



# HOW TO RE-ENGAGE GEN Z.

A resource for operators.

# HELLO.

If you are reading this e-book, it's because you have a vested interest in the hospitality industry, just like us.

We feel strongly about the industry's potential for growth and the need for experienced, knowledgeable, and more importantly, passionate professionals to support it. What can never be forgotten is what is at the core of all hospitality businesses; the people. And for now, we are homing in the vibrant and evolving , Generation Z.

After many years working in hospitality, we are proud to join forces with excellent partners, to give back to the industry we are so passionate about. We have created a resource for operators that gives easy-to-implement actions to help them re-engage and make the most of this diverse demographic, Gen Z.

If you take just one thing from this e-book, then we have accomplished our goal. We hope you enjoy the read.

**The Opportunity Co**



TOC

# UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL.

Generation Z (Gen Z) refers to individuals born between the mid-to-late 1990s and the early 2010s, following Millennials (Generation Y).

The hospitality industry, has been significantly impacted by Gen Z's unique preferences and behaviours. Here's how:

- Technology Integration
- Tailored Experiences
- Sustainability and Ethics
- Eco-Friendly Practices
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Flexibility and Convenience
- Flexible Booking
- Convenient Services
- Employment Preferences

**Keep reading for data-driven insights and forward-thinking advice on how to re-engage with Gen Z.**



# CONTENTS.

What's the mindset behind Gen Z's hospitality choices?

How technology influences the operations of a business.

The role of social media in creating brand loyalty with Gen Z.

The importance of personalisation.

How to recruit, train, and retain Gen Z.

## CONTRIBUTORS:



# WHAT IS THE MINSET BEHIND GEN Z'S HOSPITALITY CHOICES.

THE FOUR MAIN FACTORS WHEN CHOOSING A VENUE FOR FOOD AND DRINK:

73%

GOOD QUALITY  
FOOD

57%

RANGE OF  
DRINKS

55%

VALUE FOR  
MONEY

45%

THE  
ATMOSPHERE

# MINDSET OF GEN Z.

This generation breakdown many restrictions previous generations have felt. They believe they can make a difference in the world (just look at Greta Thunberg), and because of this we need to recognise the difference they make in our businesses. Hospitality has needs to meet their desire for meaningful, convenient, value-added, and tech-integrated experiences.

**Growing up in the digital age**, a seamless digital experience is crucial. Gen Z appreciate the convenience and efficiency of being able to make reservations, order food, or pay bills directly from their phones. Having a mobile-optimised website and booking journey is essential to attract this demographic and impact their choice of hospitality venue. ***When was the last time you did a mystery check on your guest's digital experience?***

**Gen Z often seeks out real-world interactions** to balance their online activities. They value face-to-face socialisation, but to keep them coming back to your venue, it is important to have dynamic reasons to visit (RTV's) that are appealing, engaging and fun.

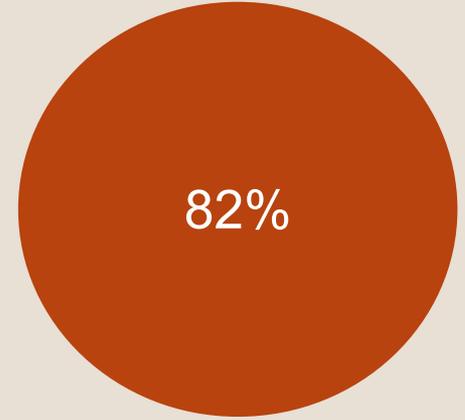


# MINDSET OF GEN Z.

**Competitive socialising venues combine the elements of fun, competition, and social interaction, catering perfectly to Gen Z's desire for memorable and shareable experiences. They preference active and engaging experiences over passive consumption. **Just look at Lane 7 for a best-in-class, consistent example of this.****

**Events and activities are a major draw for Gen Z.** Hosting events that resonate with their interests can be a powerful way for venues to attract and retain this demographic.

For example, sustainability-themed events such as a Cocktail masterclass that is eco-friendly or locally sourced, tech-centric meetups like Virtual Reality (VR) Gaming Nights or a Crypto Networking Night, or social justice awareness nights align with the values and interests of many in this generation.



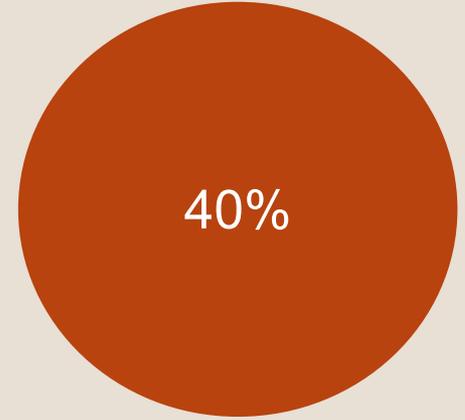
*Of Gen Z have been to a competitive socialising venue.*

# MINDSET OF GEN Z.

**Gen Z is often mindful of their spending**, even with their frequent outings. Offering affordable yet high-quality experiences can cater to their budget-conscious nature while still providing the memorable outings they seek. Be transparent with your pricing and special offers, and don't forget a loyalty program goes down pretty well with this audience.

**Gen Z is known for its strong values** around sustainability, inclusivity, and social justice, and they will support venues that align with these values. So, think about the actions your venue is currently doing to sustain the environment, promote diversity and even, engage in community-focused initiatives.

**TIP: They will also spot insincerity a mile off, so authenticity is key here!**

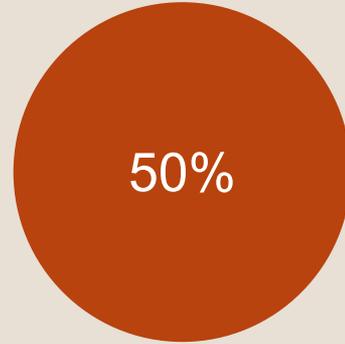


*Of Gen Z consumers are more likely to buy from brands with strong environmental credentials.*

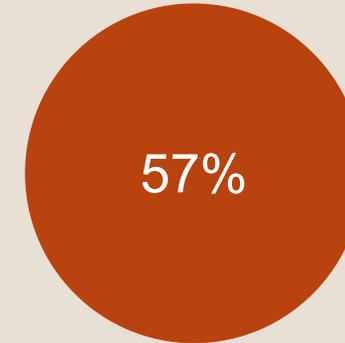
# MINDSET OF GEN Z.

**Many Gen Z prioritise health and well-being**, so an offering that encompasses healthy, organic and sustainable food with a good variety of low-and-no drinks options will appeal to this demographic. Perhaps your venue has under-utilised space, perfect for incorporating wellness-focused activities such as yoga classes or mindfulness sessions can attract those who value a holistic approach to health, but still want to enjoy the vibrancy of hospitality alongside it.

**Customer loyalty can be gained through being tech savvy and personalisation.** From QR code menus to augmented reality (AR) games within the venue, tech enhancements can greatly appeal to Gen Z. Additionally, data-driven insights can help with personalised experiences—such as tailored recommendations based on past visits or preferences—can make Gen Z feel valued and more likely to return.



*Of Gen Z are prioritising taking care of their mental health this year.*



*Of Gen Z are prioritising taking care of their physical health this year.*



# HOW TECHNOLOGY INFLUENCES THE OPERATIONS OF A BUSINESS.

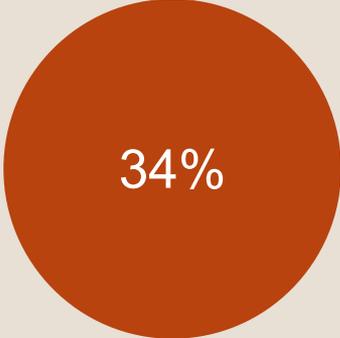
OUR BEST **13 OPPORTUNITIES** TO USE TECHNOLOGY WITHIN YOUR BUSINESS

Starting with....

## **Digital Loyalty Programs:**

Action: Implement app-based rewards systems.

**Benefit:** Encourages repeat business and strengthens customer loyalty.



34%

*Of Gen Z have  
a QSR loyalty  
card.*



22%

*Of Gen Z have  
a casual  
dining loyalty  
card.*

# TECH INFLUENCES.

*"As an operator, you know that there are never enough hours in the day. By embracing the evolution of tech, you can free up valuable time whilst ensuring a smooth running, safe and compliant venue."*

*(Alex O'Reilly, Co – Founder at The Opportunity Co)*

## Third-Party Integrations:

Action: Partner with platforms like Uber Eats or Deliveroo to reach customers at home.

**Benefit:** Increased visibility and accessibility for your brand.

## Online Review Management:

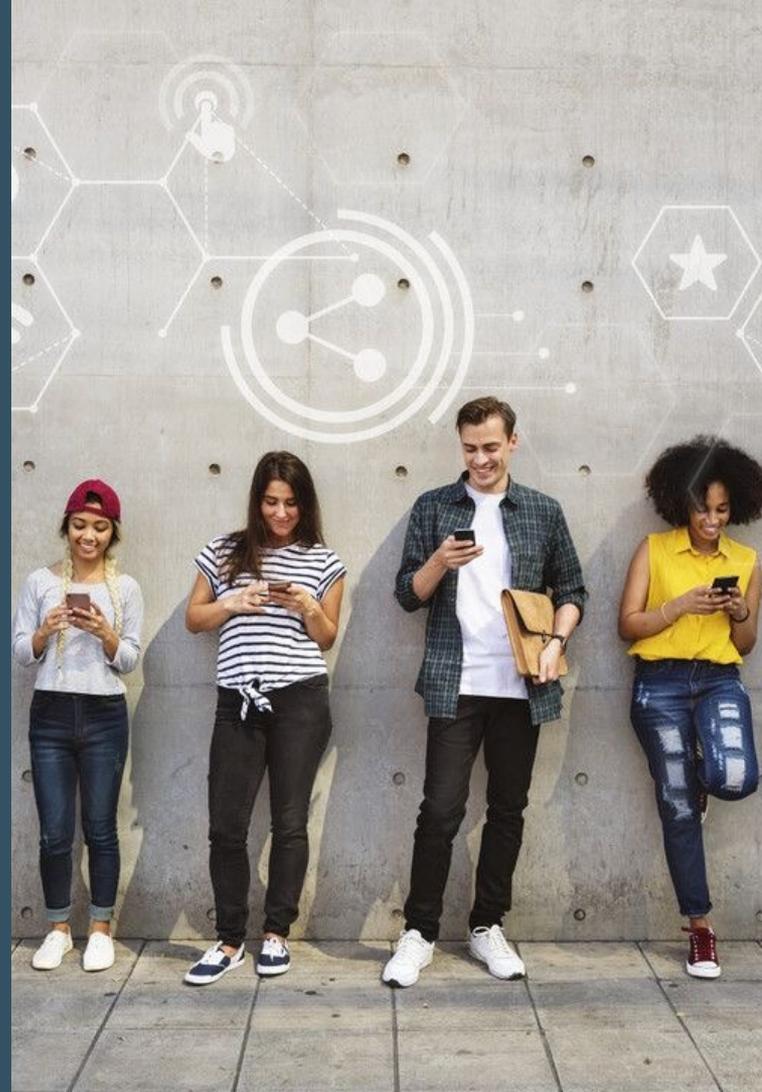
Action: Proactively manage and respond to online reviews.

**Benefit:** Demonstrates commitment to service and can turn negative reviews into positive experiences.

## Real-Time Feedback:

Action: Use digital tools to collect instant feedback.

**Benefit:** Allows for immediate service recovery and continuous improvement.



# TECH INFLUENCES.

## **ID Systems:**

Action: Implement ID verification systems for entry and data collection.

**Benefit:** Enhances security and provides valuable data insights.

## **Mobile Payments:**

Action: Support payment methods like Apple Pay, Google Wallet, and contactless cards.

**Benefit:** Streamlines checkout and enhances convenience.

## **Contactless Ordering:**

Action: Implement QR code-based ordering systems.

**Benefit:** Reduces wait times and improves the dining experience.

## **WiFi Solutions:**

Action: Ensure you have fast, reliable WiFi.

**Benefit:** Improves customer satisfaction and operational efficiency.

## **Fast Service:**

Action: Use kitchen management software to streamline operations.

**Benefit:** Accelerates order preparation and delivery.

22%

*Times more likely to demand digital order & payment than other age groups.*

X2.6

*Times more likely to demand quality WiFi than other age groups.*

# TECH INFLUENCES.

## **Engagement Tools:**

Action: Use apps to engage and reward staff.

**Benefit:** Enhances motivation and job satisfaction.

## **EPOS Systems:**

Action: Track staff performance with detailed EPOS insights.

**Benefit:** Identifies areas for improvement and rewards top performers.

## **Payroll Systems:**

Action: Offer flexible payment options and short-term loans.

**Benefit:** Improves staff financial well-being.

## **Tip Systems:**

Action: Ensure transparent and fair tip distribution.

**Benefit:** Promotes trust and satisfaction among staff.

**By addressing these opportunities, you can enhance customer experience, improve operational efficiency, and strengthen your brand's position in the market.**



# THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CREATING BRAND LOYALTY WITH GEN Z.

TOP 5 MOST POPULAR WAYS GEN Z WANTS TO **'STAY IN TOUCH'** WITH THEIR FAVOURITE HOSPITALITY BRANDS.



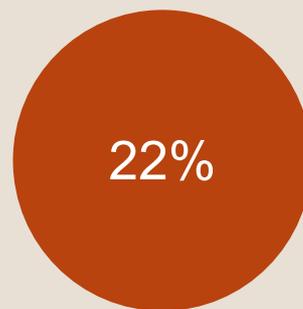
INSTAGRAM



TIKTOK



X / TWITTER



EMAILS



WHATS APP



# THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CREATING BRAND LOYALTY WITH GEN Z.

**Authenticity is key to building and maintaining strong, loyal relationships with Gen Z guests, ultimately driving long-term engagement and advocacy.**

## **Authentic content:**

Gone are the days of carefully curated social media grids. Authentic, 'in the moment' content reigns supreme (*not just with Gen Z, but Millennials too*).

Share content that resonates with their values, interests, and experiences. This can include memes, challenges, and behind-the-scenes looks that make the brand feel more personable and relatable.

Be transparent about business practices and initiatives.

Regular updates on progress and setbacks build trust and credibility.

## **Authentic engagement:**

Gen Z values authentic and direct interactions with brands.

Show your followers that you're listening by responding thoughtfully to comments, DMs, and the content in which they tag you.

A great brand response can inspire followers to engage again in the future, while creating the stepping stones for strong reciprocal relationships, alongside building a sense of community and trust.

Social media platform algorithms will also prioritise content from accounts that are engaging with other users.



# SOCIAL MEDIA > BRAND LOYALTY

## **Have an influencer strategy:**

Gen Z is heavily influenced by peer recommendations. Leveraging influencers who are seen as peers can drive engagement and loyalty. Partner with micro-influencers (10k- 100k followers) who have a genuine connection with their followers. Their endorsements can appear more authentic and trustworthy compared to those from macro-influencers.

## **Brand consistency:**

Develop a consistent brand voice that resonates with Gen Z. Maintain a consistent and visually appealing brand identity across all social media platforms. This includes colour schemes, logos, and overall aesthetics.

## **User Generated Content (UGC):**

Prompt customers to create content related to their experiences with the brand. This could be through specific hashtags, photo contests, or challenges.

Share user-generated content (UGC) on the brand's social media channels. This not only validates the customers' experiences but also fosters a sense of community and belonging.

## TOP 4 INFLUENCES ON GEN Z:

1

*Recommendations from family and friends.*

2

*Online reviews.*

3

*Brands social media profiles.*

4

*Social media influencers.*



# HOW DATA CAN GET YOU CLOSER TO GEN Z.

WE NOW LIVE IN AN ERA OF DIS-LOYALTY.

**Back in the 90's & early 2000's, brands enjoyed unchallenged loyalty, carefully controlling the narrative in a pre-digital time through PR and print.**

Fast forward to a world still spinning from an unprecedented level of societal, cultural and economic change and it's clear Gen Z's relationship with brands is different. A brand is no longer what the marketing team say it is, it's whatever social says it is, and the brand/consumer relationship has become a short-term contract requiring almost constant renewal. In most cases, our opportunity is not loyalty, but frequency.

**Of 33 brands we analysed, across all categories, overwhelmingly (79%) of Gen Z customers are visiting a single brand no more than 2 x a year, it's been 5+ months since their last visit and only 23% has visited more than one of a brand's locations.**

*Doesn't really shout 'loyalty' does it?*

The market has shifted, so your marketing has to - moving from brand 'monologue' (broadcasting to the masses, or worst, an anecdotally chosen 'target market,' about stuff only your brand really cares about) to brand 'dialogue' (knowing exactly how to compel your customers and prospects to take the action you want them to take, when you want them to take it).

And this means to be a customer business in 2024, you must be a data business. Because the brands who don't get to know their key customer groups (particularly the ones who represent the most value to them), and then use that insight to drive meaningful and relevant comms and incentives, will lose them to the brands who do.

# HOW DATA CAN GET YOU CLOSER TO GEN Z.

*“Get over the Gen Z thing.*

**2024 marks 33 years since leaving secondary school (much to the relief of my form tutor, Sister Anne).**

**Observing those I’ve stayed in touch with on social, it’s hard to imagine all these people in the same room now given their adult differences – even though we all grew up in the same town, at the same time.’**

***(Victoria Searl, Founder & CEO at DataHawks)***

So why is marketing so fixated on vague socio-economic groups like ‘Gen Z’ (which literally just means any human aged between 12 and 27), when it would be almost impossible to find a message which consistently resonated within my little school year group – let alone an audience of hundreds of thousands of people who haven’t got Sister Anne and her cutting wit in common.



# HOW DATA CAN GET YOU CLOSER TO GEN Z.

## Start with a 'WHY':

Which is why the 'why' is so important. Asking the right questions and building insights from the right data, to tell you how people are behaving in terms of their frequency, recency, visit times and product preferences – and most importantly, the mindset and motivation behind that behaviour.

Make sure you're capturing meaningful data at every opportunity – and listening to what it's telling you.



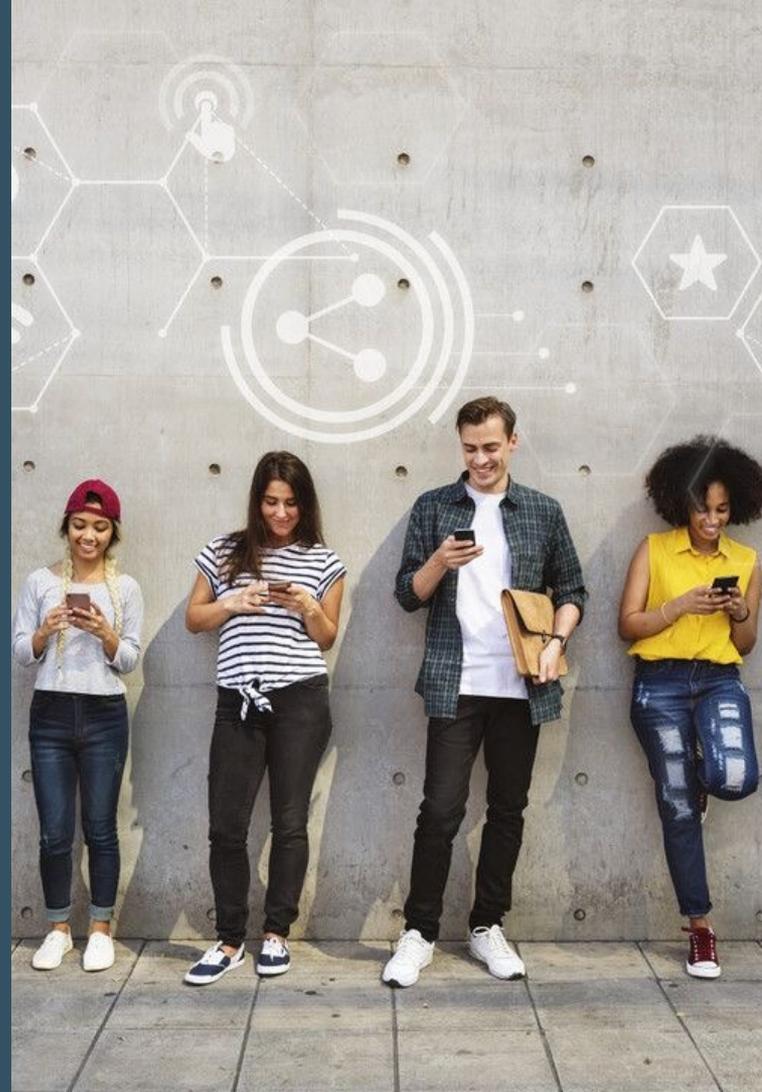
# HOW DATA CAN GET YOU CLOSER TO GEN Z.

## Turn insight into action:

You're not going to want to hear this but unless you are literally your own target audience (and even then you are viewing your brand through a biased lens), it is not your job to like your marketing. It's your job to translate your brand into messaging which resonates with it's target(s) and compels them to take positive action.

**You are not Apple**, so your marketing MUST be segmented and as personalised as possible. And it must tap into the 'why' whenever you can.

Gen Z are the most complex and nuanced market we've encountered as an industry yet, and so must your marketing be if you're to stand a chance of winning them.



# HOW TO RECRUIT, TRAIN AND RETAIN GEN Z.

**The hospitality industry faces a crucial challenge in engaging Generation Z, both as consumers and as part of the workforce. This tech-savvy generation values personalised experiences, sustainability, and convenience, reshaping expectations across the industry.**

## **Key insights about Gen Z in hospitality:**

### **Technology Integration**

Gen Z expects seamless digital experiences in all aspects of their lives, including hospitality interactions.

### **Sustainability and Ethics**

They prioritise eco-friendly practices and corporate social responsibility when choosing where to dine or work.

### **Tailored Experiences**

Personalisation is key to capturing Gen Z's attention and fostering loyalty.

### **Flexible Learning**

As employees, Gen Z seeks continuous learning opportunities that fit their schedules and preferences.

### **Meaningful Engagement**

They value work that allows them to contribute meaningfully and develop their skills.

# HOW TO RECRUIT, TRAIN AND RETAIN GEN Z.

The "last meter" of customer influence – the interaction between frontline staff and customers – is a critical touchpoint for the industry. **Well-educated teams drive brand advocacy and profitability**, while undereducated staff can lead to lost sales opportunities.

**"Innovative approaches to training and engagement are emerging to address these challenges.**

**For instance, frntline combines entertainment with education ("edutainment") has shown promise in increasing confidence and product knowledge among staff.**

**In one case study, 100% of participants reported feeling more confident in selling products after engaging with such training."**

***(Mark John, Founder & CEO at frntline)***

By focusing on this crucial intersection of staff education and customer experience, the hospitality industry can create more positive interactions, drive sales, and better cater to the preferences of Gen Z consumers.



# HOW TO RECRUIT, TRAIN AND RETAIN GEN Z.

**To effectively engage Gen Z in the hospitality industry, consider implementing these strategies:**

## **Adopt innovative learning approaches:**

Utilise short-form video content and interactive questionnaires to make learning engaging and accessible. Implement task-based learning that allows staff to immediately apply their knowledge in real-world situations.

## **Leverage technology:**

Use platforms that seamlessly integrate into Gen Z's tech-savvy lifestyle. Implement user-friendly interfaces that make tasks and learning easy and time-effective.

## **Prioritise data-driven insights:**

Gather real-time data on product availability, visibility, quality, and pricing. Use this information to optimise your marketing mix and improve customer experiences.



# HOW TO RECRUIT, TRAIN AND RETAIN GEN Z.

## **Offer flexible training options:**

Provide on-demand training to cater to Gen Z's preference for flexibility. Allow staff to access training materials on their own time and at their own pace.

## **Create meaningful incentives:**

Consider compensating staff for time spent on training to increase participation and motivation. Offer opportunities for career advancement through continued learning and skill development.

## **Partner with major brands:**

Collaborate with industry leaders to offer comprehensive, brand-specific training. Provide access to additional industry resources and learning platforms.

## **Focus on sustainability and ethics:**

Highlight your business's eco-friendly practices and social responsibility initiatives. Involve Gen Z staff in developing and implementing sustainability programs.



# OUR CONTRIBUTORS

## DATAHAWKS



*DataHawks deep dives into your customer data, identifying & profiling your key customer groups; surfacing which customers in your base are most valuable, who are lapsing, and who represent the biggest opportunity.*

*Our managed CRM services turn insight into revenue driving action, through high-converting email, SMS & WhatsApp campaigns - using your existing data & tech.*

[victoria@wearedatahawks.com](mailto:victoria@wearedatahawks.com)



*frntline is an innovative sales development platform that engages the next generation of hospitality workers through a unique model of education and incentivisation.*

*We collaborate with leading brands to create more positive interactions between well-trained team members and their customers, aiming to upskill workforces and drive profitability in the hospitality industry. Its free for all venues and we provide cash rebates to all involved.*

[mark@frntline.com](mailto:mark@frntline.com)





**We would like to thank KAM, DataHawks and frntlne for their contributions to this e-book, and to you, the reader for taking the time to hear our thoughts on how to re-engage with Gen -Z.**

**We hope you found it insightful and thought-provoking, and we encourage you to reach out with any of us to continue the conversation surrounding this vibrant demographic.**

**The Opportunity Co is a Hospitality consultancy that connects top-tier professionals with businesses in need of expert guidance in Operations, Marketing and Sales.**

**Our focus lies in spearheading new ventures, revitalising existing businesses and driving expansion strategies to success.**

**Get in touch and we will be happy to have a talk through your opportunities.**

**[hello@theopportunityco.uk](mailto:hello@theopportunityco.uk)**