



GUIDE

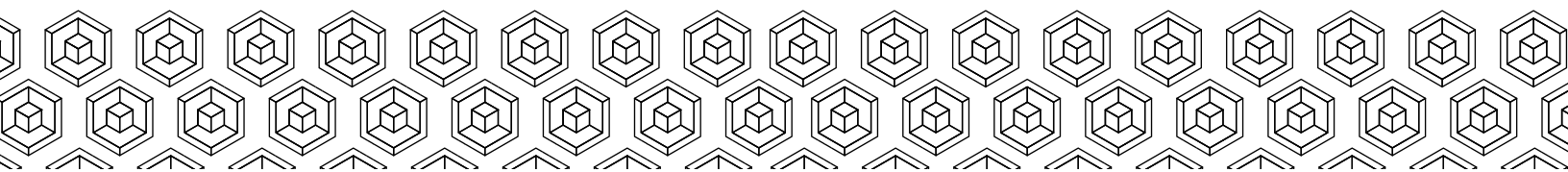
How to Use Guest Intelligence to Build Better Customer Experiences





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About Black Box Intelligence

At Black Box Intelligence, we track over 200 brands to provide the restaurant industry with customer satisfaction benchmarking. Our Guest Intelligence solution is the only online tool that validates what impact a positive or negative customer experience has on financial performance. The data set focuses on six key attributes of the restaurant industry experience: food, service, ambiance, beverage, value and intent to return.

With the addition of our latest CX solution, AreTheyHappy™, Black Box Intelligence customers can now manage the end-to-end guest experience in a single platform. Online reviews, social interactions, and satisfaction trends are captured in real-time, giving teams insight into what's working and what's not so everyone can focus on what matters most.

To learn more about what you can do with our Customer Experience and Guest Intelligence platform, visit blackboxintelligence.com.

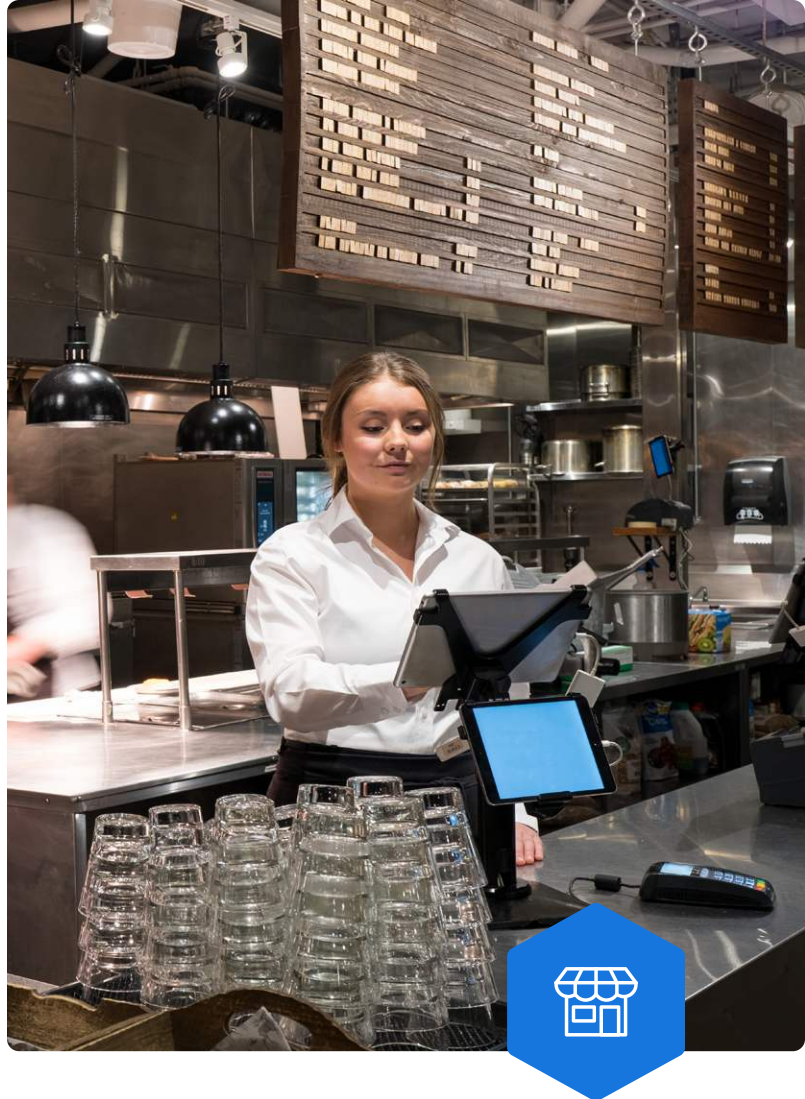
Introduction

As consumers, vendors, and everything in-between - we are constantly capturing data. Some of it may be subjective, like feedback on a comment card. More objective data - like looking at a YoY comparison of inflation rates, also holds unique value when assessing how well you are doing compared to the rest. And if you're currently in the business of hospitality, understanding the quality and impact of your service is table stakes. To deliver a more valuable experience for all, you need to start by defining what drives a good or bad visit.

Knowing whether your customers are satisfied or if there are areas you can improve upon is one thing, but it's about having a true understanding of why they've reached a certain level of satisfaction and assessing what elements are within your control - or not.

Online review sites and social media make it easy for guests to broadcast their opinions to anyone who'll listen.

By staying on top of and engaging with online reviews, you can start to take control of how your brand is perceived.



An added benefit of keeping up with online reviews: they're an excellent source of data that bring to light the areas of the customer journey requiring your attention.

Most restaurant brands today know they need to monitor, research, and act on guest feedback to deliver and maintain a competitive customer experience. But they don't necessarily have the information or tools available to figure out exactly how to accomplish this successfully.

For example, you can use the insight to improve operations system-wide or understand how trends in the market, like staffing challenges, impact the guest experience. From a more granular perspective, you can use guest feedback to track cuisine preferences, and design menus based on consumer demand.

In this guide, we'll walk through how you can tap into guest intelligence to focus your team and your investments to build better customer experiences.

Guest experience trends across the industry

We monitor reviews for thousands of restaurants nationwide to track customer intelligence trends. Recently, many of the complaints we see are directly and indirectly driven by issues related to staffing shortages.

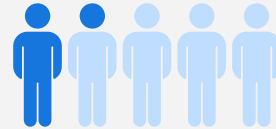
Current guest sentiment trends include “value” being a key driver of restaurant traffic. But menu prices are increasing and portion sizes are getting smaller. Restaurants will have to get creative in their value offerings to make guests feel like the experience was “worth it.”

And regardless of what economic or societal issues the world is experiencing, cleanliness remains one of the top complaints amongst guests. For example, guests frequently claim that staff members skip sanitation tasks during their service. If this is the case, it’s likely due to restaurants being short-staffed. Guests expect consistent food execution, a service experience that meets and/or exceeds expectations, and attention to detail on cleanliness.

Understanding broader trends in the industry can help you prepare your restaurant’s CX (or customer experience) strategy. It helps you understand which of your reviews are outliers, and you can hone in on the issues that matter most to consumers right now.



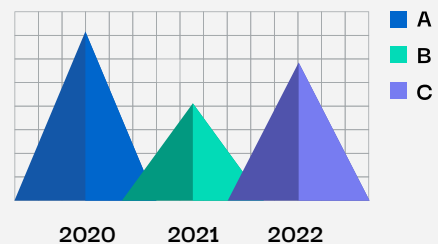
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trends



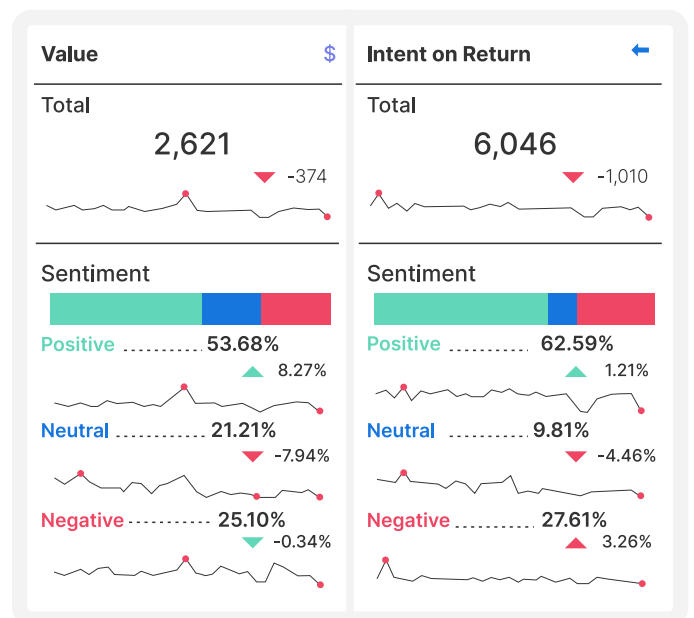
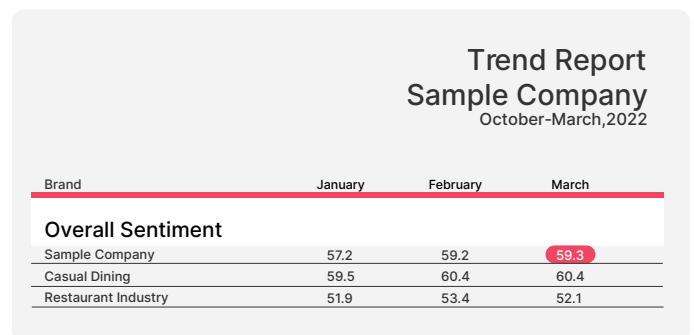
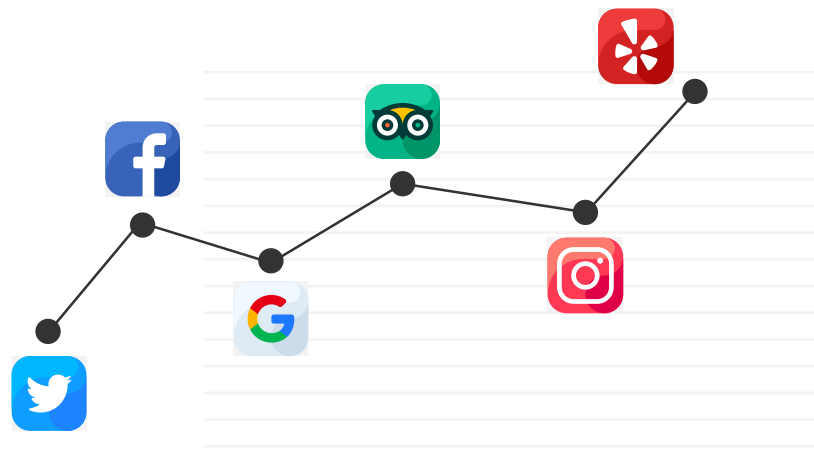
How to monitor customer satisfaction

Keeping up with social media and [review sites](#) can easily become overwhelming, especially for high-volume restaurants. Modern customer experience platforms will automatically aggregate guest satisfaction data and use NPL, or natural language processing, to identify trends and categorize the results - revealing the key drivers of the customer experience. The data can then be deployed, tested and measured across a market's social media channels. The right solution will not only allow you to monitor reviews, but it will also provide tools to help you:

- Track new menu rollouts, LTOs, promotions, and other key business initiatives
- Provide a simplified, holistic social media sentiment analysis in addition to online reviews
- Allow you to create customized alerts for specific brand reputation issues

The right customer intelligence software can also help inform your restaurant's CX strategy by providing benchmarking against competitors, restaurant segments, and the industry. It should help you track things such as:

- Sentiment around [certain restaurant roles](#), like host, server, and bartender, that have an impact on various stages of the steps of service. It's important to break down each individual position and see how sentiment around those roles changes month over month.
- Sentiment around any interactions with managers your tables might have had. General, positive adjectives like "friendly," "kind," "polite," "nice"





- General, negative adjectives like “rude,” “mean,” “unkind”
- Adjectives related to guest experience, like “wonderful,” “fantastic,” “enjoyable” or “worst,” “awful,” “terrible”
- Adjectives related to the attentiveness of your servers, like “ignored” or “forgot”
- Mentions of “understaffed”
- Adjectives that have to do with server appearance
- Remarks on the knowledge of your servers; “knew a lot about cocktails,” “couldn’t answer my questions”
- Anything specific to your steps of service; for example, we could track any mentions of table greetings

By not tracking both positive and negative sentiment, you’re leaving a lot of opportunities on the table. Your customers can be a huge asset when it comes to planning new campaigns or testing out a new market. Knowing what’s working well and what isn’t will keep your team focused on the right things.

How to deal with guest complaints

One key to building a better guest experience is to make responses to online reviews and feedback as visible as possible. Regardless if guest sentiment is skewing positively or negatively, by responding (and in a timely manner), you show them that you’re open to feedback and dedicated to improving their experience.

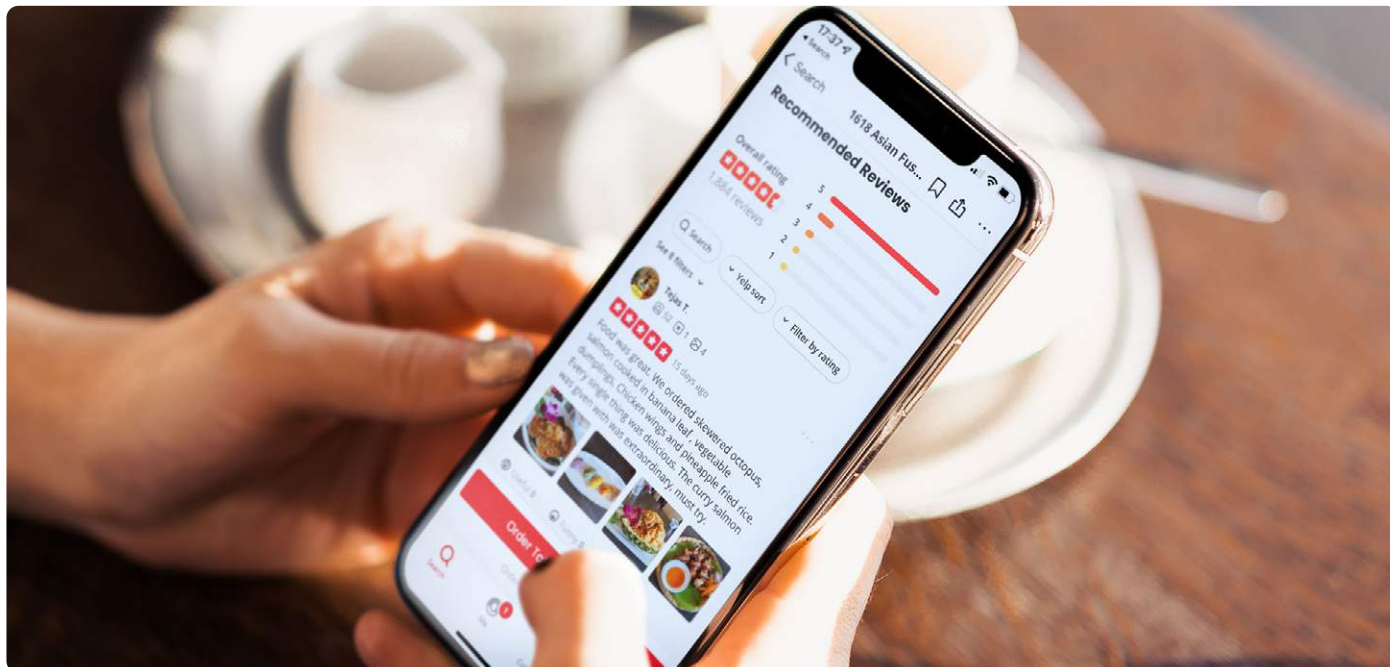
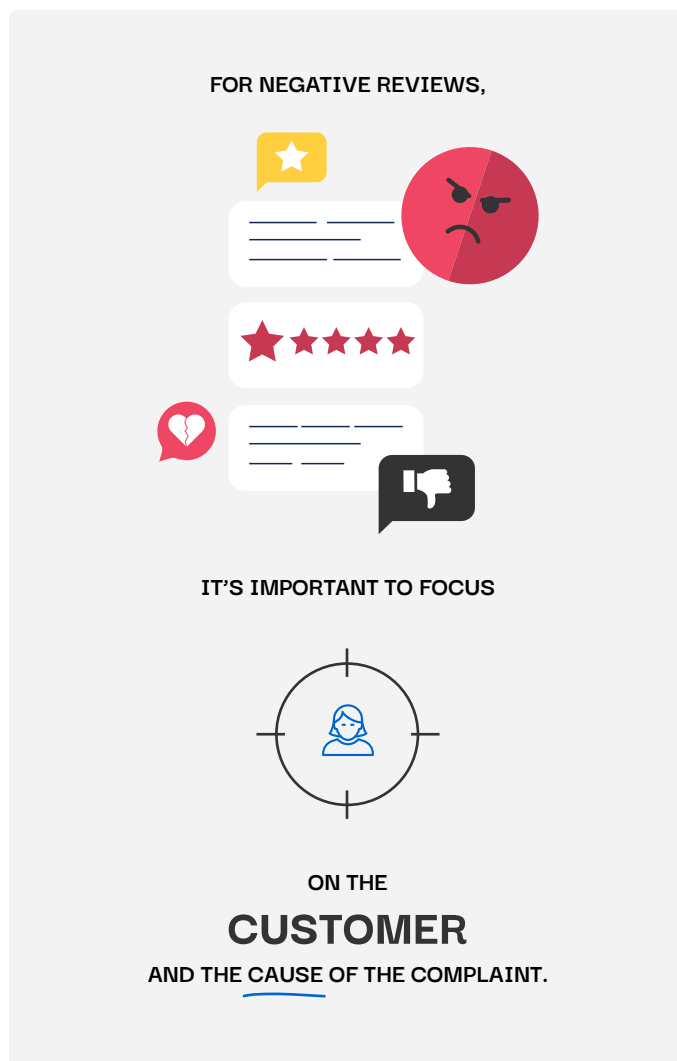
For negative reviews, it’s important to focus on the customer and the cause of the complaint. After you respond specifically to their comments and offer a remedy (such as a discount code), address the source of the complaint.

For example, if they’re complaining about bathroom cleanliness, that can be a cue to look at your operations plan to make sure your restrooms are being cleaned adequately and often enough.

Also, engage with [positive reviews](#) so that you can play up your strengths. One study found that [Yelp reviewers](#) actually use more positive sentiment words than negative. Responding to that positive restaurant feedback draws attention to the things you do well, which potential customers will notice.

The fact that your customers took the time to show their appreciation in the form of a review is admirable. Especially when you realize that only about 1% of customers write reviews. And with 97% of customers between the ages 18-34 reading reviews before visiting a business, this 1.5% can make all the difference.

And finally, simple steps can lead to easier five-star reviews. Small things, like making menu recommendations and updating customers on the status of their food can have a significant impact on customer satisfaction. With so many external factors causing price hikes, slower service, and menu changes, proactive communication can be your best tool for preventing frustration.





Restaurant customer experience FAQs

What is customer intelligence?

Customer intelligence is the process of collecting and analyzing data on how customers feel about your business. Guest intelligence data is the important foundation to building better customer experiences. When you can understand what your customers like and dislike about your restaurant, and how that sentiment compares to your competitors, you can respond in a more impactful way.

Where do I begin improving the customer experience?

Regardless of size, every brand has to digitally evolve the way they present themselves and interact online. It's important to also note that you don't have to be on every digital channel to have a great online presence. The most critical platform to host your restaurant's information is Google. Google is the first stop most consumers will hit before continuing to Yelp or your restaurant website. Ensure the information on your [Google Business Profile](#) is always accurate so you can easily pull consumers in and focus on customer engagement.

How do I measure customer satisfaction?

To accurately monitor and measure restaurant customer satisfaction, operators need to track both customer review sites and social media mentions. It's not as simple as checking ratings on popular review sites. To truly understand the factors driving restaurant guest satisfaction, you need to capture a variety of data sets - from open text fields to dynamic surveys.

How do I respond to negative feedback?

It's important to face negative reviews head-on so customers can see that you're listening and that you care about their concerns. In addition to providing a customer with compensation for a poor experience, identify the root cause of the complaint and address it so that it doesn't continue to occur. This may involve employee training or a change in your processes.



Simplify the restaurant customer experience with Guest Intelligence

A sophisticated customer intelligence platform can simplify how you approach the guest experience, and provide a depth of insight you won't find elsewhere. With BBI's Guest Intelligence platform, you receive quarterly reports showing which common terms are coming up in your restaurant's reviews and how key topics are trending over time.

It offers a level of granularity that allows you to make smarter business decisions. For instance, you can track subtle changes in sentiment over time. Sometimes your rating drops incrementally. You may not see an influx of bad reviews, but you may be receiving less enthusiastic feedback. Our Guest Intelligence solution shows you that

subtle change before it damages your reputation. With the addition of our latest feedback management system, AreTheyHappy, you can now collect, respond, and amplify online guest interactions from any review site or social media platform in a single feed.

You can also customize which terms or areas of interest you want to monitor, such as menu categories or items. As you make changes to your business, you can see what resonates most to your customers. Visit blackboxintelligence.com to learn more about what you can do with our [Customer Experience](#) and [Guest Intelligence](#) platform.



How are you improving the customer experience to drive brand performance?

Learn how you can make smarter business decisions and simplify customer satisfaction

**SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION WITH ONE
OF OUR SPECIALISTS TODAY!**

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