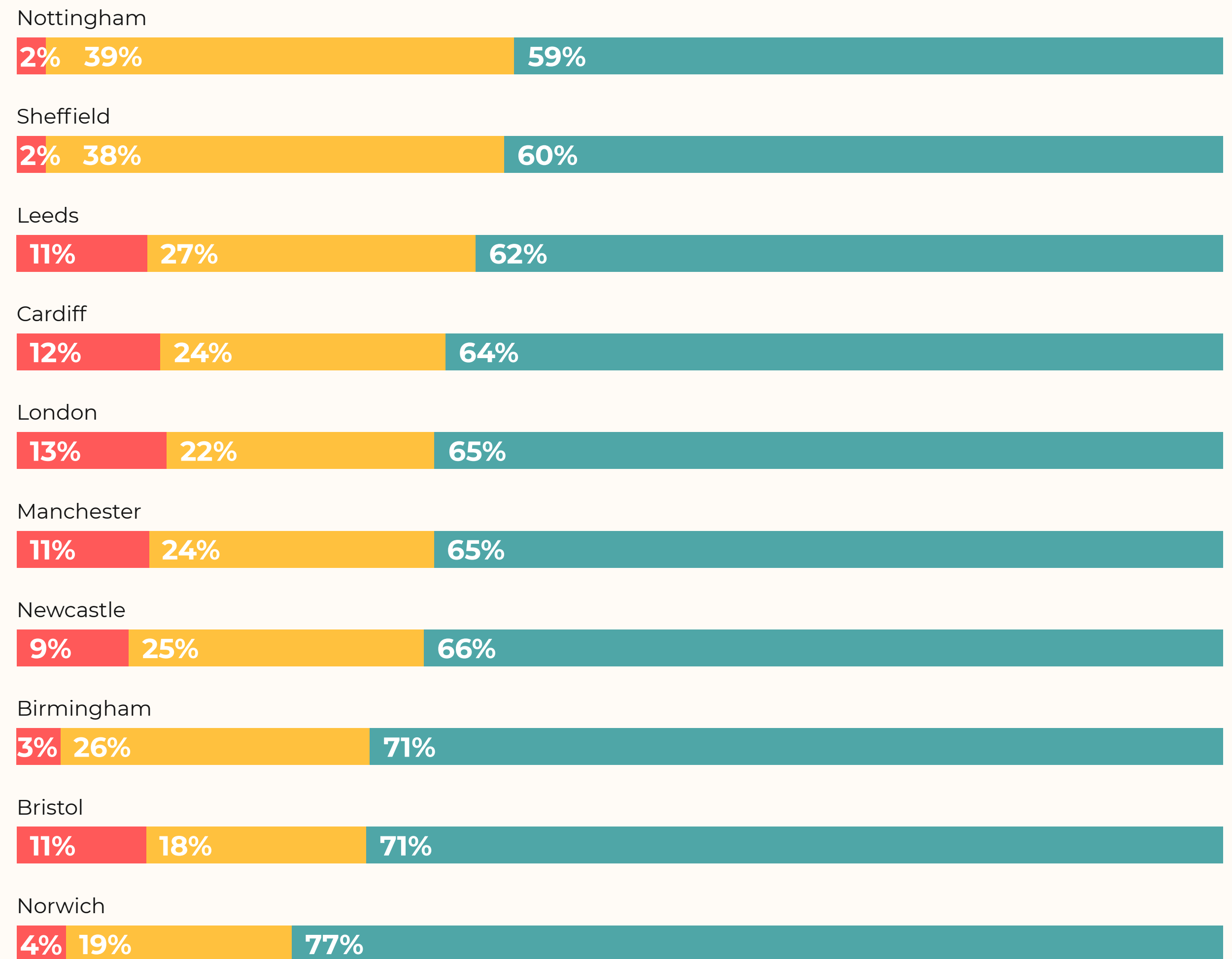
More than 40% of diners in **Nottingham** and **Sheffield** eat out weekly or more. **Londoners are most likely to dine out** more than 5 times per month (13%).

Considering expansion? Read on to learn more consumer trends and find out where the fastest-growing areas are for restaurant-goers and foodies.



On average, how often, if at all, do you dine out each month?

● 1-2 times a month ● 3-4 times a month ● More than 5 times a month



Restaurants need to prep for the spontaneous diner

Our customers see an **average of 34% of their business** from walk-ins. The experience economy is booming and diners are interested in trying new places while they're out and about.

To capitalise on the desire for more flexible dining, while capturing more covers and repeat visits, operators should:

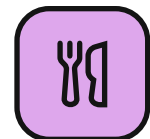
- ✔ **Implement walk-in-friendly policies:** Reserve a portion of seating, like your bar, for walk-ins by leaving these seats open in your books.
- ✔ **Leverage technology for efficiency:** Use a platform like SevenRooms that can enable guests to book reservations or add themselves to a virtual waitlist on the fly.
- ✔ **Offer loyalty programs & incentives:** Provide special deals for walk-in customers or those who follow you on social media. Implement a loyalty program that rewards repeat visits to recapture that 'spontaneous' diner.
- ✔ **Partner with local businesses & events:** Collaborate with local events or theaters to attract attendees before or after an event, or collaborate with local businesses to offer joint packages or promotions.



Loyalty is the best policy, but it's not one-size-fits-all

People want to feel like they're getting value by sticking with certain restaurants or brands, and many restaurants we surveyed have loyalty programs. But when it comes to the benefits offered in [loyalty programs](#), each generation has different interests.

With **71% of UK restaurants offering loyalty programs**, there is an opportunity to curate experiences for diners that help you stand out. Operators need to invest in guest retention programs designed for their specific audience – [loyalty isn't one-size-fits-all](#). For example, younger consumers care more about free menu items and early access to reservations, while older consumers are looking for exclusive experiences they can't find anywhere else.



59%

of Gen Z cares most about loyalty programs offering free menu items.



19%

of Millennials want early access to reservations from loyalty programs.



26%

of Gen Xers care most about exclusive events and experiences.

VIP experiences continue to be a priority

Younger audiences are also willing to share their information in exchange for VIP experiences. **38% of big spenders** (those who spend £71-100 per person) are looking for early access to reservations. Consumers who **dine out 7-8 times a month** are most likely to **join a rewards program** for VIP access to **specialty seating** areas.



Experiential dining that sells

Today's consumers are looking for deeper connections. They're making up for years of isolation and are ready to splurge when embracing new places and experiences. Our platform data showed that **reservations with prepayments for [events or experiences](#) spend >35% more** than those without a pre-booking.

SevenRooms operators cashed in on upgrades in 2023

630K+

upgrades and experiences sold

£6M+

revenue generated from upgrades

£21K+

average revenue per venue from upgrades

Top SevenRooms upgrades by volume

- 1 Afternoon tea
- 2 Christmas feast
- 3 Set menu
- 4 Champagne

Top SevenRooms upgrades by revenue

- 1 Afternoon tea
- 2 Sharing platters & starters
- 3 Venue/kitchen tours



Examples of creative upgrades and experiences:

The Ritz

Upgrade: The Ritz London Cookbook
London



Homage Restaurant

Experience: Be Our Guest Afternoon Tea
London



Tattu

Upgrade: Celestial Dragon Cocktail
Manchester



"At our fine dining restaurant Cleaver & Wake, customers have the ability to preorder flowers and champagne. We set it up through SevenRooms so each of these upgrades receives an automatic tag of 'flowers.' Then, we simply pull the report each morning and it takes us two seconds to send it out to people to pull the flowers."



Liam Morgan

Sales and Marketing Manager, The Island Quarter, Nottingham

Discover how The Island Quarter made over £33k from upgrades and experiences in 6 months.

[Read the story ↗](#)

What's simmering in restaurant marketing

The biggest themes in restaurant marketing among our audience and from the data are that:

- ✓ **Authenticity and personalisation reign supreme.**
- ✓ **People want connections within their communities.**
- ✓ **Timely, targeted messages across diners' preferred channels are keeping restaurants top of mind.**

The data shows that most people prefer hearing about promotions, events and offers via email and text, but each audience is different. If your business has a younger audience, you may lean towards more text-based marketing and social media. With an older crowd, you may want to prioritise email marketing.

Consumers also prefer a mix of channels for certain types of messages — for example, they may prefer email for longer content and storytelling pieces, but texts for last-minute reservation availability and social for building ongoing relationships. Consider your [multichannel marketing strategy](#) and how you'll share different types of content.

No matter what channels you invest in, take a well-rounded approach and use tools that let you track the outcomes of every marketing campaign and channel.

Let's review the top restaurant marketing channels, benchmarks and strategies with data to illustrate their impact.



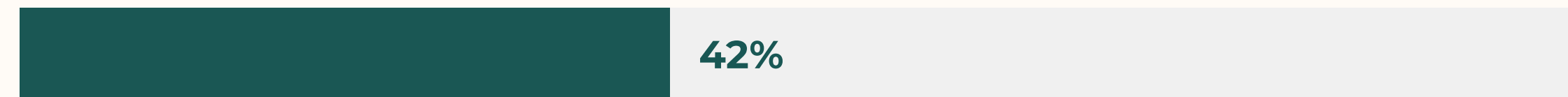
Social media is the amuse-bouche of restaurant discovery

This year, the top social media goals for operators are **driving bookings or online orders (52%)** and **increasing brand awareness (39%)**. Influencer marketing (both paid posts and user-generated) drives the most restaurant bookings, suggesting diners trust fellow customers, whether they're strangers or not.

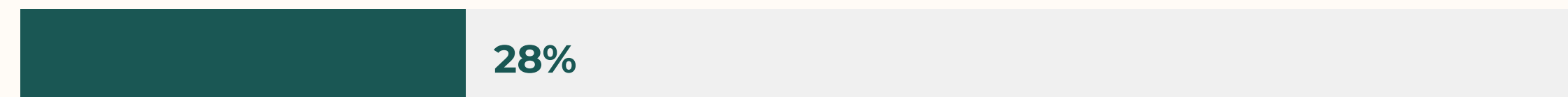


What, if any, type of social media content drives the most bookings to your restaurant or venue?

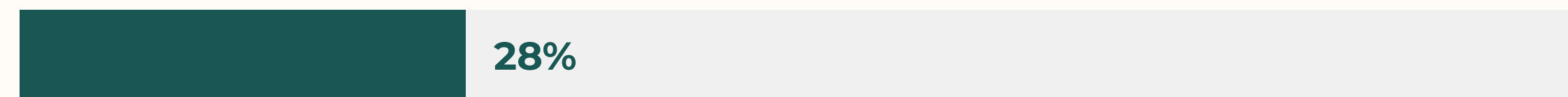
Influencers (paid or user-generated content)



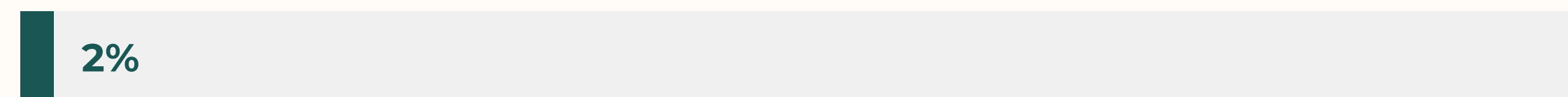
Paid advertisements



Organic posts



I am unsure/ this is not tracked



SevenRooms Consumer Trends Survey, 2024

“We work with influencers in an organic way, developing relationships with content creators who enjoy what we do. We look at direct bookings, general engagement and also ‘saves’ on organic posts, as we know then that people intend to remember the restaurant for future use. I’ve used paid social before to drive bookings for specific activations and it works well, but there is always balance, to not oversaturate.”



Hannah Berry
Marketing Director,
MJMK Restaurants

Almost half of UK consumers (46%) try restaurants because of social media.

Below are the top influences for each generation on where they dine out.

Gen Z

35%

are influenced by posts from restaurants they follow that **highlight their personality.**



Millennials

38%

are influenced by posts from restaurants they follow that **showcase food and beverage options.**



Gen X + Baby Boomers

17%

are influenced by posts from restaurants they follow that **showcase food and beverage options.**



Go organic... on social

Drive bookings with organic [social media posts](#) and authentic user-generated content.

84% of UK operators spend most of their marketing budget on social media. They need a well-rounded approach to reach both existing audiences and new customers with content that promotes their restaurant as the 'third place' guests are searching – whether through a cozy ambiance or delicious drinks menu.

Remember — diners love to share online when they're delighted by a unique dish or a table with a view. Give them something to talk about!

“Social media is a huge part of our marketing strategy, it’s an essential cog in the 360 wheel of our content, which varies between our brands. Depending on the restaurant, social media helps to tell our stories, gives insight into how we develop dishes or drinks, provides a look behind the scenes, offers a human connection with members of our teams and connects with our local communities. It’s a great way to directly interact with our audience and gauge valuable feedback.”



Hannah Berry

Marketing Director, MJMK Restaurants



To win at restaurant email marketing, the more targeted, the better

The industry standard for [restaurant email open rates](#) in the UK is around 18.5%, but **SevenRooms customers see an average of 38.8%**. We found that the smaller our customers' [email list](#) sizes, the better they convert and the more revenue they bring in. When you get to know your audience and show them that you understand them, they respond.

With 100% of generations preferring email marketing for restaurant promotions, there's real value in using this channel to build customer relationships. From February 2024 - May 2024, SevenRooms' UK customers using [Email Marketing](#) have generated over **£1.33M and 50K+ covers** with messages to **8.4M consumers**.

Restaurant email benchmarks

+23%

Targeted email sends see 23% higher open rates.*

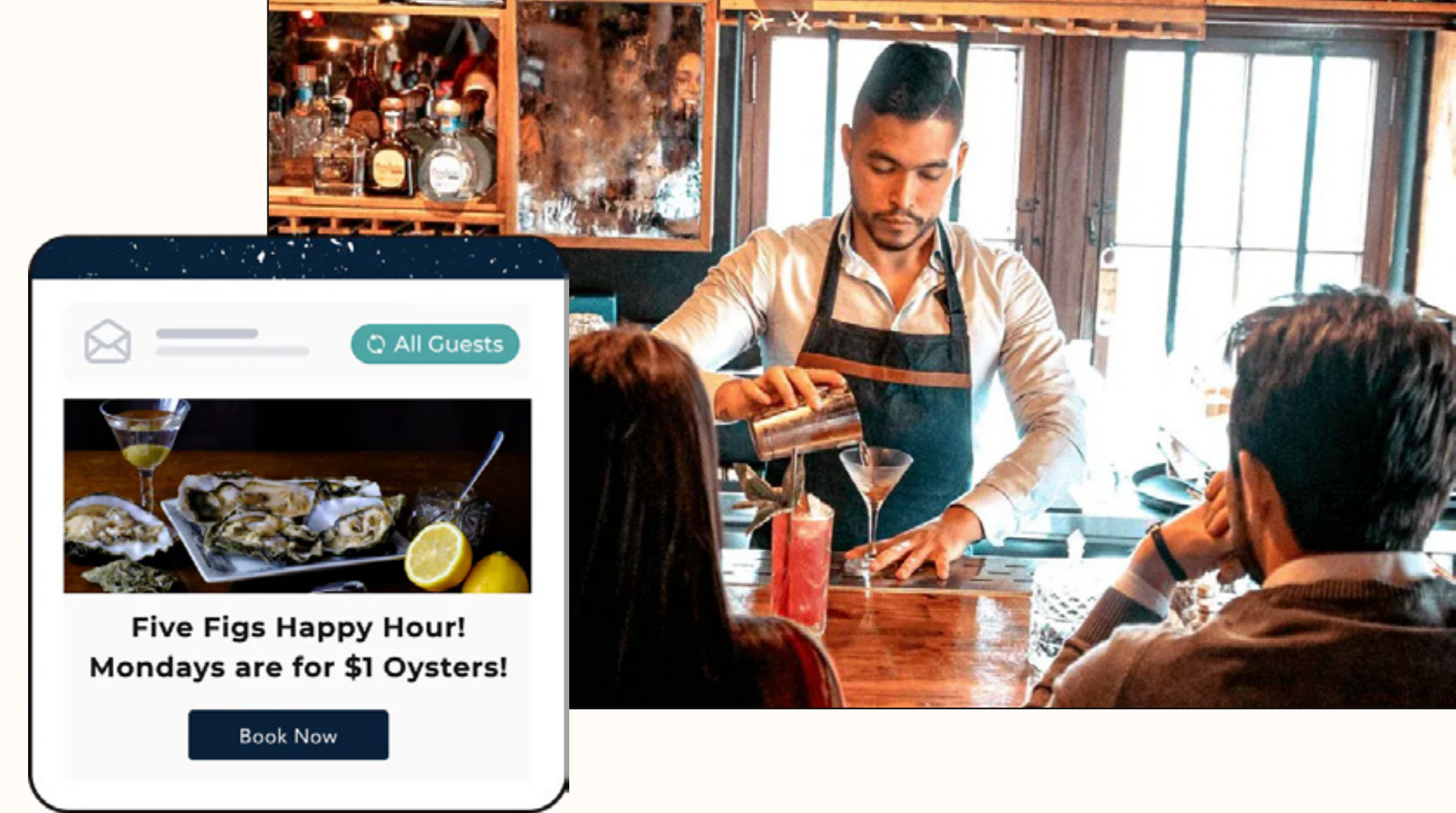
2X

Targeted emails generate 2X more revenue per email.*

+28%

Targeted emails see 28% higher click-to-open rates.*

*Statistics were based on a large sample of SevenRooms U.S. customers analysed in 2023.



"Before SevenRooms the [guest follow-up and outreach] process was quite manual. We were running reports and then prompting email campaigns targeting specific groups. SevenRooms eliminates the manual labor and all the costs associated. We can literally make money whilst we sleep :)"



Joao Teixeira

Reservations Consultant,
The Main Mayfair

Restaurant text marketing is heating up

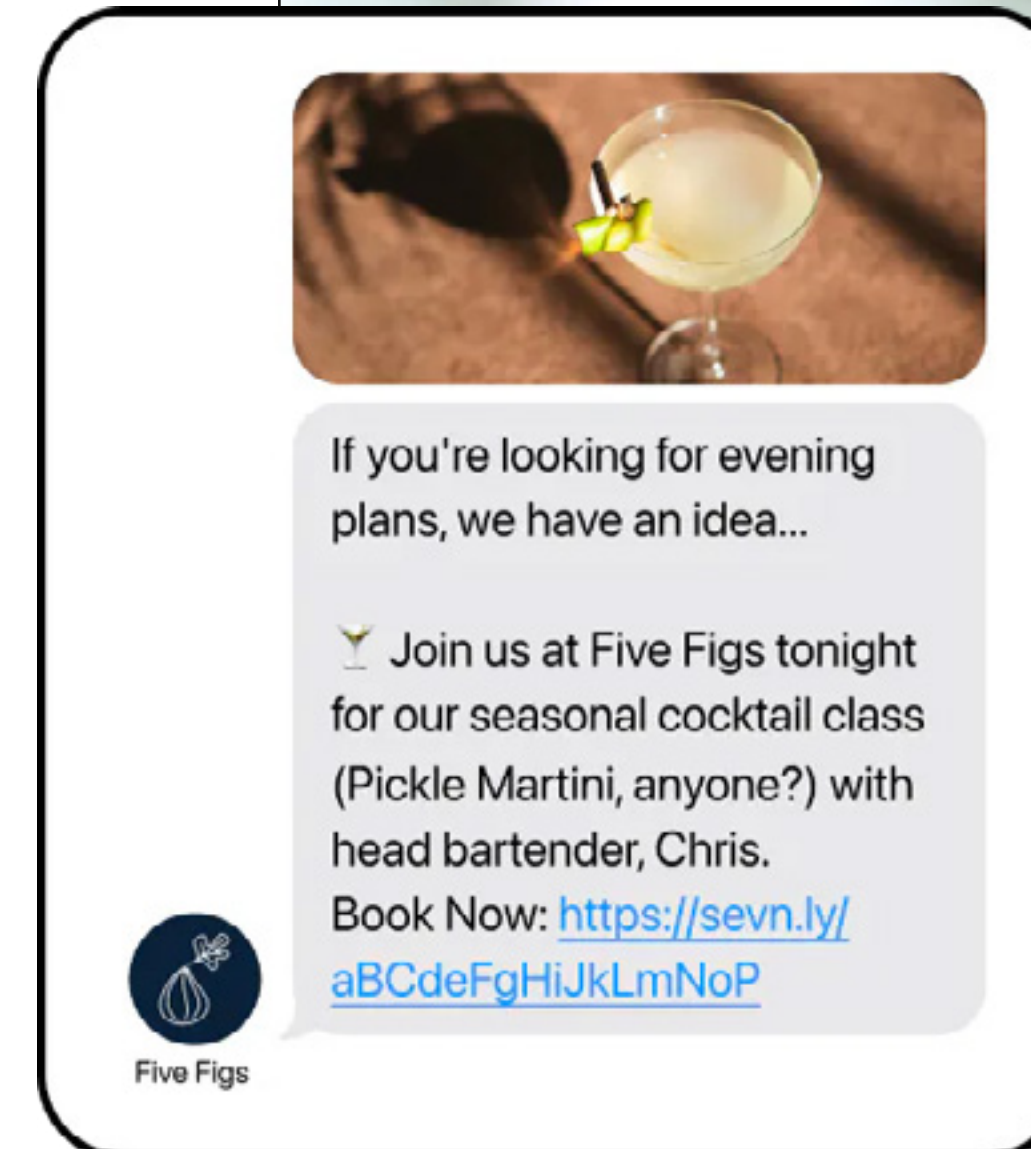
Text marketing is a fairly new concept in restaurants, especially in the UK, but it's growing rapidly — by 2029, the UK [SMS marketing market](#) is predicted to be **worth over £46M**.

Texting can be a powerful tool when used strategically, with an [average open rate of 98% in the UK](#).

For those hoping to get started with text marketing, here are a few tips:

- ✓ Keep text messages short, relevant and valuable to recipients. The more personalised and targeted you can be, the better.
- ✓ Experiment with different copy and campaigns. Use images and links when appropriate.
- ✓ Infuse your brand's personality in text messages. Develop a rapport with frequent diners who see your restaurant as a 'third place'.
- ✓ Always add your restaurant's name in the text to let subscribers know who it's coming from.

[Read more text marketing tips + best practices to connect with more diners ↗](#)



How restaurants are powering up with AI and automation

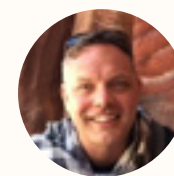
Two-thirds of operators (66%) surveyed are using artificial intelligence (AI) — the future is now in restaurant management.

As operators balance challenges like [hiring for open roles](#) and [rising energy costs](#), they're leveraging technology to help them maintain high quality and service while filling open tables in real-time.

Today's restaurant tech stack includes AI, automation and marketing tools that are connected and tied to guest revenue and sentiment.



“We actively use AI in marketing, SEO, social media posts and various other written tasks using ChatGPT. The team also uses it for email responses, letter drafting and HR functions like job adverts and descriptions. We have recently used an AI bot that scrapes information from various solutions in our tech stack like SevenRooms, Harri and Lightspeed and pulls it into one report that senior management can access and analyse. We use a chatbot on our website to funnel and direct enquiries from customers to the relevant stream — like weddings or private events vs a FAQ”



Kevin Coetzee

People Director, Humble Grape

Restaurants are working smarter to improve guest experiences

The most common ways restaurateurs use AI are for manual, time-consuming tasks, like creating marketing collateral and scheduling. Almost **one in four (24%) restaurants use AI for staff hiring and training**, devising new menu items and managing inventory.

There's room to grow in using AI in customer service and to process reservations. Operators in London and Norwich are **most likely to use AI in their business (71%)**, while it is least common in Edinburgh, where **only 54% say they use AI**.



What areas are you using AI in?

Creating marketing collateral

28%

Scheduling

26%

Staff hiring and training

24%

Devising menu items

24%

Inventory management

24%

Dynamic pricing

23%

Data analytics

23%

Processing reservations

21%

Customer service

19%

SevenRooms Consumer Trends Survey, 2024



Automagic marketing and operations make for happier guests

Automations have become a part of everyday life – from placing a coffee order to ordering groceries. Today’s consumers are not only used to digital processes and tech – they expect it. In fact, **56% of Gen Zers** are open to dining at restaurants with fully automated ordering and payment systems.

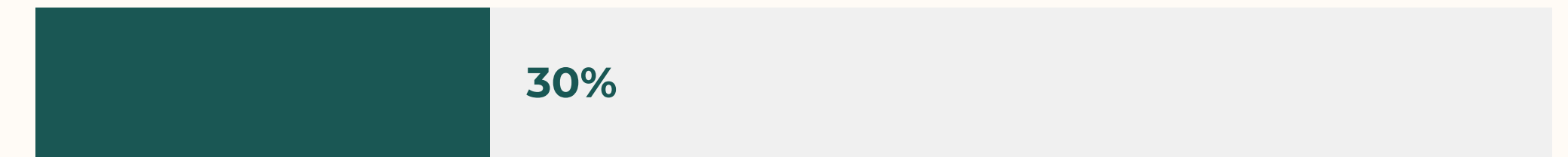
Operators are most interested in using automation for:

- ✔ Collecting and responding to feedback
- ✔ Inventory management and logistics
- ✔ Automated marketing
- ✔ Staff training and performance evaluation
- ✔ Reservations

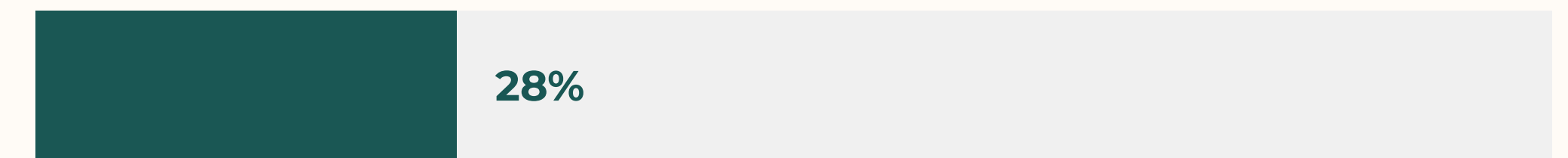
Automated marketing and operations tools can anticipate slow periods and send out targeted promotions to fill those gaps. SevenRooms restaurants see an **average of £726.75 in revenue** from every [automated email campaign](#). These automated emails might come from the voice of a manager and invite a guest to return to the venue following key events like their first visit to the restaurant, after they leave a negative or positive review or if they haven't visited in 30, 60 or 90 days.

What would be most valuable to have automated in your business?

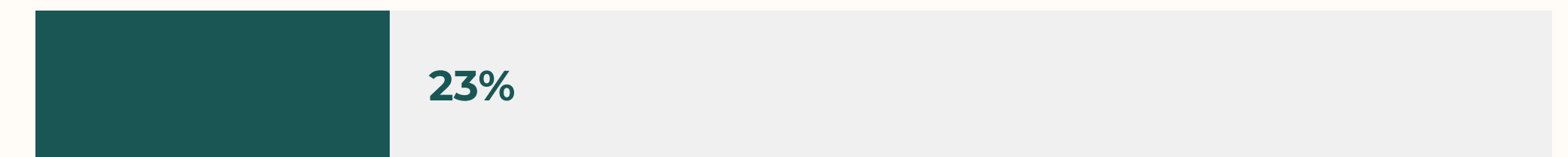
Collecting and responding to feedback



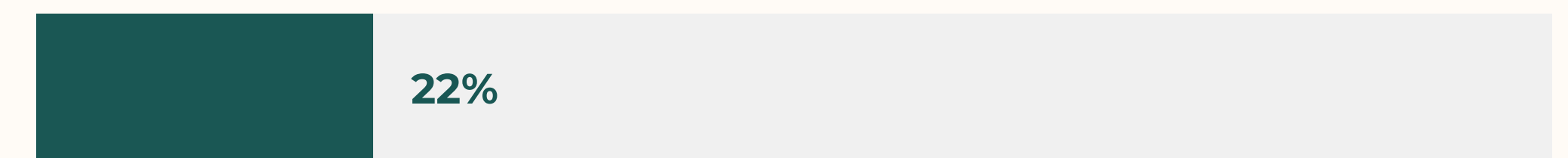
Inventory management supply chain logistics



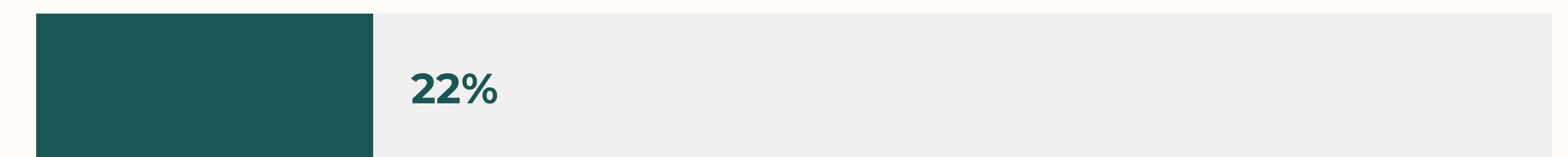
Marketing and promotions automatically triggered by an upcoming slow period



Staff training and performance evaluation



Intake and booking of large parties



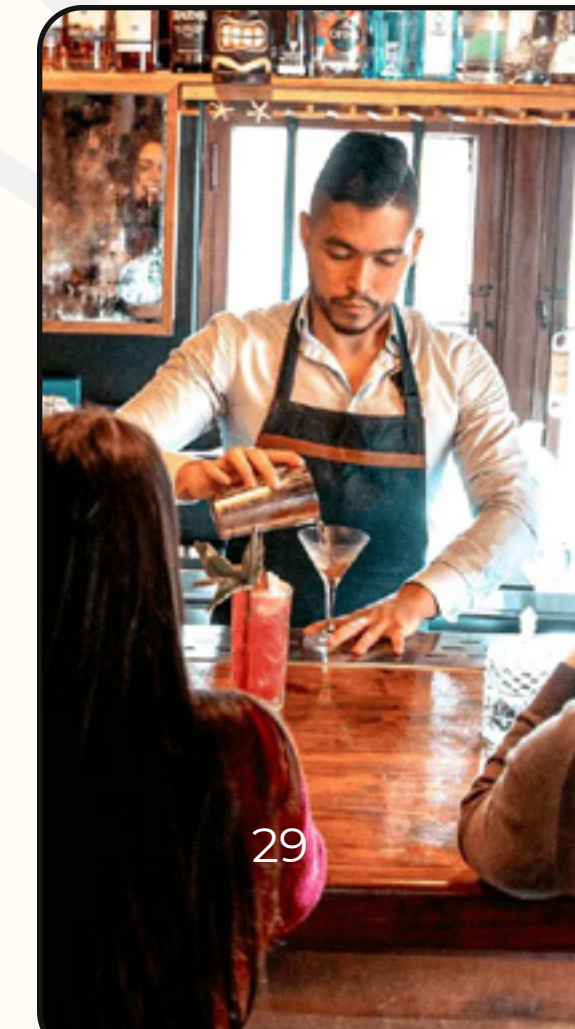
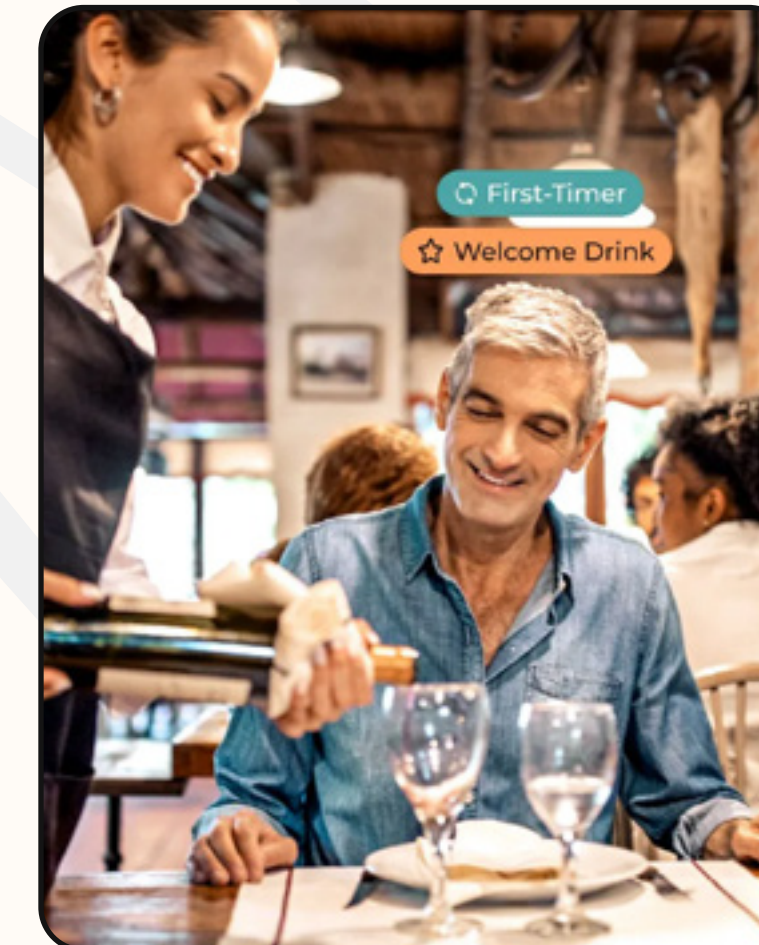
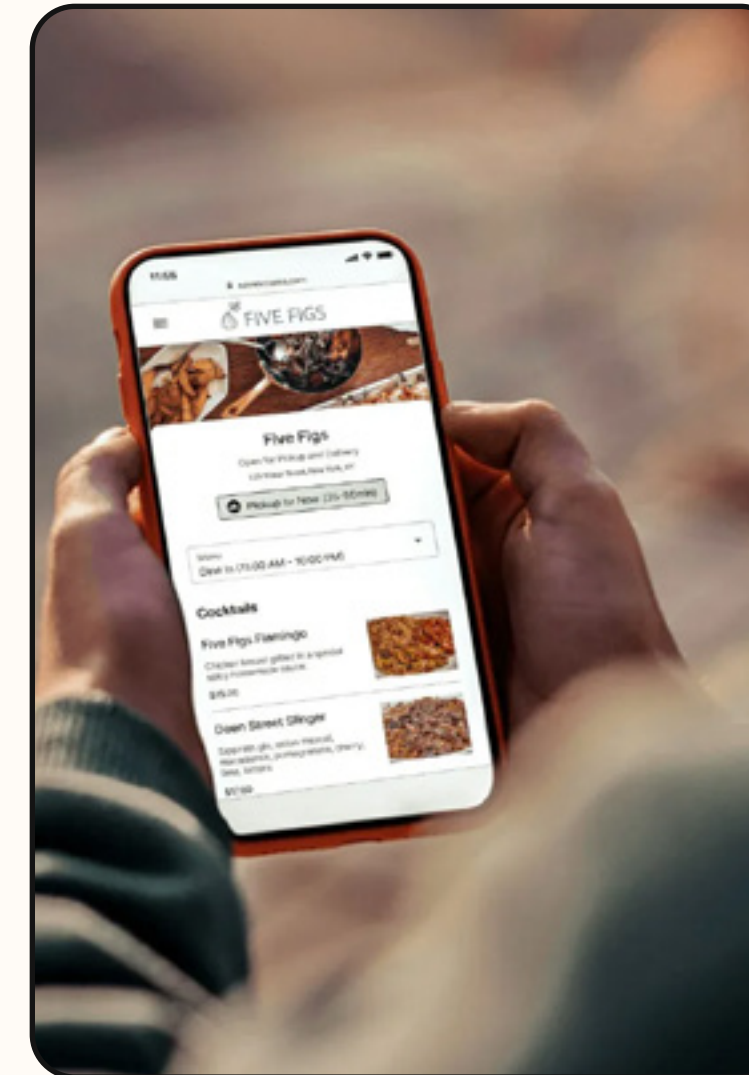
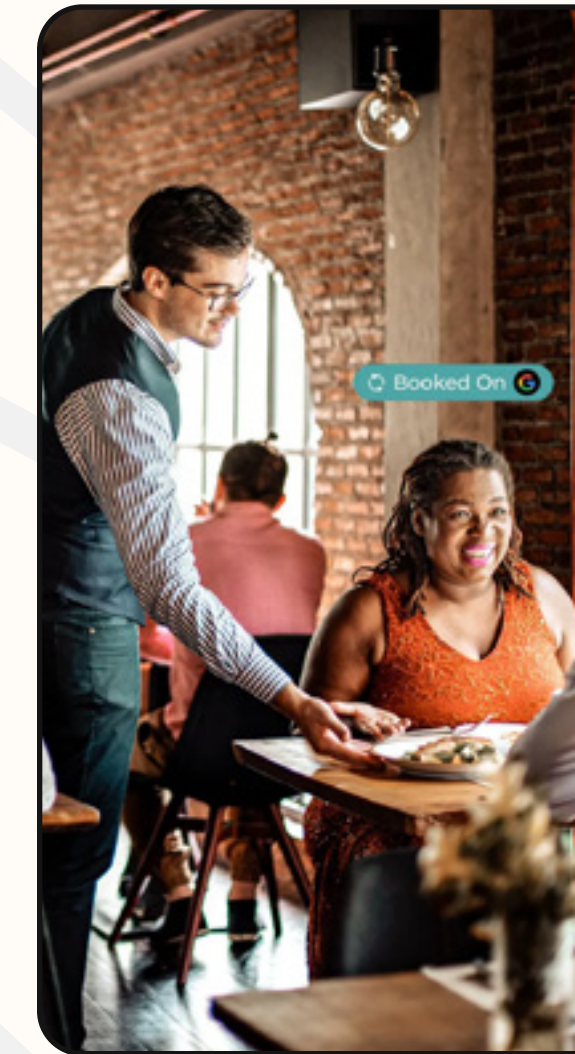
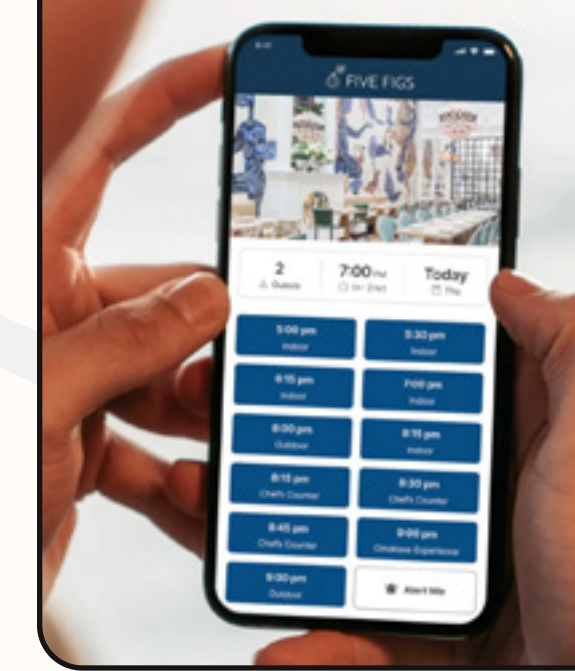
SevenRooms Consumer Trends Survey, 2024

CLOSING

Investing in the right blend of **humanity**, **hospitality** and **high-tech**

When dining out, people want to feel pampered and taken care of — like they're in a comfortable 'third place' that feels like home. They want to feel like they got value for their money and that the entire experience was worth it. They're saving their extra cash for experiences, so they want to be treated like VIPs, make memories and be transported for a few hours.

To keep up with these demands, the restaurants that are succeeding are those that have embraced new ways of thinking. Having to be more efficient with business funds and staff time doesn't mean cutting corners or compromising on quality, but getting *smarter* about operations and marketing. When leveraging technology to automate manual, time-consuming tasks, everyone can spend more time building deeper connections.

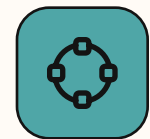


SEVENROOMS

Take your hospitality further and build meaningful guest relationships

SevenRooms' all-in-one marketing and operations platform helps you grow and deliver personalised experiences to every guest — whether they're visiting for the first time, sliding into your DMs or their favourite booth.

[Book a demo](#)



CRM & Marketing

Turn customer data into repeat visits with a unified database of guest profiles that connects with 100+ integrations.



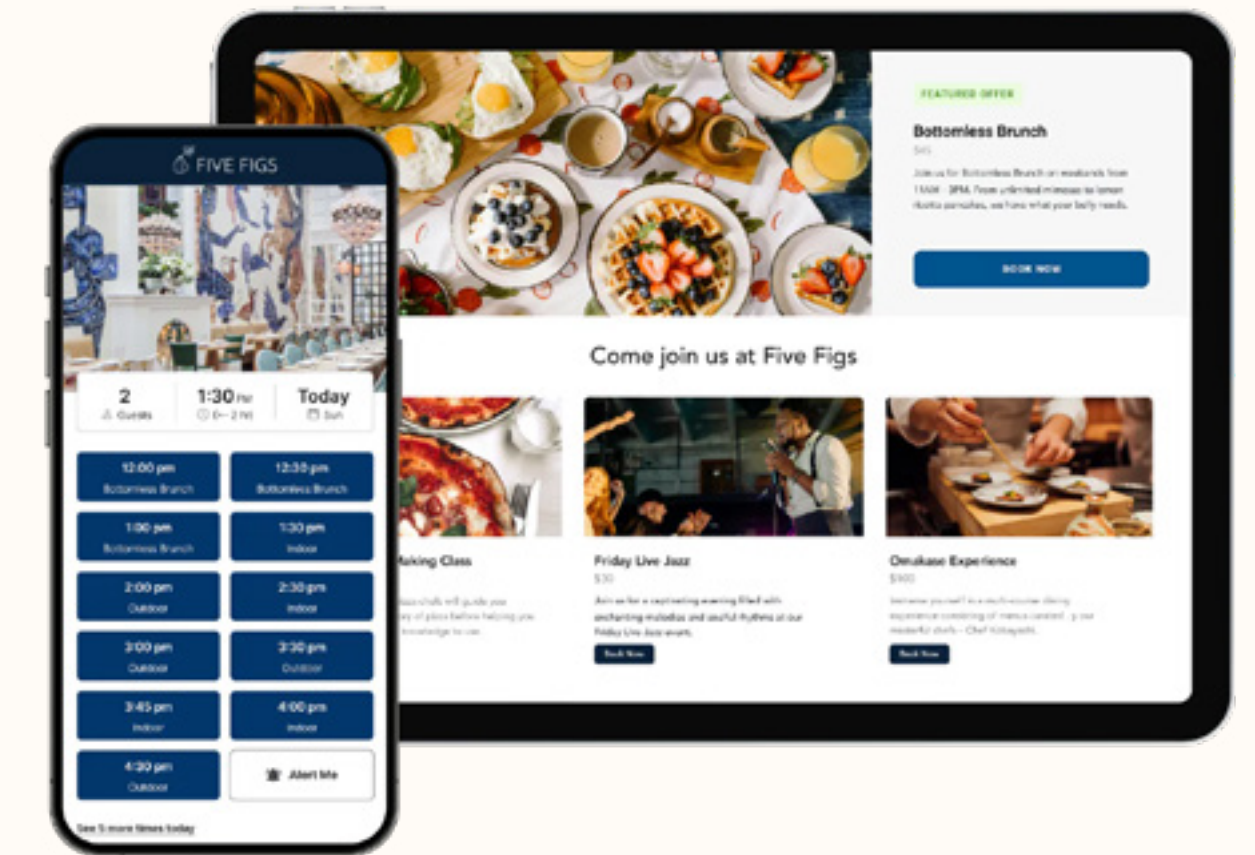
Guest Experience

Create personalised experiences for every guest with branded booking, dining, marketing and communications tools.

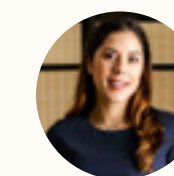


Operations

Run more efficient front-of-house operations using smarter tech. Manage pre-shifts, reservations, seating, waitlists and turns.



“SevenRooms is not just a reservation platform. It's also a powerful marketing tool, and its main focus is to really maximise the potential of a restaurant. It systematically helps us cut steps in our day-to-day operations that are unnecessary and time-consuming.”



Federica D'Incecco
Reservations and Events Manager,
Nobu London

Research Methodology

To gather the data and insights for this report, SevenRooms partnered with various sources, including Censuswide, our internal data team and SevenRooms operators.

CENSUSWIDE

UK Consumers

SevenRooms partnered with Censuswide Research – a third-party, professional research and consulting organisation. Total sample size was 1,004 UK consumers. Fieldwork was undertaken between March 4-11, 2024. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 16+).

UK Operators

SevenRooms partnered with Censuswide Research – a third-party, professional research and consulting organisation. Total sample size was 250 UK operators (hospitality decision-makers). Fieldwork was undertaken between March 4-19, 2024. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of UK hospitality operators.

SEVENROOMS

SevenRooms Platform & Operator Data

Anonymised internal data representative of UK-based restaurants using the SevenRooms platform. SevenRooms also surveyed UK-based operators for this survey in March 2024.

SevenRooms is a marketing and operations platform for growing restaurants in the hospitality industry. From Michelin star gems to local favorites, the all-in-one platform helps restaurants increase sales, delight guests and keep them coming back, automatically. The full suite of products includes reservations, waitlist and table management, review aggregation, referrals, email marketing and marketing automation. Founded in 2011 and venture-backed by Amazon, Comcast Ventures and PSG, SevenRooms has more than 10,000 dining, hotel F&B, nightlife and entertainment clients globally, including: Marriott International, MGM Resorts International, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, Wynn Resorts, Jumeirah Group, Hard Rock Hotels & Resorts, Wolfgang Puck, Michael Mina, Bloomin' Brands, Union Square Hospitality Group, Australian Venue Co., The Wolseley Hospitality Group, Dishoom, Live Nation and Topgolf.