

Pub Visiting - UK - November 2009

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What is this report about?

The UK pub industry has undergone a seismic change during the past five years, beginning with licensing deregulation in 2005, continuing with the smoking ban rolled out across the UK in 2006 and 2007 and culminating with a damaging economic recession at a time when the industry could least afford it. Although pubs have been closing at the rate of 52 a week in the UK during 2009, there are encouraging signs that the worst may be over.

This report assesses the current state of the industry and considers the question:

“What does the future hold for the traditional British pub?”

It looks at consumer behaviour in terms of how often people visit pubs, the factors that influence their choice of venue and which promotions would encourage them to visit more often. Mintel last examined this market in Pub Visiting – UK, September 2008.

What have we found out?

- After necessities and bills, going out, such as the pub & cinema, and dining out still remain consumers' top spending priorities.
- Although 4.4m adults go to the pub for a drink twice a week or more, more than 17m say that they never go to pub just for a drink, highlighting the plight of drinks-led venues in the modern era.
- Almost 29m people decide on which pub to visit for a drink by its location/ convenience, with price promotions only influencing just under 4m pub goers.
- Nearly one in two pub goers say that price promotions do not draw them to one particular drinking venue over another. However, out of a choice of price incentives, complimentary drinks/ drinks with a meal comes out on top, appealing to 11.7m pub goers (mostly third age women). Immediate rewards are the most attractive for consumers with only 5.4m pub goers being enticed by money-off the next purchase offers.
- With more than 50 pubs closing each week, the pub market is in the midst of an identity crisis, fighting to find its place in the leisure market. A food offer can influence the pub choice of nearly 14m consumers, however, with so many pubs now relying on food offers to buoy sales, subsequent issues have emerged such as price wars and difficulty in creating genuine USP's.
- Despite widespread predications of carnage on the high street arising from the relaxation in licensing laws in November 2005, this has turned out not be the case. In fact, just 850 pubs, bars and nightclubs now have the necessary licence to allow them to open for 24 hours a day. However, this does not mean that they do so every day.

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