# FOCUS ON
## *Hospitality*

Bar & Kitchen




ELEVATE YOUR FESTIVE MEALTIMES





### Did you know...



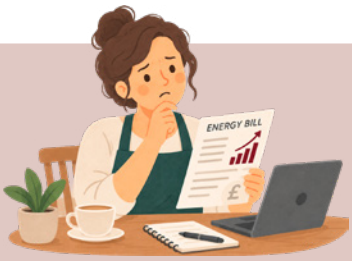

**176,685 businesses** *operate in the hospitality sector*

*Source: ICAEW*



***Hospitality supports* 2.6 million jobs**

*Source: ICAEW*




**91% *of hospitality businesses are* concerned by energy prices**

*Source: Office for National Statistics*







# Focus On Care

**Welcome to this year's edition of Focus On Hospitality.**

**Dealing with a challenging landscape has become the new normal for hospitality businesses. Adapting to customer needs and wants, keeping your team happy and motivated while also paying high bills are all part of the day-to-day. But that doesn't make it any easier!**

**This guide offers advice, inspiration and expertise to help you operate successfully in this environment.**

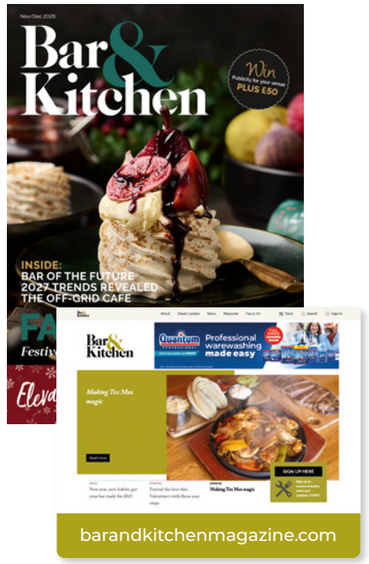
**Look out for tips on leveraging social media, creating dishes for those on weight loss medication and advice on delivering a premium service even when customers are serving themselves.**

**We wish you all the best for the months ahead.**

Katie Hinchliffe & Philip Dawson,
Out of Home team, Unitas Wholesale








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Bar & Kitchen

# Insights



**55% of hospitality businesses say that the cost of labour is affecting turnover**

Source: House of Commons




**99.6% of hospitality businesses are SMEs**

Source: House of Commons




**With the right conditions, hospitality could increase its economic contribution by £40 billion**

Source: UKHospitality



# Smart ways to win customers on social media

**Even if your hospitality business is busy with regulars, being present on social media will help you attract completely new customers. But when you're busy with the day-to-day, posting online can quickly fall by the wayside.**

Whether you're looking to get businesses in for daytime meetings, host groups for big events or fill all your covers in the evening, hospitality marketing experts SideDish Media share their tips on leveraging these platforms, even when you're time poor.



## LinkedIn

Want to tap into local businesses and professional networks? Then building a profile on LinkedIn is a must. With 47.6 million users in the UK, a presence on this platform will get your venue in front of 70% of the population.

- Start by creating a company page that highlights meeting spaces, private dining options and business event packages.
- Post consistently to get your venue seen by users. Be sure to share weekday offers, meeting packages and private hire availability.
- Use images and video as much as possible in your posts – both tend to get higher engagement than text-only updates.

Source: SalesSo



## Facebook

Facebook might not be the newest platform, but it remains one of the most effective for hospitality – particularly for reaching local, higher-spending and repeat customers. The platform is especially powerful for driving events, community engagement and return visits.

- Facebook's algorithm favours local and community-driven content. Tag your location, reference local events, and create content that speaks directly to your nearby audience.
- Messenger is a key route to bookings and enquiries. Ensure your page has clear CTAs (book now, message, call, contact us) and respond quickly to convert interest into visits.
- Engaging with local neighbourhood groups (where appropriate) can also significantly increase your visibility among nearby customers.

## YouTube

YouTube provides an opportunity to showcase food, atmosphere, and customer experiences in a highly visual way. It's also the second biggest search engine after Google, so can help you get found more easily if you're featured there.

- Videos of busy services, food preparation, live events and customer experiences help potential visitors picture themselves in your venue – and make them more likely to book.
- YouTube shorts of signature dishes, drinks being poured or behind-the-scenes moments attract attention quickly.
- Monitor website clicks, reservations, enquiries and direction requests to understand the real impact your content is having.



## TikTok

TikTok is increasingly shaping how consumers discover places to eat, drink and socialise. For out-of-home venues, it offers direct access to highly engaged local audiences. When used strategically, it can build your brand and help you find new customers.

- Ensure your bio clearly states your location, venue type and key offerings – and remember to use descriptive captions that will help people find you.
- Short videos of your team, busy services, event setups or signature dishes all help audiences visualise their visit and encourage them to make a booking.
- Location-based hashtags such as #ManchesterFood or #LondonBrunch help nearby users find you and improve your local reach.





## Instagram

Instagram is perfect for venues looking to build buzz and loyalty. As the go-to platform for diners looking to discover the next big thing and attract more Gen Z customers, you need to set up and post on this platform.

- Instagram's algorithm drives DMs and shares. Use polls and questions in Stories or promote DM-only offers to encourage replies and fill seats.
- Partner with other local businesses in your community to create cross-tagged posts. That way, you can share audiences without having to spend on influencers.
- Reels drive the biggest engagement, so be sure to showcase your venue in video form. Think 10 to 20 second long clips of your drinks, plates and team.




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*Censuswide survey of 250 UK chefs, November 2024

Unilever Food Solutions


# How GLP-1s are changing menus



One in five UK adults are using, considering using or have used weight loss drugs like GLP-1, according to food and drink consumer market experts Lumina Intelligence.

This compares to 3% who are vegan and 15% following a gluten-free diet. So if you're not offering options, you risk missing out. Here's how to meet their needs.

**20%**
of UK adults are taking, thinking about taking or have taken GLP-1s.
Source: Lumina Intelligence

### What do GLP-1 drugs do?

GLP-1 medicines mimic a natural hormone released in the gut after eating. They lower people's blood sugar, slow down their digestion and suppress their appetite so they are less likely to overeat.

### Who uses GLP-1s?

The age group most commonly using GLP-1s are 25 to 44-year-olds. Most of them are affluent, female and living in urban areas. But it's important to note that there's not one type of GLP-1 user. Some but not all might be health-conscious and work out regularly,

### Is it a trend?

Until recently the high cost and injectable nature of GLP-1s have been the biggest barriers. But with tablets now available and usage increasing, these issues are being removed. This makes it more likely to turn from a trend to an everyday medication.

### How does it affect behaviour?

GLP-1s are popular because takers don't have to change their behaviour. They can still socialise, go out for group meals or on days out, without being tempted to overeat.

So people taking GLP-1s will still visit and spend in pubs, bars and restaurants – but when they do, they'll be looking for options that are made for them.

## Tips to get your menu ready

### 01
**Make choices easy**

Shout about items on the menu that are GLP-1 friendly, high in protein and nutrient dense. As with other dietary needs, this will make it easier for customers to choose.



### 02
**Think small not cheaper**

57% of GLP-1 users are spending more on smaller portions and small plates. Offer lighter versions of some dishes, but don't scrimp on taste and quality ingredients.



### 03
**Rethink drinks**

Review your drinks menu to include light, low-calorie alternatives that won't fill up GLP-1 users too quickly. Think refreshing cocktails, premium soft drinks and healthy shots or juices.



### 04
**Small moments of indulgence**

Give little opportunities to indulge with tiny treats and tasty snacks that look great. This will boost guests' enjoyment without affecting their appetite.






# EAT YOURSELF HEALTHY



***Stephen Beaddie is a chef, recipe developer and nutrition coach with two decades in professional kitchens.***

***Diagnosed with Asperger's at nine, he had a difficult relationship with food at school but found his passion in his first kitchen job, later co-founding healthy food brand Seed.***

Now working across food education with schools, private dining and content, the Northern Irish chef's mission is simple: to grow people's confidence in cooking, eating and feeling well by proving that nutritious dishes shouldn't mean compromising on flavour.

## What shaped your philosophy around healthy food?

It really started when I broke my leg seven years ago and to speed my recovery, I focused on nutrition and got a Precision Nutrition Level 1 certification.

It opened my eyes to balanced healthy cooking, and I left Seed after eight years to freelance and stretch my comfort zone.

It's been pretty daunting but at the same time hugely exciting.

## How do you keep the menu appealing for customers wanting healthy options?

People are a lot more aware of what they're putting into their bodies, but I don't think anything is especially bad – the danger is in the dose.

What has changed is that people now want to feel better, with an improved mood and energy, but it's all about balance.

You should be able to enjoy everything in moderation without being married to this or that diet. My message is simple: eat like an adult, try to get as many different colours in as possible, don't make your food bland or beige... and enjoy it.

If you want an almond croissant on a Sunday morning, have one.

## What key ingredients or dishes are customers looking for?

At Seed, nutrition was visible. You could see the food in front of you with plenty of colours, vegetables, proteins and clean sauces made with good-quality oils.

Lunchtime diners want to feel good and energised because choosing well is also a psychological thing.

Guests want to put a tick in the box of the person they want to be – and feel better for making that choice.

A chicken satay bowl with flavours people already know and love sells far better than a plain salad.

It's also clear proof that you always have to meet customers where they are and not necessarily where you want them to be.

Younger diners are driving demand for food they know the nutritional value of, and that's a trend that's spreading fast across generations.

## How can chefs emphasise the nutritional value of their menu?

I'm not a believer in menus that list calories because most diners want to enjoy their food. For me it's about knowing your audience. A lunchtime crowd fresh from Pilates or the school run want protein and fibre built quietly into the options.

It's a widely held misconception that fewer calories mean healthier. There's a difference between calorie density and nutrition density – a salad dressed with good olive oil can be calorie-rich yet hugely nutritious, while a 'diet' snack offers little.

Even digestion differs. A sweet potato and a chocolate bar might have the same calories, but our bodies work harder breaking down the protein and carbs in the sweet potato and it's a slow-release carbohydrate, so those calories go into our system more slowly and we burn more energy digesting it.

## How does building a healthy menu benefit a hospitality venue?

Simply, venues that don't adapt will get left behind and they'll be leaving money on the table. Two years ago, one health-conscious diner in a group of five might have been outvoted but today half the group or more want the lighter option.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with steak and kidney pie and chips, but it comes back to a simple truth that hospitality is about service and knowing your audience.

## What will the arrival of GLP-1s mean for healthy food?

It's coming down the track fast, and its biggest impact will land on the lunch trade as some diners cut a meal altogether. For chefs, the focus will shift to nutrient density in things like beans, pulses and lean protein, since GLP-1 users eat far less and need every mouthful to count.

Fibre matters more too, so a plate of grilled chicken or salmon with butter beans, herbs and quality olive oil will do all the heavy lifting.



### Tips for balancing a 'treat' experience with health

- **Build in texture.** Toasted nuts or seeds lift a 'one-note' dish, making it more enjoyable.
- **Don't fear flavour or fat.** Learning how to season, use acidity, aromatics and fat makes healthy food taste good. The 'one-calorie spray' oils can go in the bin.
- **Roast, don't just boil.** It's the easiest win going for bringing out flavour in vegetables.
- **Think abundance, not restriction.** Look at the plate's abundance rather than what it's lacking and don't be afraid to add mozzarella or burrata to a salad.

***Don't miss January's Bar & Kitchen magazine for more GLP-1 tips and recipes from chef_stevieb***




# 6 steps to self-serve success

**B&Bs and hotels are turning to self-serve breakfasts and afternoon teas as staff shortages bite and guest habits change.**

With 64% of visitors returning to a hotel based on its breakfast* and tea offering, they're two events you have to get right.

The right cereals, breads, teas and biscuits gives grab-and-go guests genuine control while trimming staffing costs to a single supervisor.

**Here's how to fine-tune your offering.**




## 1. Hand over control

Guests love a buffet-style, help-yourself breakfast. There's a perceived abundance, no waiting, more control and no menu anxiety.

Self-serve breakfasts also take pressure off the rota with one team member able to run a big self-serve breakfast station.

## 2. Quality over convenience

Self-serve shouldn't mean dropping quality and Kellanova single serve portions offer choice and portion control.

There's nothing like bread, croissants and pastries alongside local, homemade jams and butter. Small-batch jams show thoughtfulness guests notice, and they set the tone for everything else on the table.

A conveyor toaster with a fun sign explaining how to achieve that perfect crunch puts guests in control.

## 3. Make it an occasion

Variety at a 'help yourself' afternoon teatime turns a self-serve station into an occasion, with mini or individually wrapped Meredith & Drew biscuits adding indulgence that guests remember.

Tempt them with a sample in their room – around 80% expect tea and coffee there – to advertise a well-stocked mid-afternoon offering in the dining area at a small surcharge.

## 4. Looking good?

Presentation is everything. Group items on tiered stands, slate boards or labelled jars rather than plastic trays, and keep restocking tight so nothing looks picked-over.

A well-styled station photographs beautifully too – free marketing every time a guest shares their breakfast online.

## 5. Leave clear, friendly notes

A short, friendly note does more work than any sign. Explain what's on offer, flag allergens and add a personal touch around provenance.

"Today's jam is made by our neighbour" turns it into a story. Clear guidance reduces hesitation, so guests feel free to serve themselves confidently.

## 6. The benefits beyond

Add a simple comment card or QR feedback link nearby to help you gather honest input on what to keep, swap or drop.



*Specific.app



# PERFORM BETTER, GO PREMIUM

***Customers are taking more persuasion to leave home and spend money in hospitality venues. Whether it's enjoying a drink, meal or overnight stay, purchases are increasingly occasion-led. So when guests do decide to spend, they want maximum value for money. Beyond quality food and drink, they're also looking for a quality experience in a cool location.***

## Build your brand

Trading conditions are challenging. But strong brands are proving that if the offer is strong enough, customers will come. This doesn't mean using expensive ingredients on your menus. It's about having a brand that customers see as prestigious, superior quality or that makes them feel good.

This will make customers feel like their spending is worthwhile.

This approach also lends itself to social media algorithms. They promote brands that offer something different so if you've got a brand that customers see as 'premium', then you'll start to attract new audiences on these platforms too.

## Balance experience and cost

It's true that delivering elevated experiences can start to increase your outgoings, so make sure you focus on 'different' rather than 'deluxe'.

Online trends are driving footfall to novelty-driven and 'gimmicky' venues that aren't luxury in the traditional sense, but offer unique experiences.

From quirky cocktails to mammoth burger specials, movie-themed brunches to legendary children's parties, make sure you deliver and promote experiences well – and people will come.

This involves delivering delicious food using quality ingredients.

## Sell your experience

Convenience is as important for customers as ever. More businesses are investing in technologies like QR codes for ordering to keep pace with demand without being at the mercy of labour and skills shortages.

For businesses where speedy service doesn't suit, they need to elevate the experience. That means uniqueness, immersion and often luxury.

Think about how to capture spend by creating memories for customers, through personalised attention, stunning interiors or exceptional standards. Once you've nailed it, be loud about it across all your channels.

**1** **Top tip:** think about what makes your brand distinctive and shout about it on socials.

**2** **Top tip:** focus on making your experience unique, not expensive

**3** **Top tip:** combine tech and your team to make your customers feel special consistently

**4.1%**

Fine dining's forecasted growth in turnover

Source: Lumina Intelligence

**To add a premium feel without breaking the bank, try Knorr Professional Finest Gravy. It delivers rich, deep flavour and a silky mouthfeel. Designed for professional kitchens with a vegan, no-allergen recipe.**



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