

Pints & Profits

DIGITAL PUB & BAR REPORT
SPRING 2025



brew.

brew.



Pulling together: Digital marketing support for the UK's pub sector



Matt Bowell

Director

Brew has provided digital marketing services to the hospitality sector for the past 15 years. We've worked with some of the biggest and most innovative pub companies in the UK.

It felt fitting to put together a report that could offer real value to this industry by tapping into our digital marketing expertise, connections and resources.

This report tells the story of the challenges facing the sector whilst arming the industry with tangible digital marketing recommendations.



Adam Cox

Technical Director

The pub industry is a thread woven through my life. Its significance is deeply personal, from student jobs to celebratory gatherings and even tracing back to my father and grandfather's brewery work.

Witnessing the current challenges facing these vital community hubs spurred us to action.

This report is a direct response to the need for accessible information and practical guidance for digital marketing to support businesses and preserve the cherished tradition of the local pub.

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Part 01

Overview

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£26,200,
000,000



£26.2 billion is contributed to the UK economy, and a vital part of cultural & social life.

The opportunity for digital marketing to boost UK pubs and bars

This latest update to our *Pints and profits: digital pub and bar report - Spring 2025 update* explores the challenges facing the sector, notably cost pressures. We look at changing customer behaviour and the opportunity for digital marketing to attract and retain customers.

The value of digital marketing lies in its ability to attract, engage and retain customers through an effective online presence, personalised interactions and relevant content.

This report is based on interviews with marketing leaders working within the sector and a survey of more than 1,000 pub goers to understand their changing habits.

We've also explored aggregated data points from 750 pubs and bar websites to understand the role

that digital marketing plays in a visit to the pub. It is the first time such a broad dataset has been used to understand the contribution of digital marketing to the sector.

Pints and profits: digital pub and bar report - Spring 2025 update is packed with data and insight. It sets out a marketing checklist based on a dozen insights and recommended actions for marketing leaders.

Brew is an integrated digital marketing agency specialising in the pub and bar sector. We are passionate about supporting operators and enabling the industry to thrive.

Economy

The economic contribution is more than £26.2 billion generating £15.1 billion in tax revenue, according to the British Beer and Pub Association.

Society

The societal contribution is the 45,345 pubs and 2,000 breweries that support 936,000 jobs, underpinning high streets and local economies in our towns and cities.

Culture & tourism

The cultural role is harder to define, but this is the role of pubs and bars as a community focal point and tourism asset. It's a place for people to gather or visit from all walks of life and at all times of life.



70%

of hospitality businesses
likely to reduce employment
levels in 2025.

Financial pressures on the pub & bar sector

The pub and bar sector has demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability in the face of significant challenges since the pandemic. Unfortunately, there is no sign of the pressure or volatility on the sector relenting at any time soon.

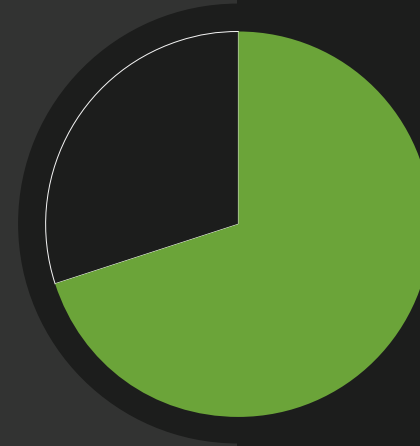
The numbers are brutal.

Six pubs a week are permanently calling last orders, according to the British Beer and Pub Association. 289 pubs closed in 2024 alone.

Pub numbers in the previous five years **fell from 47,613 at the start of 2019 to 45,345 at the start of 2024.**

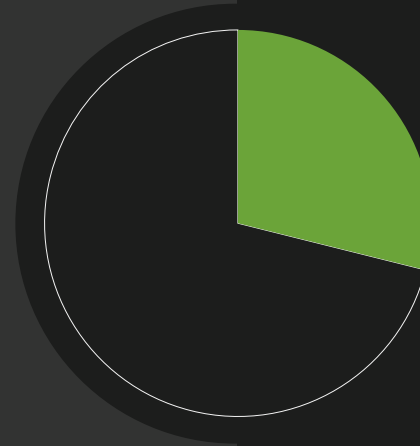
There is a **growing list of price pressures** on the sector, including a reduction in business rates relief, packaging taxes, energy costs and the ongoing cost of living crisis.

70%



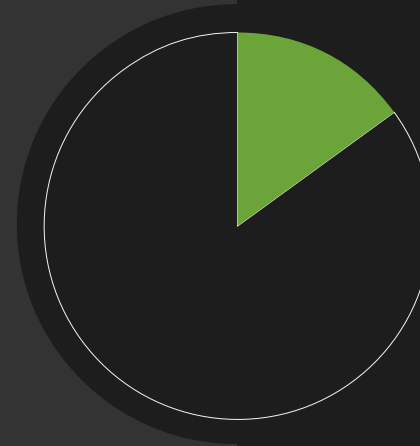
70% of hospitality businesses are likely to reduce employment levels in 2025.

29%



29% are set to reduce trading hours.

15%



15% believe that they will close at least one site.

The financial margins are razor-thin.



12p profit
per pint

£4.50
sale

Profit

Taxes

Including VAT
and excise

The Government doesn't appear to be listening to the growing volume of industry lobbying efforts. Instead, it has added **greater pressure on the sector through National Insurance and minimum wage increases**, as well as uncertainty around the upcoming Employment Rights bill.

These factors compounded with reduced business rate relief introduced during the pandemic from 75% to 40% are creating a cliff edge for the sector in April. Energy price volatility and changes in packaging legislation that shift responsibility to the producer are creating additional volatility.

Industry trade associations ranging from The British Beer and Pub Association to the British Institute of Innkeeping and from Hospitality Ulster to UKHospitality are united in calling out the challenges that the industry faces.

The Daily Mirror's Your Pub Needs You campaign is highlighting this issue. It has called for government recognition and a fighting fund for pubs and support for community groups wanting to buy their local.

Pubs and bars face the twin challenge of increasing productivity or reducing costs to meet the new cost pressures. The sector continues to innovate to meet the challenges that it faces.

Digital marketing provides the means to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing activities, increasing footfall and spending per visit.

The average pub makes an estimated 12p profit per pint on a £4.50 sale. Taxes, including VAT and excise, make-up a third of this cost.

Consumers are making fewer but higher-value trips to pubs

with more than a third visiting at least weekly



Changing consumer habits

While pubs and bars are an important part of cultural life in the UK, consumer behaviour is changing due to rising costs.

The rising cost of a visit to a pub means customers are making less frequent trips but the good news is that they are spending more when they do. Visiting the pub is becoming a planned occasion like dining out rather than a more frequent occasion. This is a message we've heard clearly from both pub goers and operators.

The closure of shops and Post Offices means that the pub is often the only community asset left in many villages in the UK leading to a reappraisal and resurgence in the value of the pub within society.

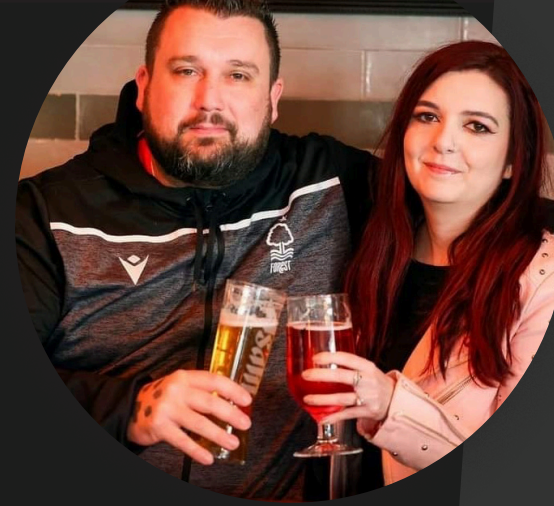
The pub remains one of the few institutions that welcomes people from all walks of life and at all times of life.

A third of survey respondents to our survey of **pub goers (35.5%) reported visiting a pub or restaurant at least once a week, with 27.5% visiting a couple of times a month and 17.0% visiting once a month.** A fifth of respondents visit less frequently than monthly.

The planned trip means that pub goers put more effort into researching menus and reviews before a visit.

Live events are a significant draw for pub customers and provide an additional source of revenue for venues. The FA Cup Final, British & Irish Lions Tour, Women's Euros, Women's Rugby World Cup and The World Athletics Championships will be a focus for venues, drawing people together to watch and celebrate the participation and progress of the UK nations.

In addition, pubs are increasingly hosting their own events, from live music and quiz nights to special themed evenings, to attract a more diverse range of customers. It's a



Former Nottingham-based landlord **Dale Harvey is on a mission to have a pint in every pub in the UK.** He and his partner have visited more than 5,000 so far, posting about his experiences on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#) and [YouTube](#).

Harvey says his Great British Pub Crawl project aims to encourage people to check out pubs that they have not previously visited. He has amassed more than 150,000 followers across his various platforms.

The Great British Pub Crawl is a stand-out example of the growing role and influence of social media within the sector. We explore this later in the report.

strategy that is working.

A fifth of customers (21.5%) say they attend special events.

A notable innovation is the rise of low and non-alcoholic beers. Nine in ten pubs serve a no and low alcohol option. The category is growing at 15-20% per year. This is an opportunity for pubs to diversify their offer and attract new customers.

This report explores the opportunity for digital marketing as a means for a pub to engage both regular and occasional customers.

Part 002

The digital
pub-goer
journey

- 014 Awareness
- 017 Consideration
- 020 Decision stage
- 025 Experience
- 029 Post-visit engagement

The digital pub-goer journey

The digital landscape has transformed the way pub goers interact with pubs. This digital transformation was underway before the COVID-19 pandemic and has been accelerated by the current economic climate.

The report explores the role of digital marketing and highlights insights to help operators optimise their digital presence to attract, convert and retain customers. In each case, we have set out recommended actions. These are summarised in a marketing checklist.

This report breaks the pub goer journey down into **five stages**:

01

Awareness

The initial stage in the pub-goer journey is where customers first learn about a pub or bar.

02

Consideration

Many pub-goers put considerable effort into planning their visit to the venue.

03

Decision

Having considered their options, pub-goers are ready to choose whether to visit the venue.

04

Experience

Pub-goers visit the chosen pub or bar and interact with its offerings and services.

05

Post-visit engagement

The final stage involves maintaining and nurturing relationships with the pub-goer after their visit to the pub or bar.



Awareness

The awareness stage is the start point for the customer journey. Effective strategies at this stage can significantly increase the chances of attracting new customers who are considering their options. Using social media, content marketing, influencer partnerships and local search engine optimisations, pubs can build a strong brand presence and stay top-of-mind among potential customers.

Social media engagement

Social media is a powerful tool for pubs and restaurants looking to build brand awareness and engage with their potential customers.

While Facebook and Instagram cater to a broad demographic, TikTok has become an important social channel in the past two years, particularly for younger audiences. It has ten times the like-for-like reach and engagement compared with other channels.

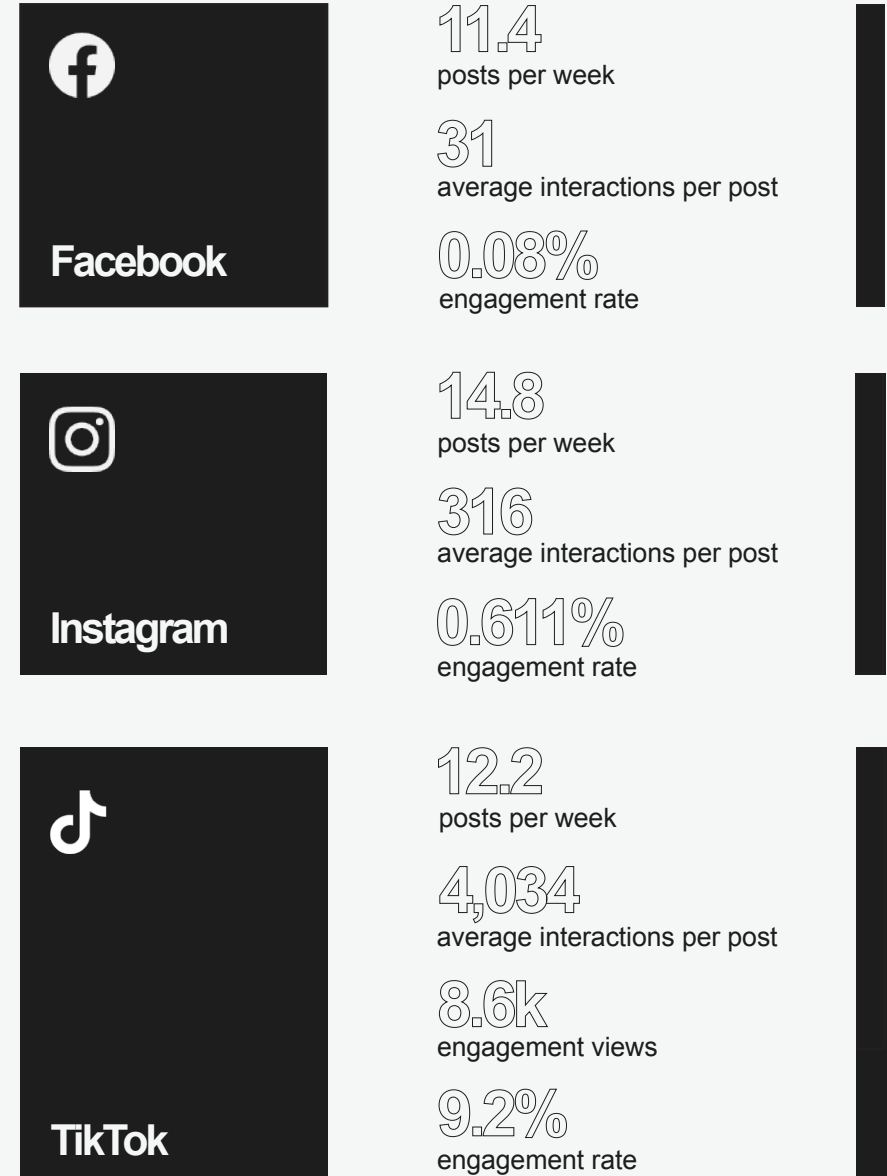
Pubs need to create compelling visual content that resonates with their audience. This includes high-quality photos of food and drink offerings, engaging videos and user-generated content.

Pubs should also focus on localised content, using hashtags and location tags to reach people in their area. Videos with the hashtag #ukpub received more than 100 million views per month.

Action

Conduct a social media audit to identify where your target audience is most active and allocate resources accordingly.
 Create a content calendar that balances engaging visuals, user-generated content and localised hashtags to maximise reach and engagement.

Average posts per week by a venue



Content marketing

Content marketing enables a pub or bar to build brand awareness and attract new customers.

Pubs can establish themselves as go-to destinations in their area by creating valuable, informative content that resonates with potential customers.

Effective content types include blog posts highlighting local attractions, newsletters featuring upcoming events and guides to the best dishes on the menu. Venues should experiment with different content formats, such as videos or interactive content, to see what resonates with their audience.

Action

Identify topics that align with your target audience's interests and create valuable content that showcases your pub's unique offerings. Experiment with different formats to see what works best.

Influencer engagement

Influencer marketing can be an effective strategy for building brand awareness and driving engagement. Pubs can tap into new audiences and generate engagement around their offerings by partnering with local influencers who align with their brand values.

In terms of motivation to create and post content to their social media networks, three in ten creators seek complimentary products while two in five expect payment, according to data for the pub and hospitality sector from the Influencer Marketing Hub.

Action

Identify relevant influencers in your area and contact them about potential collaborations. Offer a mix of compensation methods and track the success of your campaigns to optimise future efforts.



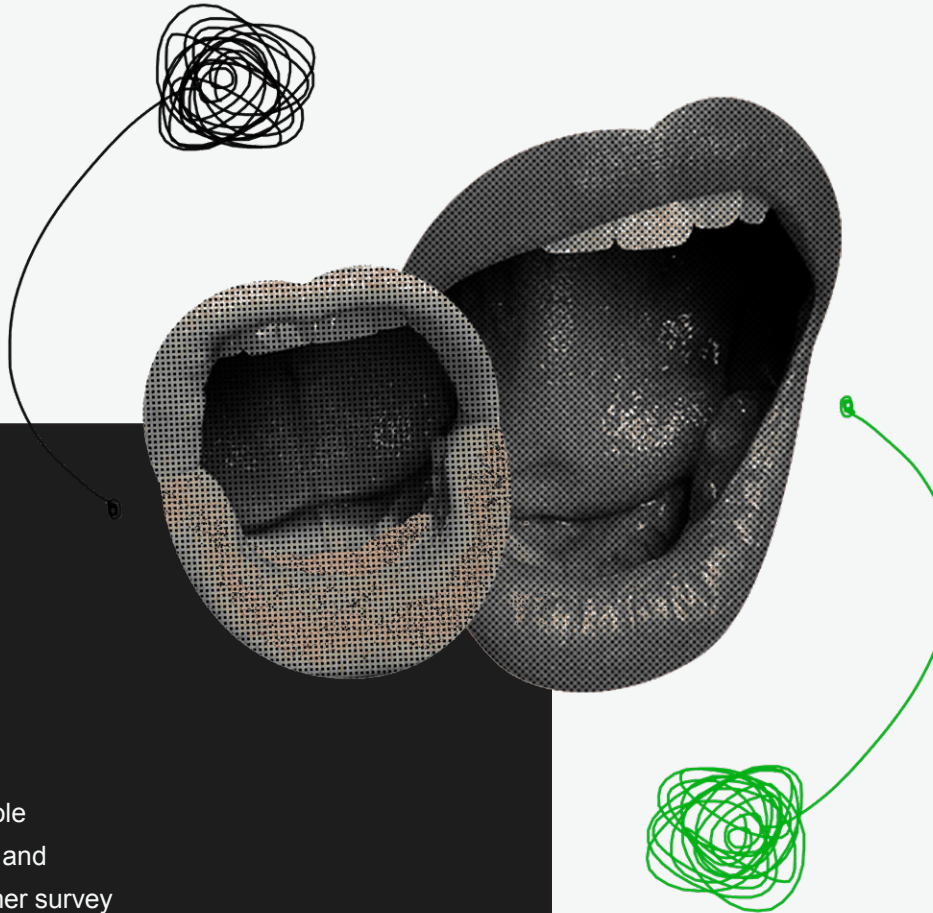
Consideration

The consideration stage is where potential customers evaluate whether a pub or venue aligns with their preferences and requirements. Effective strategies at this stage can significantly enhance the chances of getting new customers into a venue.

56%

of traffic
comes from
Google search





Discovery

Search engines play a role in discovering new pubs and restaurants. Our consumer survey suggested that significant traffic comes from Google search (56.0%), followed by booking platforms including Booking.com and TripAdvisor (21.5%).

To maximise visibility in search results, pubs need to optimise their website and Google Business Profile for relevant keywords, such as “best pub near me” or “pub food in [location].” Tools such as Google Ads Keyword Planner and Google Trends can help identify keywords.

Action

Conduct keyword research to identify your pub’s most relevant search terms and optimise your website and Google Business Profile accordingly. Regularly monitor and respond to customer reviews to maintain a positive online reputation.

Review & reputation management

Online reputation management is another aspect of the consideration stage. With countless options, customers often rely on reviews to decide where to eat or drink.

Industry professionals note a strong correlation between review scores and sales, with higher scores driving more business. To manage their online reputation effectively, pubs should use platforms such as Google Business Profile and TripAdvisor to monitor and respond to reviews across multiple sites.

Action

Use reputation management tools such as Reputation.com to monitor and respond to reviews across multiple platforms. Implement post-visit surveys to encourage customers to leave reviews and address any negative feedback promptly.



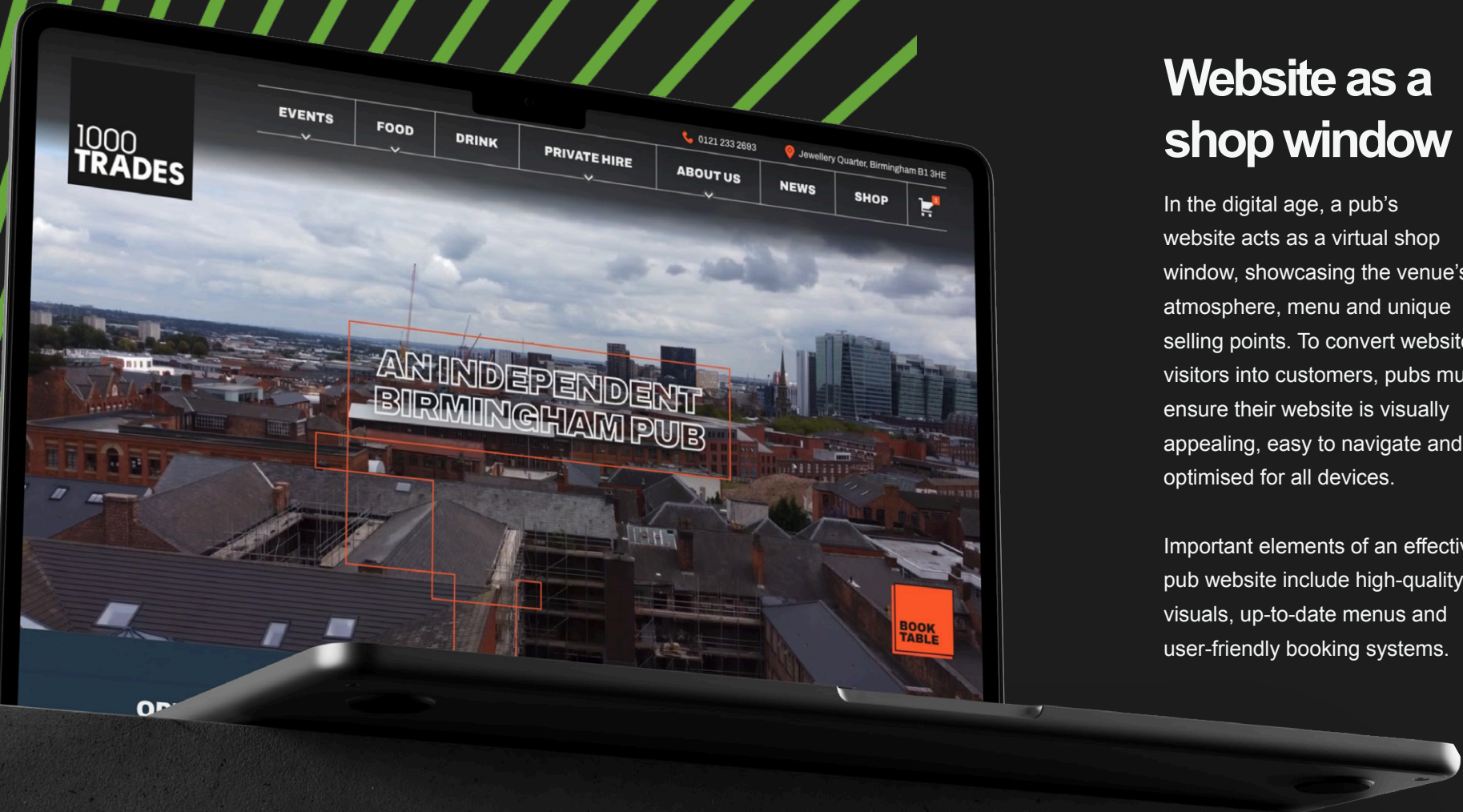
Decision stage

The decision stage is where potential customers commit to visiting or booking. Ensuring a smooth, enticing and friction-free process can increase conversion rates and drive more customers to your venue. Effective digital marketing strategies at this stage can turn consideration into action and help pubs and hospitality venues secure more reservations and visits.

Website as a shop window

In the digital age, a pub's website acts as a virtual shop window, showcasing the venue's atmosphere, menu and unique selling points. To convert website visitors into customers, pubs must ensure their website is visually appealing, easy to navigate and optimised for all devices.

Important elements of an effective pub website include high-quality visuals, up-to-date menus and user-friendly booking systems.



Only 5%
of visitors to a booking
page convert to actual
bookings



We explored the customer journey for website bookings. Typically, five percent of visitors to the booking page on a website convert into actual bookings. Organic search and a Google Business Profile page are the most effective channels.

Action

Optimise your website to showcase your pub's unique offerings and streamline booking. Use booking funnel data to identify drop-off points and make data-driven improvements.

	Website > Start booking	Start booking > Complete booking	Overall booking rate
Organic search	21%	32%	7%
Google Business Profile	24%	24%	9%
Organic social	17%	18%	3%
Paid social	5%	9%	<1%
Social (organic and paid)	10%	16%	2%
Paid search	22%	23%	5%
Email	26%	26%	3%

Table: Website booking conversion effectiveness by channel (Source: Brew aggregated web analytics data for pub and bar sites)

Online booking systems

Customers increasingly prefer to book tables or rooms online rather than over the phone.

Driving direct bookings through a website rather than relying on third-party sites avoids commission fees and saves margin. Offering incentives such as discounts or complimentary drinks can encourage customers to book directly.

Action

Implement an online booking system on your website and offer incentives for direct bookings. Regularly monitor and compare the revenue generated from direct bookings versus third-party sites to ensure you are maximising your profits.

Measurement of effectiveness

The digital customer journey in the pub and bar trade is complex and multifaceted. Pubs and restaurants can attract, retain and delight customers in an increasingly digital world by focusing on social media engagement, content marketing, online reputation management, user-friendly websites and post-visit engagement.

The key to success is a data-driven approach, continuously testing and optimising your efforts based on what resonates with your audience. By implementing the action steps outlined in this report, pubs and restaurants can stay ahead of the curve and thrive in an ever-changing digital landscape.

Attribution assigns a value to each touchpoint a customer encounters on their journey to making a booking. By understanding which channels and campaigns drive the

most bookings, pubs can optimise their marketing efforts and allocate their budgets more effectively.

Several attribution models are available, including first-click, last-click, linear, time decay and position-based. The choice of model depends on your specific goals and the dynamics of a business.

Google Analytics 4 provides a data-driven attribution model that learns how different channels work together to drive conversions. This helps you understand the true impact of each channel on your booking rates.

By understanding the role of each touchpoint in the customer journey, pubs can optimise their marketing strategies and enhance the overall effectiveness of their digital efforts.



Experience

The experience stage delivers on the promises made during the earlier stages of the customer journey. A positive, memorable experience can lead to repeat business and positive reviews, while a poor experience can deter future visits and harm a venue's reputation. Ensuring that every aspect of the customer's visit exceeds their expectations is the key to long-term success.

Menu browsing

Most customers know what they want to eat before arriving at the pub, according to our interviews. To cater to this trend, pubs should ensure their menus are easily accessible and visually appealing on their website and social media channels.

High-quality photos of dishes can go a long way in enticing customers to visit your venue. Pubs are responding to this trend by creating so-called *Instagrammable* food and drinks that customers will want to share on social media.

Action

Ensure your website features appealing, current menus with high-quality photos. Regularly update your content to reflect seasonal changes, special offers and events.

Measurement of effectiveness

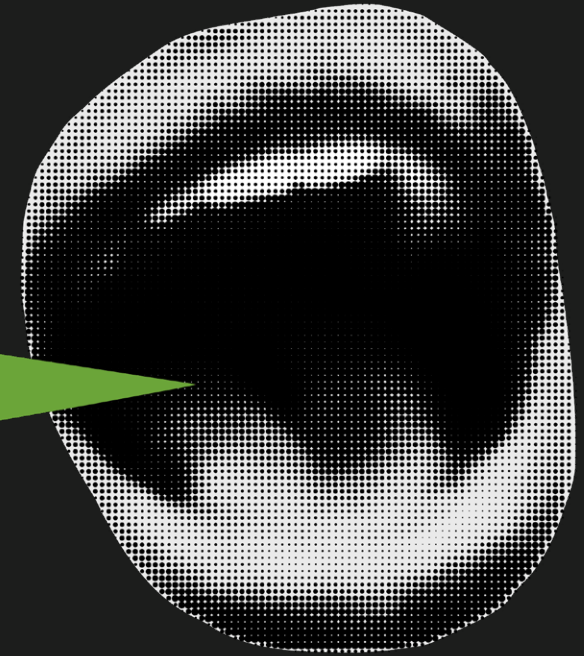
Menus, offers, & events pages are the most visited areas of pub & restaurant websites

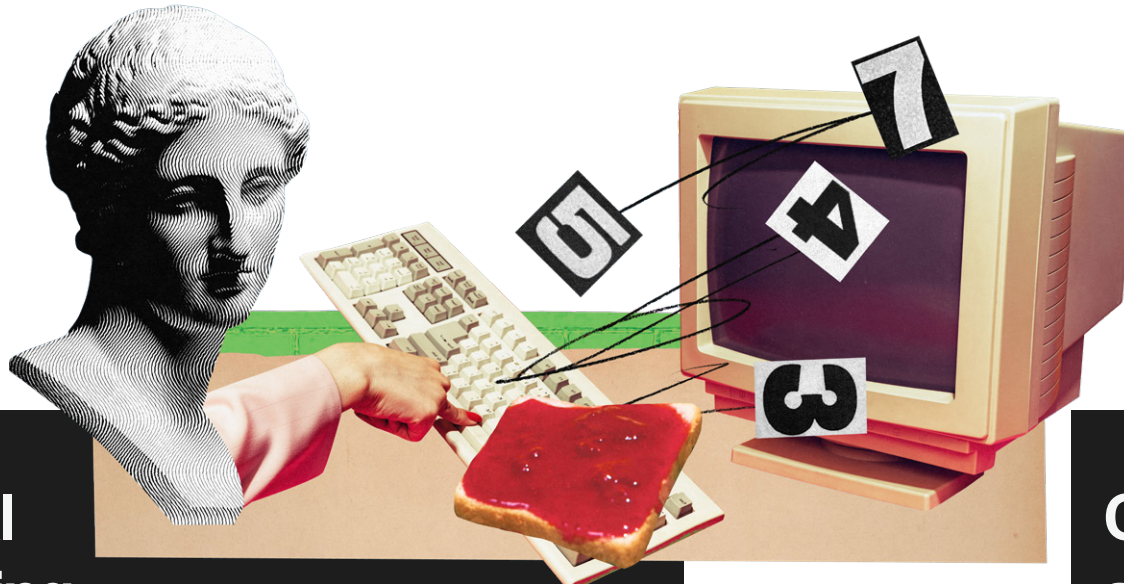
Customers who view these pages are more likely to make a booking

Up-to-date content is favoured by both customers & search engines

Quality content on these pages directly impacts booking rates

**Customer reviews
& online reputation
management strongly
correlate with sales
performance**





Digital ordering

While digital ordering peaked during the pandemic, there has been a shift back to in-person ordering. However, some customers still prefer the convenience of digital ordering, particularly at a table in a busy venue or for takeaway and delivery.

Some larger groups have moved to apps. However, customer response is mixed. Pubs should consider implementing web-based ordering systems that can be accessed via QR codes, rather than requiring customers to download a separate app.

Action

Consider implementing a web-based ordering system with QR codes to streamline the ordering process and increase average order value.

Customer social media activity

User-generated content (UGC) enables pubs to showcase their offerings and build social proof through third party advocacy. Pubs can reach new customers by encouraging customers to share their social media experiences.

To incentivise UGC, pubs can run social media contests, offer discounts for customers who share photos of their meals or collaborate with influencers to create content.

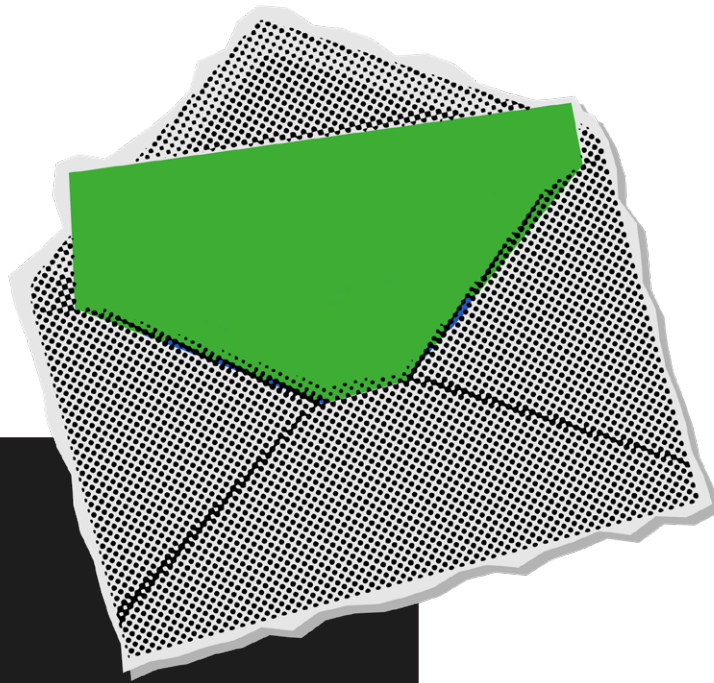
Action

Create visually appealing dishes and drinks that customers will want to share on social media. Collaborate with influencers to reach new customers via their social media networks.



Post-visit engagement

Finally, the post-visit engagement stage is focused on sustaining a relationship with pub goers and turning their positive experiences into advocacy and loyalty. Effective strategies at this stage can lead to increased customer retention, higher lifetime value and organic promotion through word-of-mouth and social media.



Email marketing

Email marketing is a useful tool for pubs looking to build customer relationships and drive repeat visits. Pubs can create targeted campaigns that resonate with their audience by collecting customer emails through bookings, WiFi logins or surveys.

Effective email campaigns include personalised offers, event promotions, or exclusive content. Segmenting your email list based on customer preferences can also improve engagement and conversion rates.

Action

Implement a customer relationship management (CRM) system to collect and manage customer email addresses. Segment the email list based on customer preferences and create targeted campaigns with personalised offers and exclusive content.

Loyalty programmes & incentives

Loyalty programmes can be an effective way to encourage repeat visits and higher spending per visit. By rewarding customers for their loyalty, pubs can create a sense of community and build long-term relationships with their customers.

Loyalty programmes include promotions such as birthday offers, complimentary drinks and exclusive experiences for top customers.

Action

Develop a loyalty program that rewards customers for repeat visits and higher spending. Offer personalised incentives and exclusive experiences to make customers feel valued.

Part 03

Digital marketing
recommendations

01

Social media engagement

Recommendation

Allocate resources to platforms where engagement is highest. Use high-quality photos, videos and user-generated content to maximise reach and engagement. Focus on localised content, using hashtags and location tags to attract nearby customers.

Action

Conduct a social media audit to identify where your target audience is most active.

02

Content Marketing

Recommendation

Create valuable content, such as blog posts, newsletters, or guides, to establish your pub as a go-to destination. Experiment with different formats to see what works best.

Action

Identify topics that align with your target audience's interests.

03

Influencer engagement

Recommendation

Offer a mix of compensation, such as free meals or exclusive experiences, to encourage influencers to create compelling content about your pub or venue.

Action

Identify local influencers and collaborate with them.

04

Discovery (search engine optimisation)

Recommendation

Use tools such as Google Ads Keyword Planner to identify relevant search terms. Regularly monitor and respond to customer reviews to maintain a positive reputation.

Action

Conduct keyword research and optimise your website and Google Business Profile.

05

Online reputation management

Recommendation

Implement post-visit surveys to encourage positive reviews and address any negative feedback promptly.

Action

Use reputation management tools or native platforms to monitor and respond to reviews.

06

Website optimisation

Recommendation

Focus on high-quality visuals, up-to-date menus and user-friendly booking systems to convert website visitors into customers.

Action

Ensure your website is visually appealing, easy to navigate and optimised for all devices.

07

Online booking systems

Recommendation

Offer incentives for direct bookings to reduce reliance on third-party platforms. Monitor and compare revenue from direct and third-party bookings to maximise profit.

Action

Implement an online booking system on your website.

08

Menu browsing

Recommendation

Regularly update your menus and create *Instagrammable* dishes and drinks to entice customers.

Action

Make menus easily accessible and visually appealing online.

09

Digital ordering

Recommendation

Streamline the ordering process and increase average order value by offering digital ordering options.

Action

Consider implementing a web-based ordering system with QR codes.

10

Customer social media activity

Recommendation

Run social media contests or offer discounts for shared photos. Collaborate with influencers to reach new customers.

Action

Encourage UGC by incentivising customers to share their experiences.

11

Email marketing

Recommendation

Create targeted campaigns with personalised offers and exclusive content based on customer preferences.

Action

Implement a CRM system to collect and manage customer emails.

12

Loyalty schemes

Recommendation

Offer personalised incentives, such as birthday offers or exclusive experiences, to make customers feel valued.

Action

Develop a loyalty programme to reward repeat visits and higher spending.

Part

04

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for Mitchells & Butlers*
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Methodology

Pints and profits: digital pub and bar report - Spring 2025 update is based on interviews with marketing leaders working within the sector and surveying more than 1,000 pub goers to understand their changing habits.

We've also explored aggregated data points from 750 pub and bar websites from November 2023 to May 2024 to understand the role that digital marketing plays in a trip to the pub.

Qualitative interviews were conducted by Wadds Inc. using a semi-structured format with organisations including Mitchells & Butlers, Nightcap, Oakman Inns, Robinsons and Stonegate in March and April 2024.

The consumer research was carried out by Sensu Insight through an online survey with a nationally representative sample of UK adults in May 2024.

It is the first time such a broad dataset has been used to understand the contribution of digital marketing to the sector.

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Heineken to reopen more than 60 closed pubs

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CASE STUDY

How Brew scaled social media for Mitchells & Butlers

Brew collaborated with Mitchells & Butlers (M&B) to develop a 'Local Social Training Academy,' an online program designed to help M&B's 2,000 managed pubs and improve their social media presence and sales. The challenge was to reach local audiences across hundreds of different establishments, each with a unique environment, audience and goals.

Brew worked closely with M&B's central marketing team and the company's Social Ambassadors to

create a flexible and comprehensive training program. The academy, officially launched in March 2024, features monthly live webinars, video and training guides, live social media clinics and ongoing support from Brew's marketing experts.

The success of the Local Social Training Academy demonstrates the power of collaboration in achieving targeted social media growth and engagement across a large, diverse estate of establishments.





About brew.

Brew is an award winning Birmingham-based integrated marketing agency that has been specialising in the pub and bar sector since 2009.

With a track record of supporting more than 50 hospitality brands and approximately 7,000 pubs,

Brew has extensive experience in helping businesses raise their profile and boost sales.

We are passionate about supporting operators and enabling the industry to thrive.

**Crafting the
future for
hospitality
brands**

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