

guest XM

by Black Box Intelligence

How to Use GuestXM to Build Better Customer Experiences



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction..... | 4 |
| Industry and CX Trends..... | 5 |
| How to Monitor Customer Satisfaction..... | 6 |
| How to Leverage CX Benchmarking..... | 8 |
| How to Use Surveys to Capture Customer Satisfaction..... | 9 |
| How to Respond to Online Reviews..... | 10 |
| Restaurant CX FAQs..... | 11 |

About GuestXM

GuestXM is the only customer experience (CX) platform purpose-built for the restaurant industry, offering a 360-degree view of the guest experience. At GuestXM, we work with over 400 brands to provide restaurant teams the insights and tools needed to maintain and scale unparalleled customer experiences. The GuestXM platform is organized into three distinct solutions, including:



Feedback & Sentiment Analysis: Social & Review Listening and Surveys

GuestXM pulls restaurant feedback from online review sites and uses AI-powered natural language processing to help you understand the guest sentiment for food, beverage, service, hospitality, ambiance, value, and intent to return. Our AI tool helps you find the needle in the haystack.



Brand Reputation Management: Review Management

GuestXM's Brand Reputation Management solution allows you to take an omni-channel approach to responding to guests, improving search engine visibility, and streamlining feedback management processes through automation.



Market Intelligence: Competitor Workforce and Financial Intelligence

GuestXM's Market Intelligence provides macro and micro trends in the market, then compares them to the overall industry and your competitors to unlock opportunities that drive sales and traffic. Armed with insights across geographies, Nielsen DMAs, and your Comp Units, you'll gain clarity on seasonality trends, new anomalies, and see weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual performance.

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 year-over-year 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 whether there are areas you can improve on 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.

In addition, customer feedback surveys serve as a powerful tool for uncovering shortcomings across customer interactions—from service-related issues to concerns about atmosphere, food quality, or perceived value, all of which significantly impact a guest's decision to return. And by conducting surveys, you can potentially reduce the likelihood of negative online reviews.

Overall, online reviews and surveys are excellent sources 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 superior CX. 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 customer insights to focus your team and your investments to build better customer experiences.

Industry and CX Trends

At GuestXM, we consistently track critical industry and CX trends across the nation to provide restaurant brands with the most up-to-date insights. According to our recent data:

- During the first nine months of 2023, those restaurant locations with very high ratings (over 4.5 stars) received 3.5 times more online reviews than restaurants rated between 3.5 and 4.0 stars.
- Restaurants that provided higher levels of hospitality had 2.4 percentage points better same-store sales growth and 1.8 percentage points better same-store traffic growth than brands classified as providing lower levels of hospitality to their guests.
- In the current environment, food quality has become the key differentiator helping brands attract more customers than competitors. The top negative themes in Q3 included food safety, temperature inaccuracy, and accuracy of order.

Guests expect consistent food execution, a service experience that meets and/or exceeds expectations, and attention to detail. Understanding broader trends in the industry can help you prepare your restaurant's CX 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.

2023's Top Negative Themes in Customer Sentiment

1

Food Safety

2

Temperature Inaccuracy

3

Accuracy of Order



Food quality is your brand's key differentiator for attracting more customers than competitors

How to Monitor Customer Satisfaction Via Online Reviews

Keeping up with social media and review sites can easily become overwhelming, especially for high-volume restaurants. Modern CX platforms will automatically aggregate guest satisfaction data and use NLP 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, limited-time offers, promotions, and other key business initiatives.
- Easily conduct online review sentiment analysis.
- Create customized alerts for specific brand reputation issues.



The right CX management software can also help inform your restaurant's CX strategy by providing benchmarks against competitors, restaurant segments, and the industry.

Essential Sentiment Tracking for Modern Feedback Analysis

Restaurant brands need to monitor sentiment around certain 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 so you can pinpoint team training opportunities.

Another critical sentiment category is around any interactions with team members your guests might have had. Trends around the frequency of table touches or speed of service would indicate whether or not your team is meeting expectations.

Finally, assessing trends over time will make your NLP more intuitive because it will continue learning from the greater volume of reviews received. It should also be able to make suggestions about what to do next based on those trends.

Hospitality-Specific Natural Language Processing



General positive adjectives like “friendly,” “kind,” “polite,” and “nice.”



General negative adjectives like “rude,” “mean,” and “unkind.”



General neutral adjectives like “OK.”



Adjectives related to guest experience, like “wonderful,” “fantastic,” and “enjoyable” or “worst,” “awful,” and “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,” and “couldn’t answer my questions.”



Anything specific to your steps of service; for example, we could track any mentions of table greetings.

How to Leverage Customer Experience Benchmarking

CX benchmarking in the restaurant industry is the process of measuring and comparing a restaurant's service, quality, and overall customer satisfaction against established standards or competitors to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

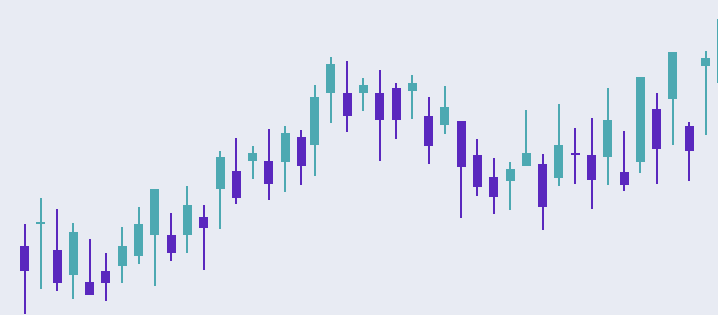
When benchmarking your CX performance, it's important to tap into the authentic voice of both your guests and those of your competitors. This means honing in on online reviews.

GuestXM provides unblinded competitor analysis and benchmarking straight out of the box. Our unique approach relies on online reviews, not survey data, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of customer sentiments.

By naturally listening to customers' preferences and analyzing free-text feedback, we avoid subjecting them to a barrage of rigid questions, providing valuable insights effortlessly.

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CX Benchmarking



- Provides rich and unbiased data with a customer-centric approach
- Utilizes qualitative capture to highlight specific details, content, and nuances that quantitative surveys may miss
- Uses advanced sentiment analysis to extract and analyze emotions expressed in reviews
- Offers agility through Natural Language Processing (NLP)
- Provides flexibility to meet the current and future needs of growing brands through a configurable platform
- Includes ml-microservices (machine learning functionality broken down into smaller, independent services) to track a predefined set of topics that cover the common themes in the restaurant industry

How to Capture Customer Satisfaction Via Feedback Surveys

Surveys are a reliable diagnostic tool that, when used properly, can provide detailed information about the guest experience.

Today, most businesses are monitoring core indicators of brand and location health through Net Promoter Scores (NPSs), which identify guests' willingness to recommend a specific restaurant; Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) Scores, which indicate how satisfied diners are with a restaurant's food, service, and overall experiences; Customer Effort Scores (CESs), which indicates of how easy or difficult it is to dine at or order from a restaurant; etc. Top brands are also including surveys to customers of their delivery and takeout platforms to better manage the experience of this crucial, growing segment.

A consolidated CX management solution should provide your team with the ability to easily build and distribute post-dining surveys, usually via QR code, email, or Wi-Fi access; automate various actions, like task assignments or notifications, based on survey scores or customer feedback; evaluate comments by leveraging NLP to understand what customers are talking about at scale; and so forth.



How to Respond to Online Customer Reviews

One key to building a better guest experience is to make responses to online reviews and feedback as visible as possible. Regardless of whether guest sentiment is skewing positively or negatively, by responding (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.

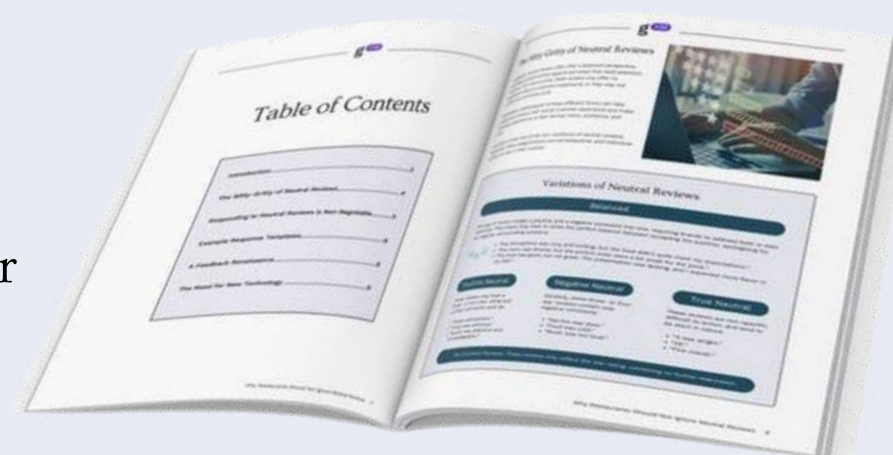
Responding to positive restaurant feedback draws attention to the things you do well, which potential customers will notice. The fact that your customers took the time to show their appreciation in the form of a review is admirable. According to research done by [Google](#), businesses that respond to reviews are seen as 1.7 times more trustworthy than those that don't.

Neutral reviews, on the other hand, merge a positive and a negative comment into one, requiring brands to address both in their responses. That means they have to strike the perfect balance between accepting the positive, apologizing for the negative, and providing solutions.

Where brands may get away with responding to five-star reviews with automated messages, these responses don't necessarily work when it comes to neutral reviews. So a lot of care and consideration needs to go into how a business will engage with passive customers. More often than not, these responses need to be more personalized, building trust while simultaneously obtaining more information about the customer's experience.



Neutral reviews can bring to light issues that are quickly resolvable. Don't miss an opportunity to recover guests. Learn how to take advantage of your online reviews in our guide [“Why Restaurants Shouldn't Ignore Neutral Reviews”](#).



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 CX FAQs

What Is CX Management?

CX management is the process of collecting and analyzing data on how customers feel about your business. Guest intelligence data is an important foundation for 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 CX?

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 guest sentiment via online reviews and feedback surveys. 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.

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About GuestXM

Gain full control of your brand—from how it's perceived to how it performs—so you know exactly what impact your team can make to transform your brand's hospitality and deliver remarkable restaurant experiences.

Visit [guestxm.com](https://www.guestxm.com) to discover what's possible.