

# Enhancing the Movie-Going Customer Experience: Insights and Strategies for Theater Operators



## Executive Summary:

**A Closer Look** conducted a comprehensive market research study to provide movie theater operators with valuable insights into **customer preferences, behaviors, and expectations**. By surveying 1,670 respondents, we identified key areas where theaters can focus their efforts to enhance the movie-going experience, increase customer satisfaction, and **drive revenue growth**.

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The study reveals that while nearly half of the respondents rarely visit movie theaters, there are significant opportunities to encourage more frequent visits through targeted promotions, loyalty programs, and a differentiated experience. The report highlights the importance of factors such as comfortable seating, cleanliness, and audio-visual quality in shaping the movie-going experience.

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It also explores the potential of premium offerings, subscription models, special events, and expanded concession stand options to cater to evolving customer preferences. By implementing the recommendations provided in this report, movie theater operators can adapt to changing trends, stay competitive in the market, and foster long-term customer loyalty.

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## KEY INSIGHTS

**Movie-going frequency:** Nearly **50%** of respondents rarely visit movie theaters, while **33%** go once a month, indicating a need for strategies to encourage more frequent visits.



## KEY INSIGHTS

**Factors influencing the movie-going experience:** Comfortable seating (86%), cleanliness (65%), and ticket prices (63%) are the top considerations for moviegoers.



## KEY INSIGHTS

**Willingness to pay:** 55% of respondents are willing to pay between **\$10 and \$15** for a standard movie ticket, while **25%** prefer ticket prices below **\$10**, emphasizing the need for diverse pricing options.





## KEY INSIGHTS

**Premium experiences and subscription models:** **73%** of respondents are interested in premium movie experiences, and **43%** are likely to subscribe to a monthly movie pass.



## KEY INSIGHTS

**Concession stand offerings:**  
Health-conscious options (**45%**)  
and gourmet popcorn flavors  
(**22%**) are the most sought-  
after additions to the  
concession stand menu.





## Research Methodology

To gather comprehensive insights into customer preferences and behaviors, A Closer Look conducted an **online survey of 1,670 respondents**. The survey was designed to cover various aspects of the movie-going experience, including frequency of visits, preferred movie times, factors influencing the experience, popular movie genres, willingness to pay, interest in premium offerings and subscription models, special events, concession stand preferences, and competing entertainment options.

The survey consisted of a combination of multiple-choice questions, rating scales, and open-ended responses to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. Respondents were asked about their movie-going habits before and after the COVID-19 pandemic to identify shifts in behavior and preferences.

## Introduction

In an increasingly competitive entertainment landscape, it is crucial for movie theater operators to understand and adapt to the evolving preferences of their customers. This market research report, prepared by **A Closer Look**, aims to provide valuable insights into consumer behavior, preferences, and expectations regarding the movie-going experience. By analyzing the responses, we have identified key areas where theater operators can focus their efforts to improve customer satisfaction, drive revenue growth, and foster long-term loyalty.





## Movie-Going Habits and Preferences

Our survey reveals that nearly half of the respondents rarely visit movie theaters, while **33%** go once a month. This suggests a need for theaters to develop strategies that encourage more frequent visits. One approach could be to offer **targeted promotions** and **loyalty programs** that incentivize regular attendance. Additionally, theaters should focus on providing a compelling and **differentiated experience** that sets them apart from other entertainment options.



When it comes to the **preferred movie times**, weekend matinees (**32%**) and evenings (**25%**) are the most popular choices. Theaters can optimize their scheduling and staffing to accommodate these peak periods while also promoting weekday matinees (**22%**) and evenings (**21%**) to drive attendance during off-peak hours.

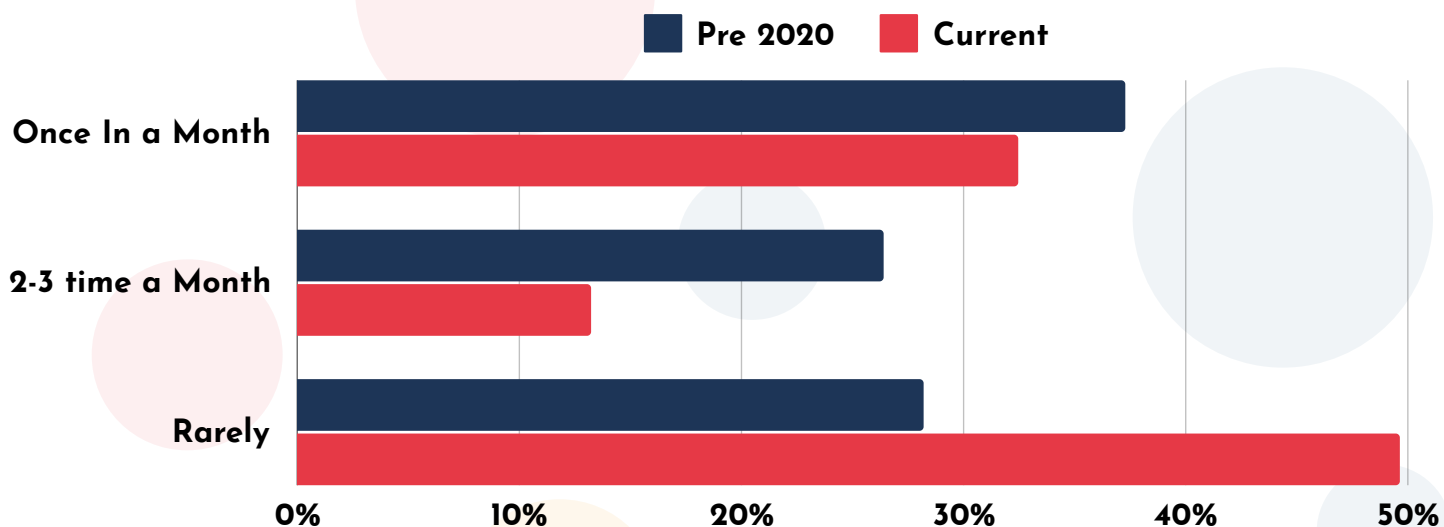






## Evolution of Movie-Going Habits Post-COVID

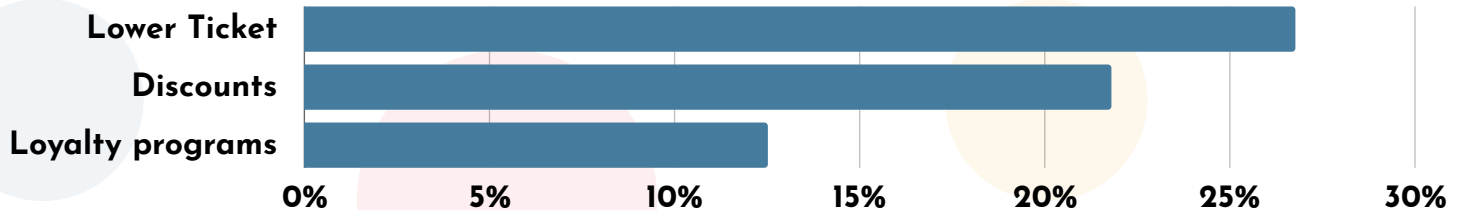
Comparing **pre-2020** movie-going habits to current behaviors, there appears to be a shift towards less frequent movie theater visits. The percentage of respondents who went to the movies once a month has decreased from **37%** pre-2020 to **33%** currently. Similarly, the percentage of respondents going to the movies 2-3 times a month has dropped from **26%** pre-2020 to **13%** currently. The proportion of respondents who rarely went to the movies has increased from **28%** pre-2020 to **50%** currently, suggesting that the pandemic may have accelerated the trend of infrequent movie-going or led some individuals to visit theaters even less often than before.





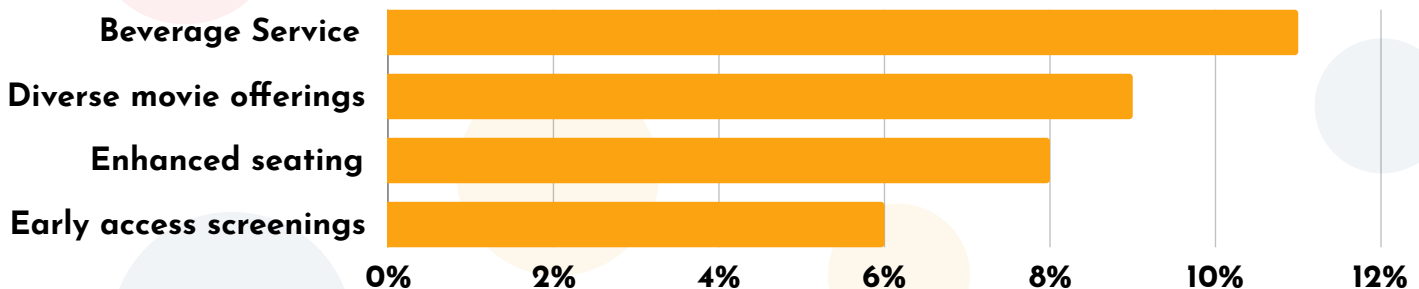
When asked about factors that would encourage more frequent movie-going, respondents identified several key drivers. Lower ticket prices emerged as the most popular factor, with **27%** of responses, followed by special promotions or discounts (**22%**) and loyalty programs (**13%**). These findings suggest that price and value are significant considerations for moviegoers, and theaters could benefit from implementing dynamic pricing strategies, targeted promotions, and rewarding loyalty.

■ frequent movie-going, respondents



Other factors that could positively impact attendance include in-seat food and beverage service (**11%**), more diverse movie offerings (**9%**), enhanced seating (**8%**), and exclusive or early access screenings (**6%**). While these factors received comparatively fewer responses, they highlight the importance of providing a comfortable, convenient, and differentiated movie-going experience.

■ Factors that could positively impact attendance





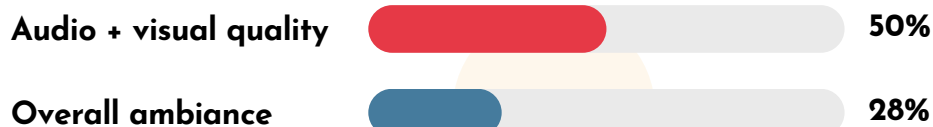
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## Factors Influencing the Movie-Going Experience

Our findings highlight the key factors that influence the movie-going experience. Comfortable seating (**86%**), cleanliness (**65%**), and ticket prices (**63%**) emerge as the top three considerations for moviegoers. To address these concerns, theaters should invest in high-quality, comfortable seating and maintain a clean and inviting environment. Implementing dynamic pricing strategies and offering value-added packages can help mitigate the impact of ticket prices on attendance.



Audio and visual quality (**50%**) and overall ambiance (**28%**) are also significant factors. Theater operators should ensure that their sound and projection systems are state-of-the-art and well-maintained. Creating a welcoming and immersive atmosphere through lighting, decor, and customer service can further enhance the overall experience



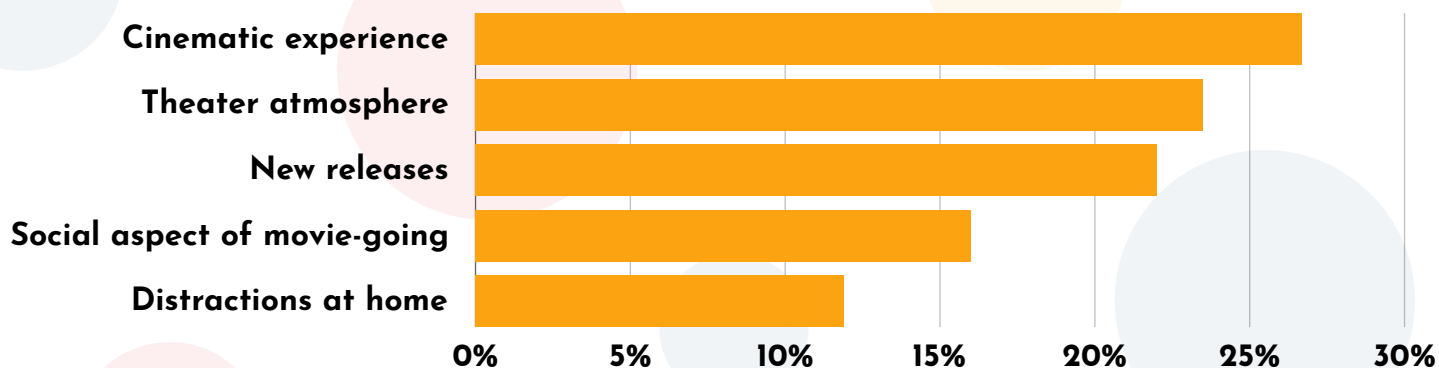




## Factors Influencing the Movie-Going Experience

The primary motivations for attending movie theaters include the cinematic experience (**27%**), theater atmosphere (**24%**), and access to new releases (**22%**). Theaters can capitalize on these motivations by investing in premium formats (e.g., IMAX, 4D), creating immersive environments, and securing exclusive or early access to highly anticipated films. Emphasizing the social aspect of movie-going (**16%**) and the opportunity to escape distractions at home (**12%**) in marketing campaigns can further drive attendance.

Factors Influencing the Movie-Going Experience:



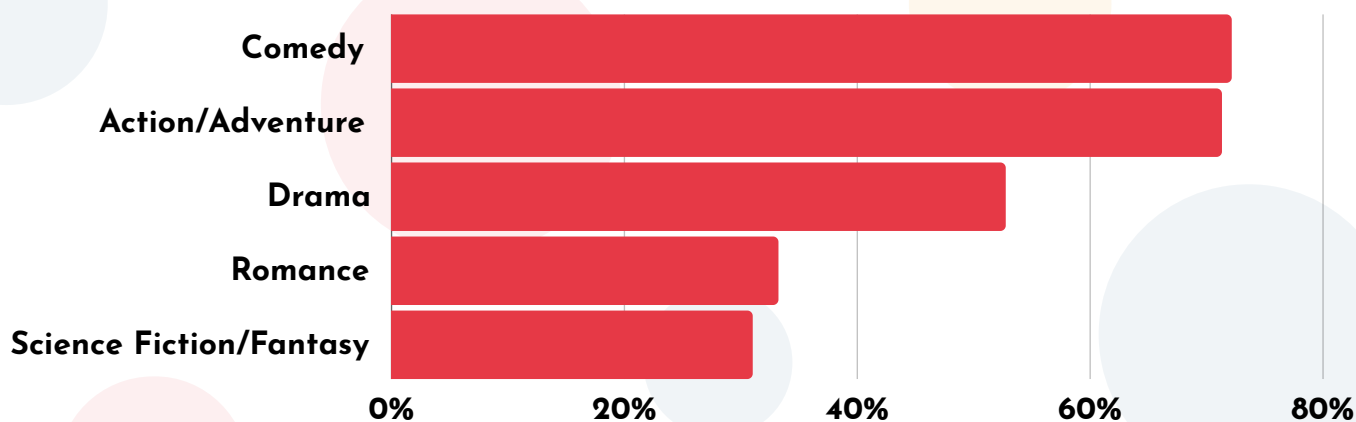




## Genre Preferences

Understanding the movie genres that appeal most to audiences is crucial for theaters to make informed decisions about their programming. **Comedy (72%)**, **Action/Adventure (71%)**, and **Drama (53%)** emerge as the most attractive genres, followed by **Romance (33%)** and **Science Fiction/Fantasy (31%)**. Theater operators should work closely with film distributors to secure a diverse and appealing lineup of movies that cater to these popular genres while also offering a mix of other genres to satisfy niche interests.

■ Genre Preferences:





## Pricing and Willingness to Pay

Our survey reveals that the majority of respondents (**55%**) are willing to pay between **\$10 and \$15** for a standard movie ticket. However, a significant portion (**25%**) prefer ticket prices **below \$10**. This highlights the need for theaters to offer a range of pricing options and value-added packages to cater to different consumer segments. Implementing dynamic pricing, offering discounts for off-peak showtimes, and bundling tickets with concessions or merchandise can help attract price-sensitive customers while maximizing revenue.

**55%**

Willing to pay between  
\$10 and \$15

**25%**

Prefer ticket prices  
below \$10







## Premium Experiences and Subscription Models

There is a strong interest in premium movie experiences, with **73%** of respondents expressing interest in added perks such as **exclusive seating, in-seat service, or early access to screenings**. Theater operators should consider introducing premium offerings that provide a differentiated and elevated experience. This can include luxury seating, gourmet food and beverage options, and personalized service.

Additionally, **43%** of respondents are likely or very likely to subscribe to a **monthly movie pass with unlimited screenings**. Implementing a subscription model can foster loyalty, provide a predictable revenue stream, and encourage more frequent visits. However, theaters must carefully design the program to ensure its financial viability and attract a wide range of customers.

**73%**

Interested in premium  
movie experiences

**43%**

Likely to subscribe to a  
monthly movie pass.



## Special Events and Themed Movie Nights

Our findings reveal a significant appetite for special events and themed movie nights, with **80%** of respondents expressing interest. Theater operators can capitalize on this by regularly organizing unique and engaging events that cater to different audience segments. This can include retro movie nights, film festivals, live broadcasts, and collaborations with local organizations or celebrities. Partnering with film studios, distributors, or fan communities to create exclusive experiences can further differentiate the theater's offerings and generate buzz.



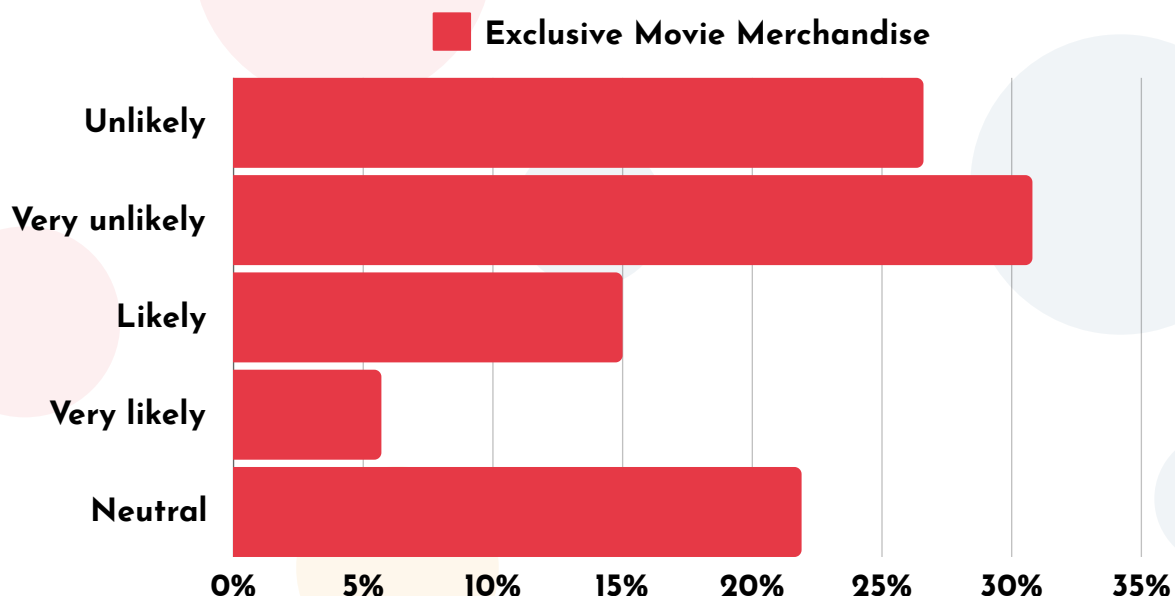
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## Exclusive Movie Merchandise

Our survey explored the likelihood of moviegoers purchasing exclusive merchandise related to popular movies, such as T-shirts and collectibles, if available at the theater. The findings suggest that offering movie-related merchandise may have limited appeal among the general audience. The majority of respondents (**58%**) indicated that they are either unlikely (**27%**) or very unlikely (**31%**) to purchase such items. Only **21%** of respondents expressed a strong interest, with **15%** being likely and **6%** being very likely to make such purchases. A significant portion of respondents (**22%**) remained neutral, suggesting they might be open to purchasing merchandise under certain circumstances.





## Exclusive Movie Merchandise

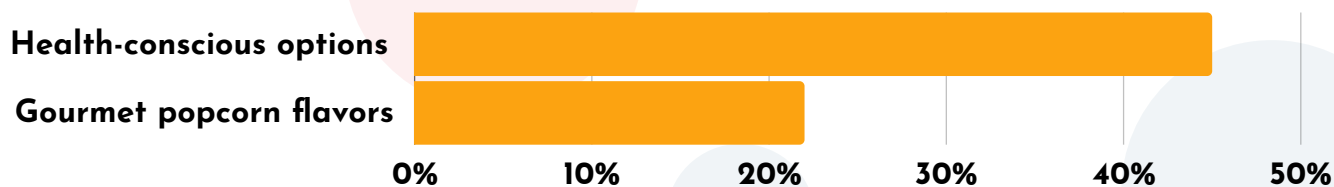
While these results indicate that offering exclusive movie merchandise may not be a highly effective strategy for generating additional revenue, there is still a **small but significant group of moviegoers (21%) who express interest in buying such items**. Theater operators could consider offering a limited selection of high-quality, exclusive merchandise related to highly anticipated or popular films to cater to this segment of their audience. However, it is crucial to carefully evaluate the potential demand, profit margins, and inventory management aspects before investing heavily in this area. Conducting targeted surveys or focus groups among interested moviegoers could provide valuable insights into the types of merchandise they would be most likely to purchase and help guide product selection and pricing strategies.



## Concession Stand Offerings

Expanding and diversifying the concession stand menu presents a significant opportunity for theaters to increase revenue and cater to evolving customer preferences. Our survey reveals that health-conscious options (**45%**) and gourmet popcorn flavors (**22%**) are the most sought-after additions. Many respondents expressed a desire for healthier snacks, such as fruits, vegetables, low-carb, gluten-free, and vegan/vegetarian options. Theaters should consider introducing a range of these items to appeal to health-minded moviegoers.

### Concession Stand Offerings:



Additionally, offering a variety of gourmet popcorn flavors beyond the classic butter popcorn can provide a premium and differentiated experience.

Exclusive or themed snacks (**18%**) and specialty beverages (**15%**) also have potential. Respondents showed interest in movie-themed snacks or exclusive items that they can only find at the theater. Specialty drinks, such as Starbucks coffee, bubble tea, and high-quality iced tea, were also mentioned as desirable additions to the concession menu.







## Concession Stand Offerings

Quite a few respondents suggested adding adult beverages like beer, wine, and cocktails to the concession menu. Though while many people expressed interest in new and diverse concession options, it is essential to note that classic favorites, like regular butter popcorn, soda, and candy, remain popular. Theaters should maintain these staples while expanding their offerings to cater to a wider range of preferences.

Another important aspect to consider is affordability. Many respondents commented on the high prices of concessions and expressed a desire for more budget-friendly choices.

In addition to snacks and beverages, some respondents suggested offering more substantial food options, such as sandwiches, burgers, fries, and appetizers like mozzarella sticks or pizza bites.

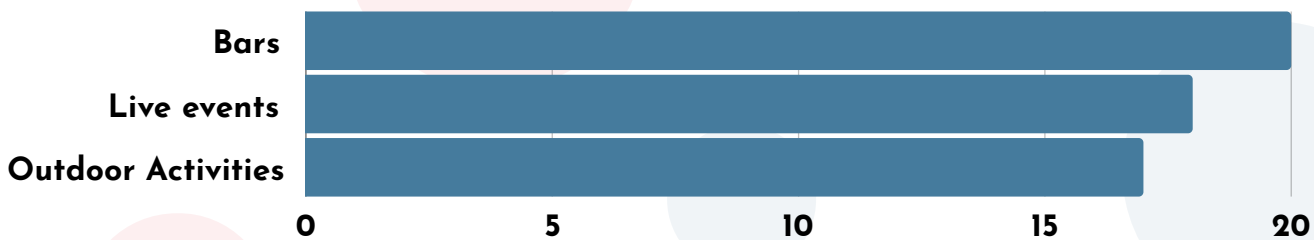
Finally, a few respondents mentioned the need for options catering to specific dietary restrictions, such as gluten-free, dairy-free, and low-sugar items. By offering a selection of snacks and beverages that accommodate these needs, theaters can demonstrate their commitment to inclusivity and attract a broader customer base.



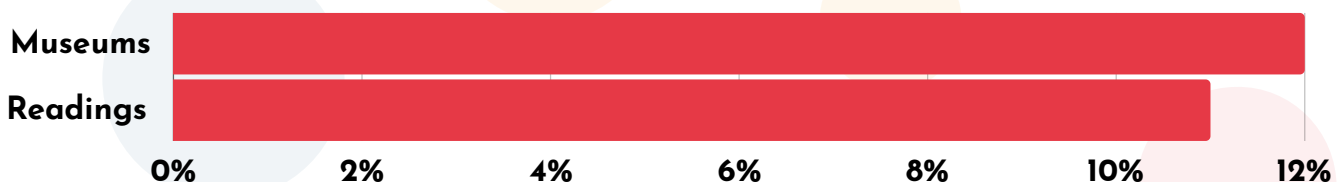


## Competing Entertainment Options

Movie theaters face competition from various entertainment alternatives. Socializing at restaurants or bars (**20%**), live events (**18%**), and outdoor activities (**17%**) are the most popular options chosen over movie-going. To remain competitive, theaters can explore partnerships and cross-promotional strategies with restaurants, bars, or event organizers. Creating movie-themed dining packages or offering discounts for combining movie tickets with other activities can help attract customers who seek variety in their entertainment choices.



Cultural events or museums (**12%**) and reading (**11%**) also compete for audience attention. Theaters can collaborate with cultural institutions to create educational or enrichment programs that complement the movie-going experience. Hosting book clubs, author events, or film discussions can engage audiences who value intellectual stimulation.





## The Value of Regular Customer Feedback

To consistently deliver an exceptional movie-going experience and adapt to changing customer preferences, it is crucial for theater operators to establish a **robust feedback collection process**. Regularly gathering input from patrons allows theaters to actively measure the customer experience, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate their commitment to customer satisfaction.

Conducting ongoing, in-the-moment feedback collection through methods such as post-movie surveys, on-site kiosks, or mobile apps can provide valuable insights into the immediate experiences of moviegoers. This real-time feedback enables theaters to **quickly address any issues or concerns**, such as cleanliness, staff friendliness, or technical problems, and make swift improvements.

In addition to in-the-moment feedback, implementing quarterly, semi-annual, or annual surveys can offer a more comprehensive understanding of **customer preferences, satisfaction levels, and evolving trends**. These surveys can delve deeper into topics such as movie genre preferences, opinions on premium offerings, and the effectiveness of loyalty programs. By analyzing this data, theater operators can make informed decisions about programming, pricing strategies, and facility upgrades.







## The Value of Regular Customer Feedback

Moreover, actively seeking and responding to customer feedback demonstrates that theaters value their patrons' opinions and are committed to enhancing their experience. When **customers feel heard** and **see their suggestions being implemented**, it fosters a sense of loyalty and encourages them to choose the theater as their preferred movie-going destination. Regularly communicating updates and improvements based on customer feedback through social media, email newsletters, or in-theater displays can further reinforce this connection.

By establishing a continuous feedback loop and acting upon the insights gained, movie theater operators can **proactively adapt to changing customer needs**, stay ahead of industry trends, and create a personalized and satisfying movie-going experience that **drives long-term loyalty** and venue success.





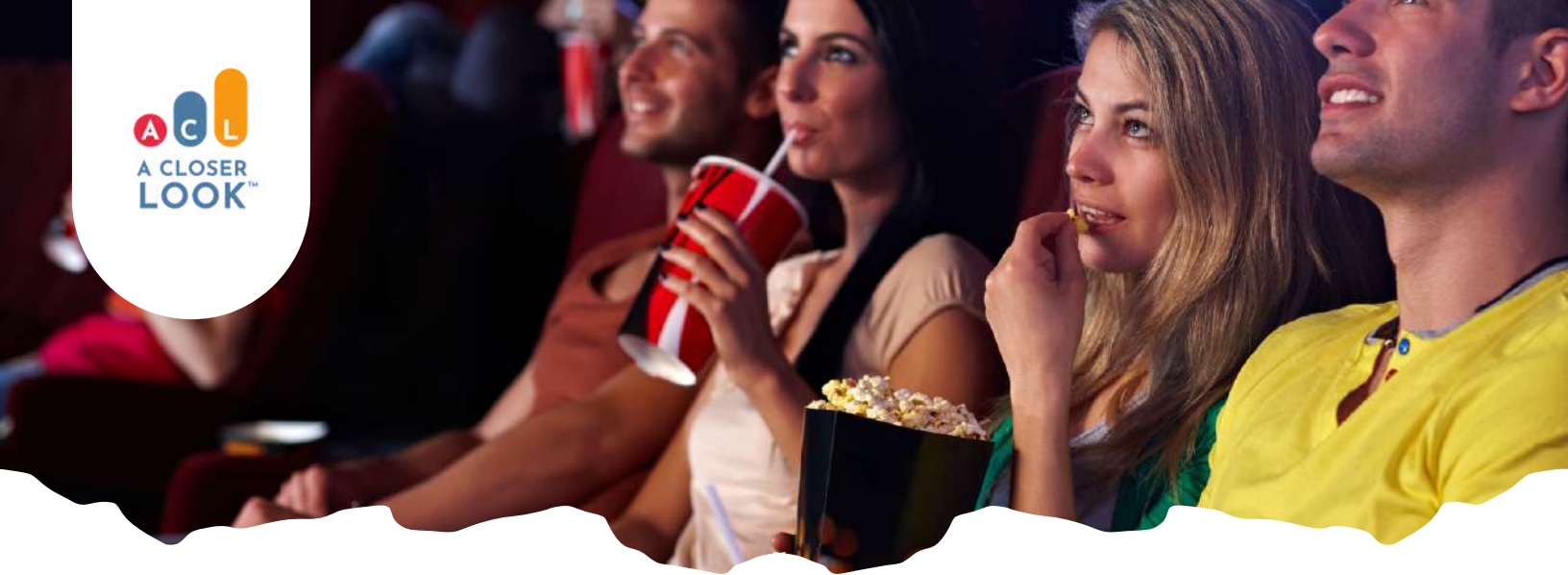
## Conclusion

The insights provided in this report offer a roadmap for movie theater operators to enhance the customer experience, **drive revenue growth**, and foster long-term loyalty. By focusing on the key factors that influence movie-going decisions, such as comfort, cleanliness, and audio-visual quality, theaters can meet expectations for a compelling experience. Offering a diverse range of movie genres, implementing dynamic pricing strategies, and introducing premium offerings and subscription models can help **attract and retain customers**.

Moreover, regularly organizing special events, expanding concession stand offerings, and exploring partnerships with other entertainment providers can help theaters **stay competitive in an evolving market**. By consistently monitoring customer preferences and adapting to changing trends, movie theater operators can position themselves for success in the years to come.







## Recommendations

- Enhance the movie-going experience by investing in comfortable seating, cleanliness, and state-of-the-art audio-visual systems.
- Implement dynamic pricing, value-added packages, and subscription models to cater to different consumer segments and drive revenue.
- Offer a diverse lineup of movies, including popular genres and niche content, and introduce premium offerings such as luxury seating and gourmet food and beverages.
- Organize special events, themed movie nights, and partnerships with studios, distributors, and local organizations to create exclusive experiences.
- Expand the concession stand menu with health-conscious options, gourmet popcorn flavors, and exclusive or themed snacks and beverages.
- Explore partnerships and cross-promotional strategies with restaurants, bars, event organizers, and cultural institutions to attract customers seeking variety.
- Continuously monitor customer preferences, gather feedback through ongoing surveys, adapt to changing trends, and regularly communicate updates and improvements based on customer feedback to demonstrate commitment to customer satisfaction and foster loyalty.

By implementing these recommendations and leveraging the insights provided in this report, movie theater operators can enhance the customer experience, drive revenue growth, and foster long-term success in an increasingly competitive entertainment landscape.



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Focused Feedback Studies and gather  
insights like this for your brand,

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