

Chain Versus Independent Venues - UK - September 2009

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What is this report about?

The fiercely competitive leisure market presents challenges for both chain and independent venues and each have their selling points. The guarantee and reassurance that a well-known chain can offer is weighed up against the individuality and authenticity of an independent venue. However, regardless of the type of venue, quality of product and customer friendliness are key factors for consumers when making their choice.

Key issues covered in the analysis

- With consumers' becoming increasingly wary of paying a premium in some leisure markets, the concepts of differentiation and brand power is more important than ever. But are people turning their backs on multi-nationals in favour of independently-run businesses?
- Independent leisure venues are perceived to offer greater customer service and authenticity than bigger, more impersonal chains, but is that what consumers really crave?
- We're seeing some well-known chains change their focus to incorporate more down-to-earth approaches, so what are likes of Starbucks doing to turn themselves from monotonous monoliths to cuddly corporations?
- The popularity of independent venues are somewhat dependent upon demographic trends, namely the older, more world weary the person, the more sympathetic they are likely to be to the cause. So, is the issue of chain vs independent merely an age and educational issue or is it something less tangible?
- Insights into the mindsets of both chains and independent leisure venue operators reveal that both sectors see friendliness and comfortable surroundings as the major attractions, but consumers value one thing above all others: the quality of the product.

Scope of the report

In this report a chain venue is defined as a number of similar branded venues located nationwide and owned by one organisation. Whilst an independent venue is defined as a single or small number of venues owned by one organisation and located in one area of the country.



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