

Leisure Venue Catering - UK - March 2011

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What is this report about?

The various segments which make up the leisure venue market experienced mixed fortunes in recent years: Whilst sectors such as nightclubs and bingo halls continue to be dogged by factors such as legislative restrictions, historic venues now face an uncertain future due to government spending cuts in the wake of the recession, whilst boutique cinemas continue to invest in new and interesting catering options.

What have we found out?

- A major challenge to the cinema catering market is that it isn't considered to be good value for money with around eight in ten visitors saying that the food/drink is overpriced. Premiumisation is one way in which cinemas could maintain margins but at the same time raise the value perception.
- Cinema, theatres and other leisure venues should look to stock a broader range of retail products that are portable and convenient and can easily be accommodated by their existing seating layout, as 35% of cinema goers would like seating in cinemas that are better equipped for eating and drinking. Think of products such as Maltesers Shake 'n' Snack and Nutella & Go packs.
- Cinemas and theatres could also upgrade their snacking offers in line with wider market trends eg Graze boxes, which is based on the principle of mix and match snacks and is easily customisable with varieties ranging from the saintly to the more sinful. This would appeal to nearly a fifth of cinema goers who have stated that they would like to see more nibbles available in cinemas.
- Cinemas could look to tap into the broader eating out market trend towards coffee shop-style offerings; especially as nearly 40% of respondents aged 16-24 who visit the cinema at least once a month would like to see a greater variety of drinks (eg lattes, smoothies) on offer in these venues.
- Historic venues need to better incorporate their catering offer into the overall personality of the venue in order to increase usage and drive sales. At present, a third of visitors to historic venues think that catering is all part of the experience, showing that there is considerable room for improvement.
- Historic venues could also take inspiration from the emerging fast casual restaurant sector; the emphasis on outlets in this area tends to be on providing fast, 'real' fresh food that is easily customisable. This would help them tap into the third of visitors to historic venues who are looking for a quick bite/snack rather than a full meal.

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