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Restaurants power more than dining

Restaurants are at the heart of local neighborhoods. One in four US diners (43%) visit a local restaurant, bar or cafe at least once a week, and an overwhelming 98% agree these businesses are vital to their communities.¹ With dining at US OpenTable restaurants up 11% year-over-year, that role is only growing in importance.²

OpenTable's *Restaurant Impact Report* brings the data to life, combining proprietary insights with consumer

research to show the broader impact of the industry. It explores how local restaurants fuel economies, strengthen communities and support wellbeing—and why tackling challenges like no-shows is essential to helping restaurants thrive.

“This report is ultimately a love letter to restaurants, backed by meaningful insights, to honor all that restaurants do for us, and our society – and why OpenTable is committed to helping them grow and succeed,” said Amy Wei, Chief Operating Officer at OpenTable.



At a Glance: The Power of Hospitality

Behind every great meal is a business that helps power its local economy, brings the community together, and enhances daily life for its patrons. Here are the numbers behind that impact.

15.7m

The restaurant and foodservice industry is the nation's second largest private sector employer, providing 15.7 million jobs – or 10% of the total U.S. workforce.³

+11%

increase in US dining at OpenTable restaurants in the last 12 months, year-over-year.²

88%

of US operators agree restaurants play a vital role in powering their local economies.⁴

88%

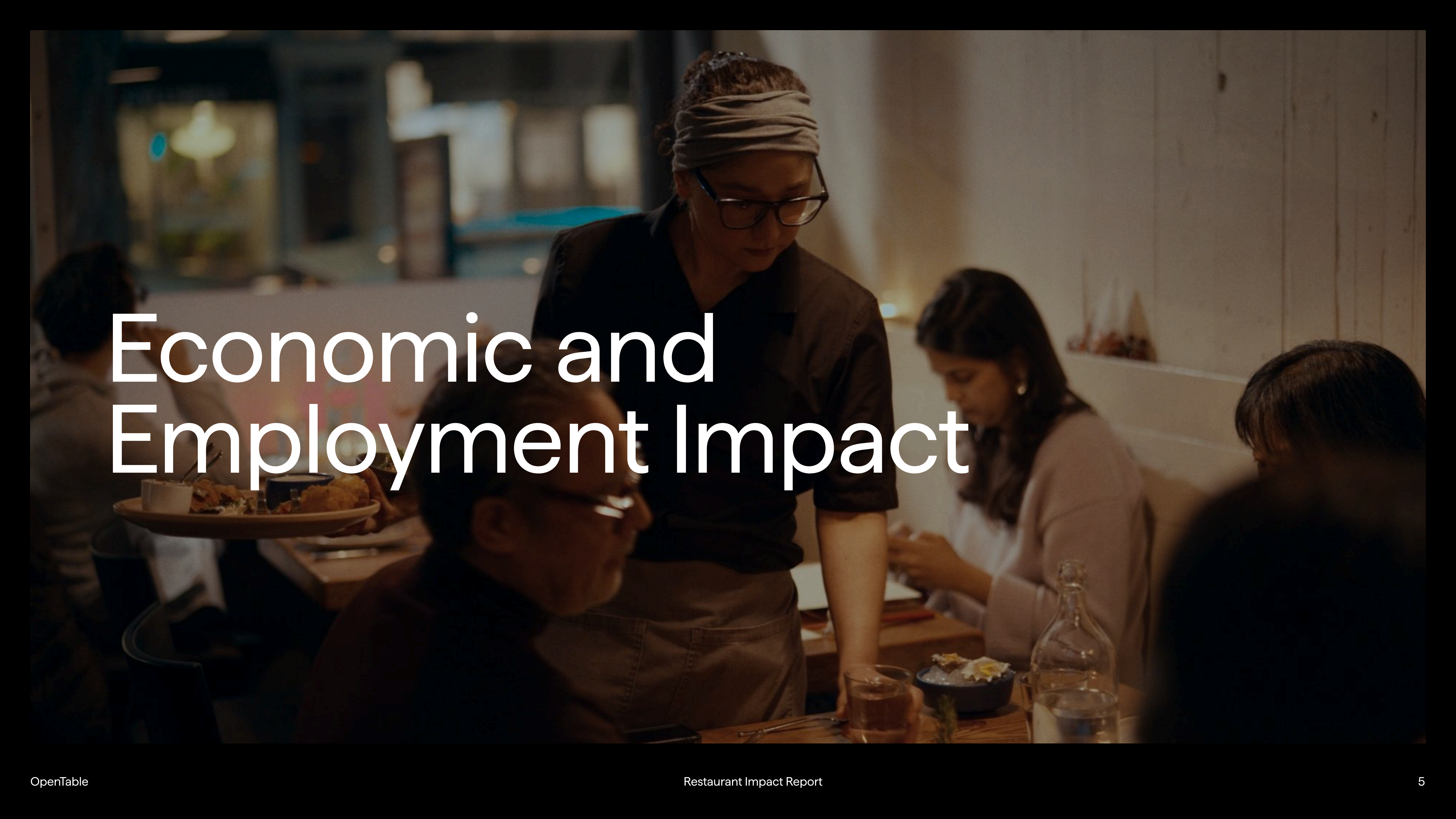
of US diners say local restaurants, pubs and cafes are key to building a sense of community.¹

84%

of US diners say dining out locally boosts their personal and social wellbeing.¹

67%

of US diners agree a no-show has a real impact on a restaurant's business.¹

A photograph of a restaurant interior. A server, a woman with glasses and a headband, is standing and holding a tray with food, serving a customer who is seated at a table. Other customers are visible in the background, and the atmosphere is warm and dimly lit.

Economic and Employment Impact

Restaurants don't just feed us, they fuel local economies and spur jobs.

Restaurant and foodservice sales are expected to reach a record \$1.55 trillion this year, a 4.8% increase from 2025.³

These contributions fuel additional spending across the economy, pushing the sector's total economic impact to \$3.7T – roughly 16% of real GDP – and supporting 23M jobs and \$1.2T in labor income.³

From sustaining local jobs to spurring foot traffic to neighboring businesses, every filled table delivers value far beyond the dining room.

How full tables power neighborhoods

60% of US diners have spent money at another nearby business before or after their meal at a local restaurant, spending an average of \$138.¹





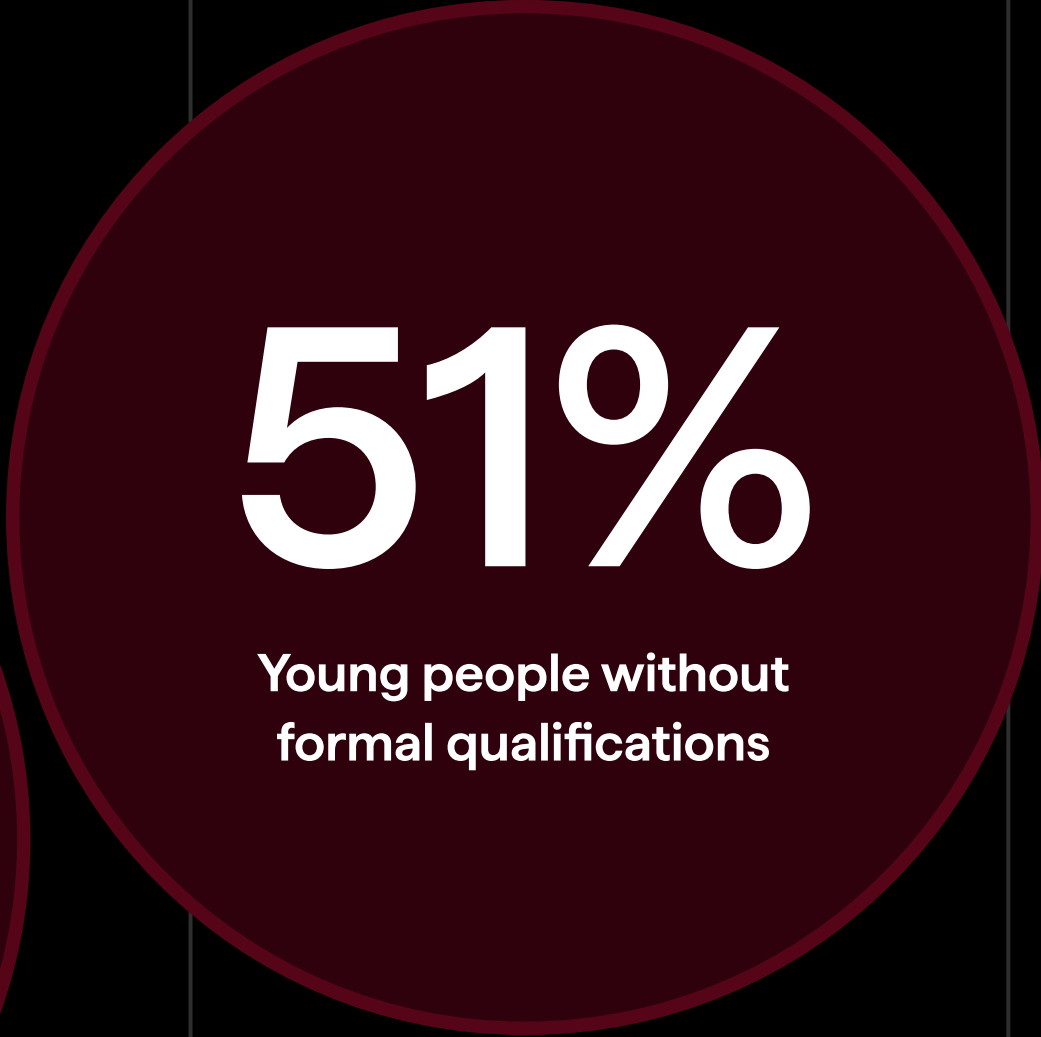
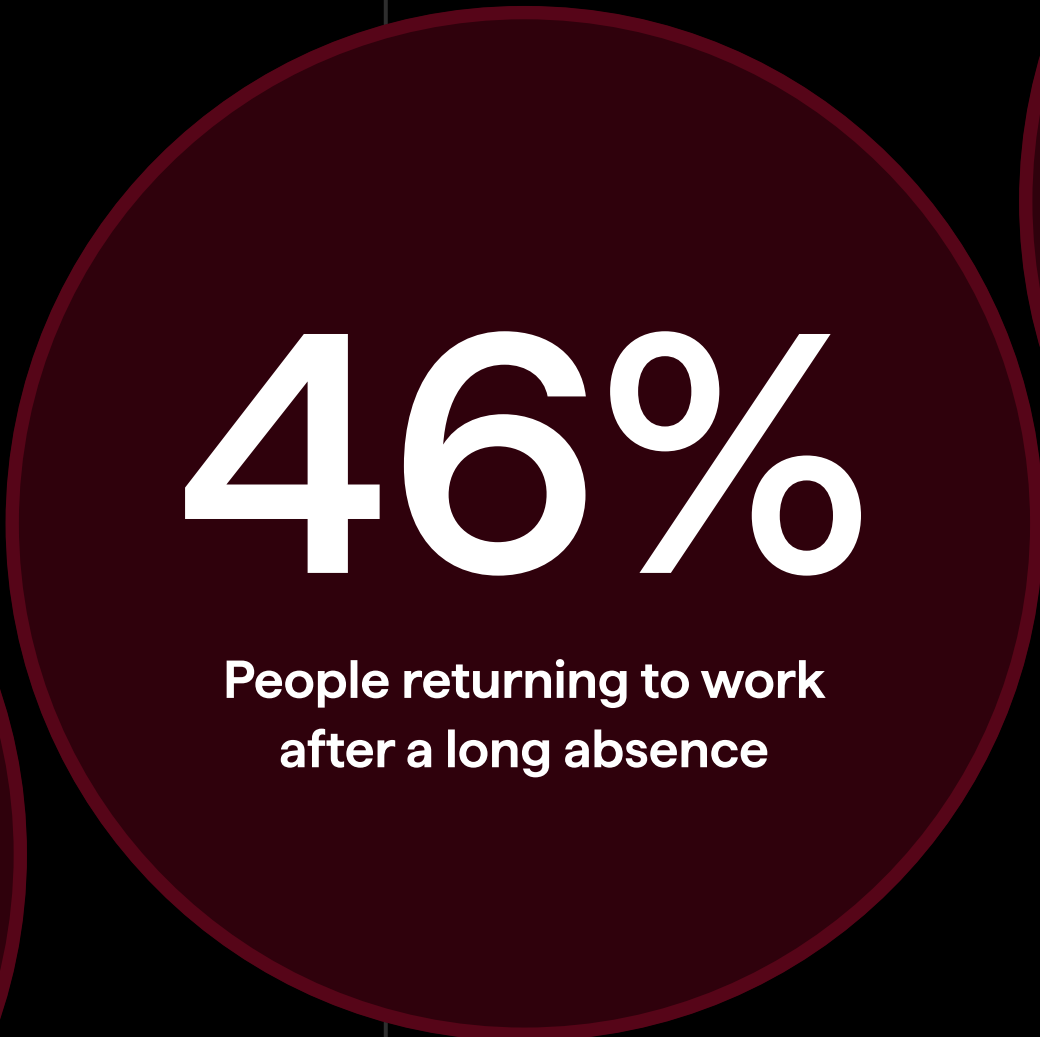
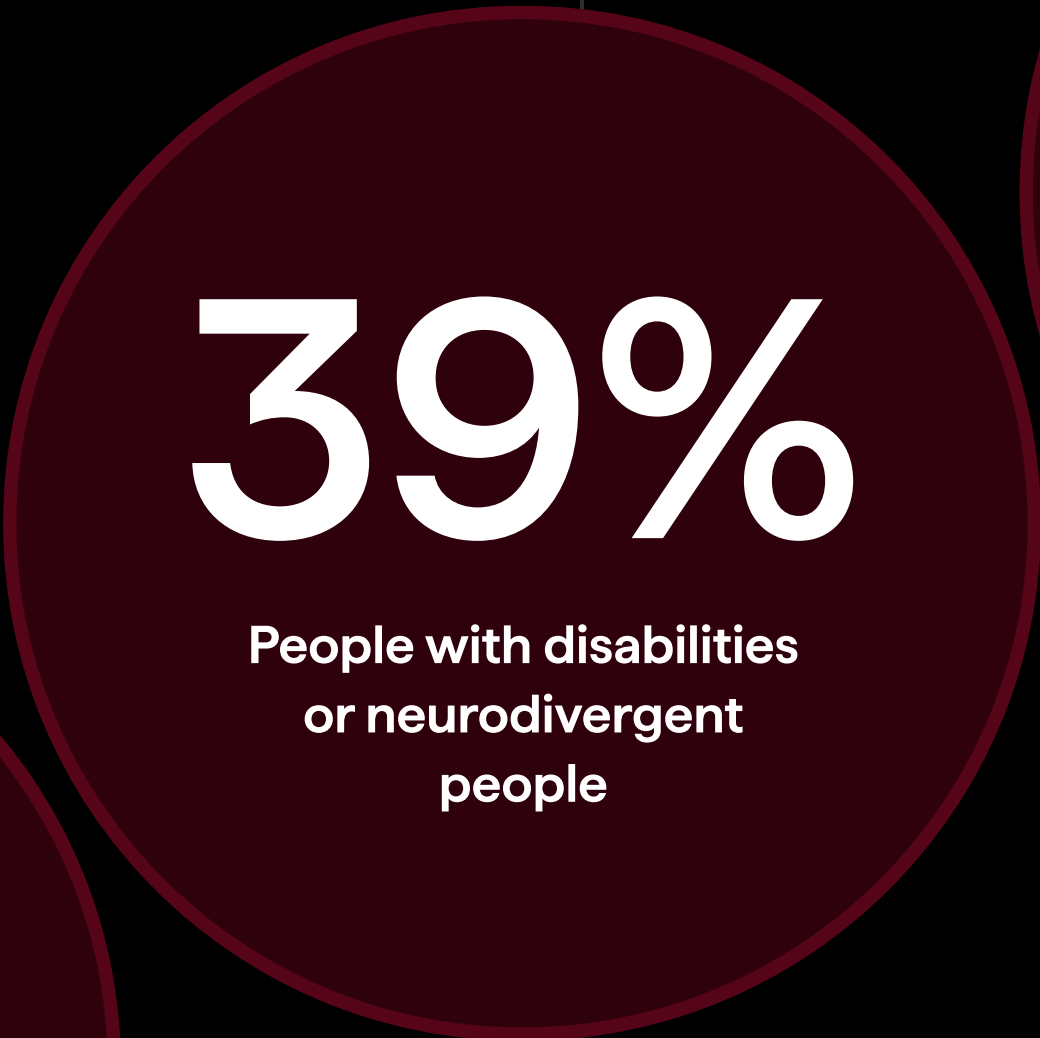
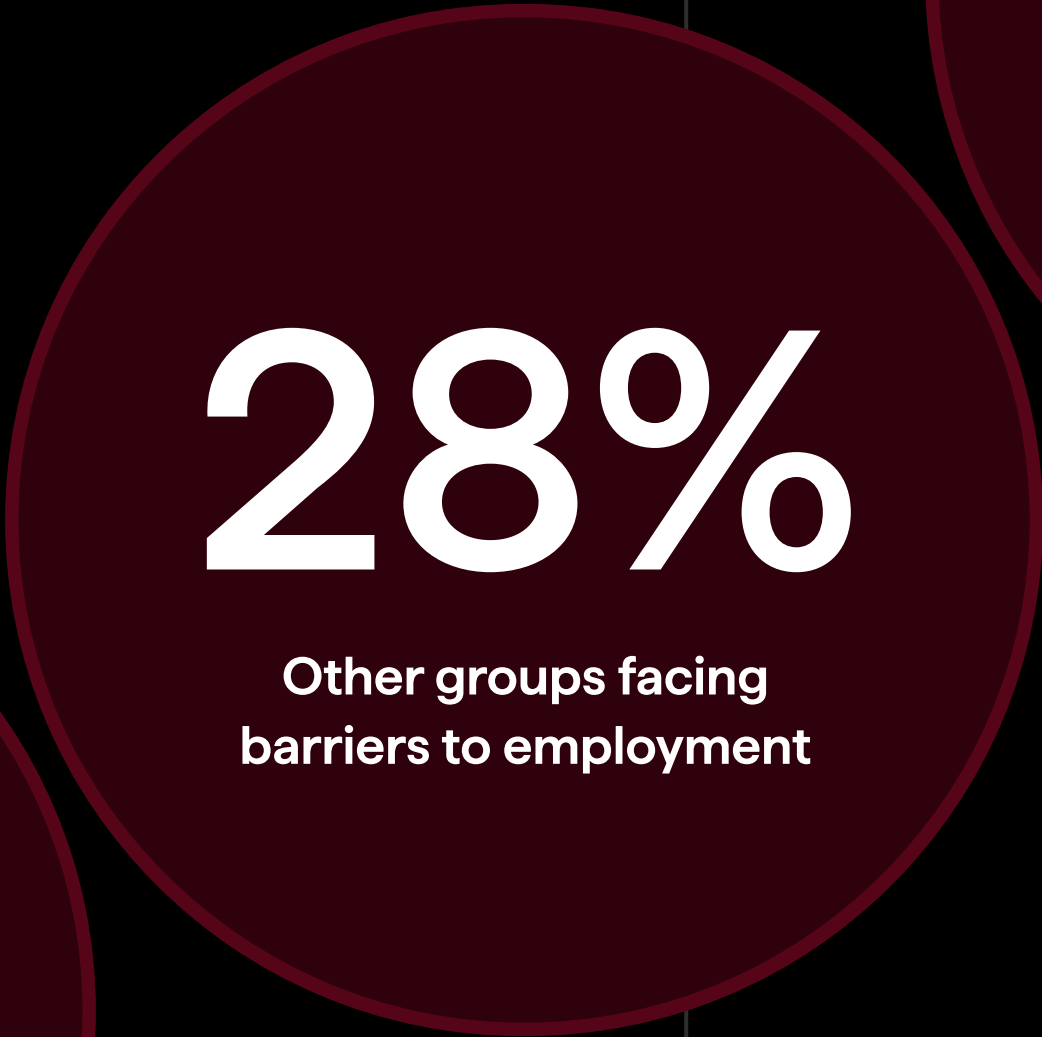
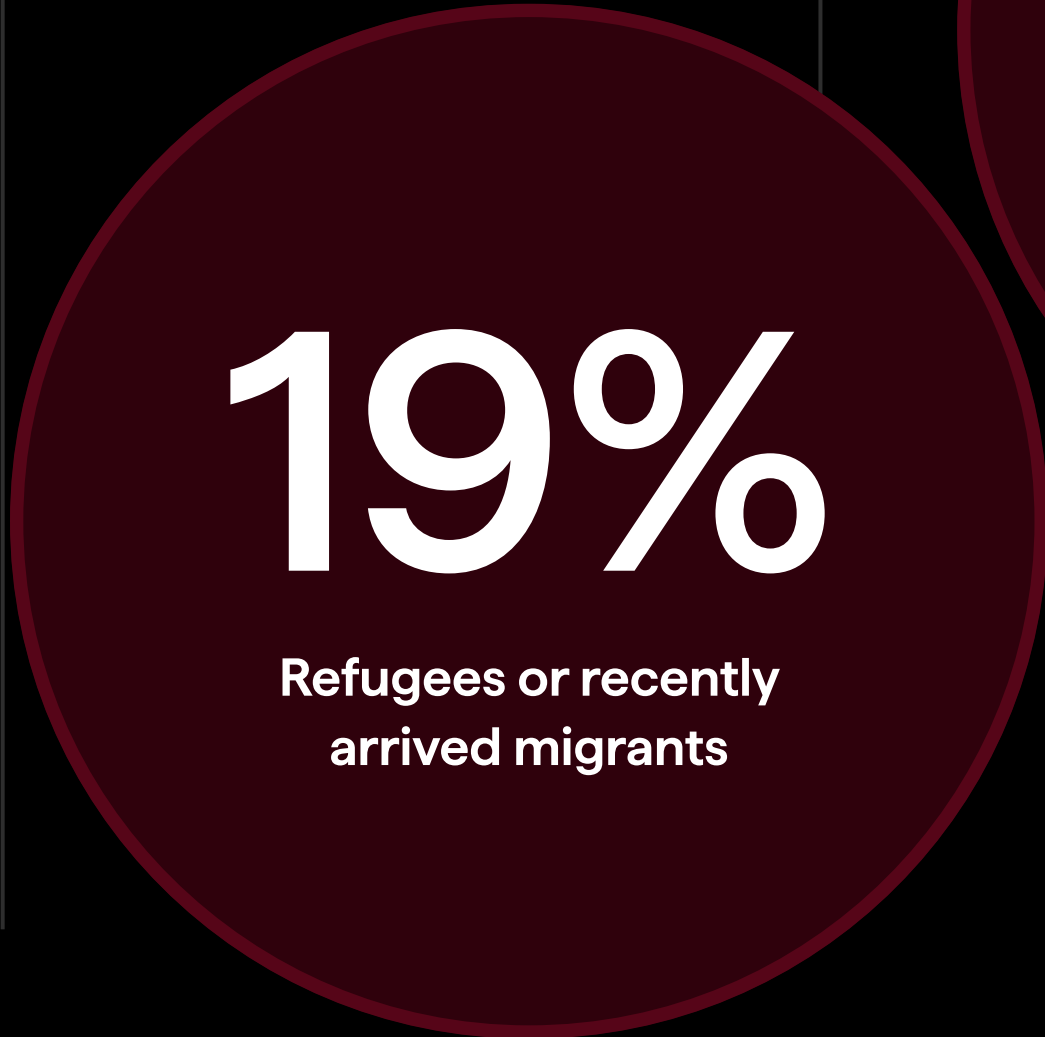
88%

of US operators say their restaurant plays an important role in the local economy, e.g. creating jobs, encouraging spending in the area and supporting local purveyors.⁴

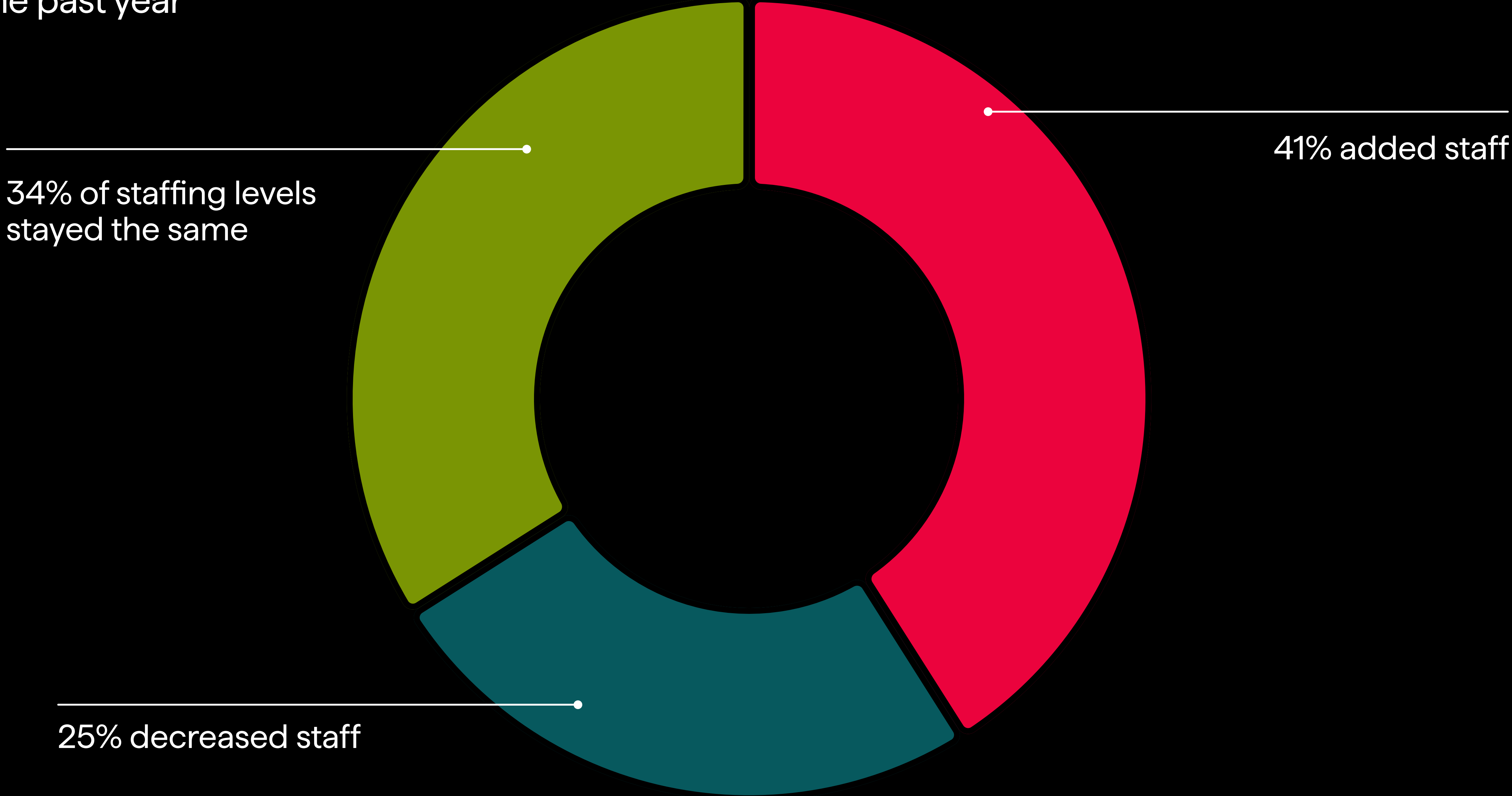
\$60

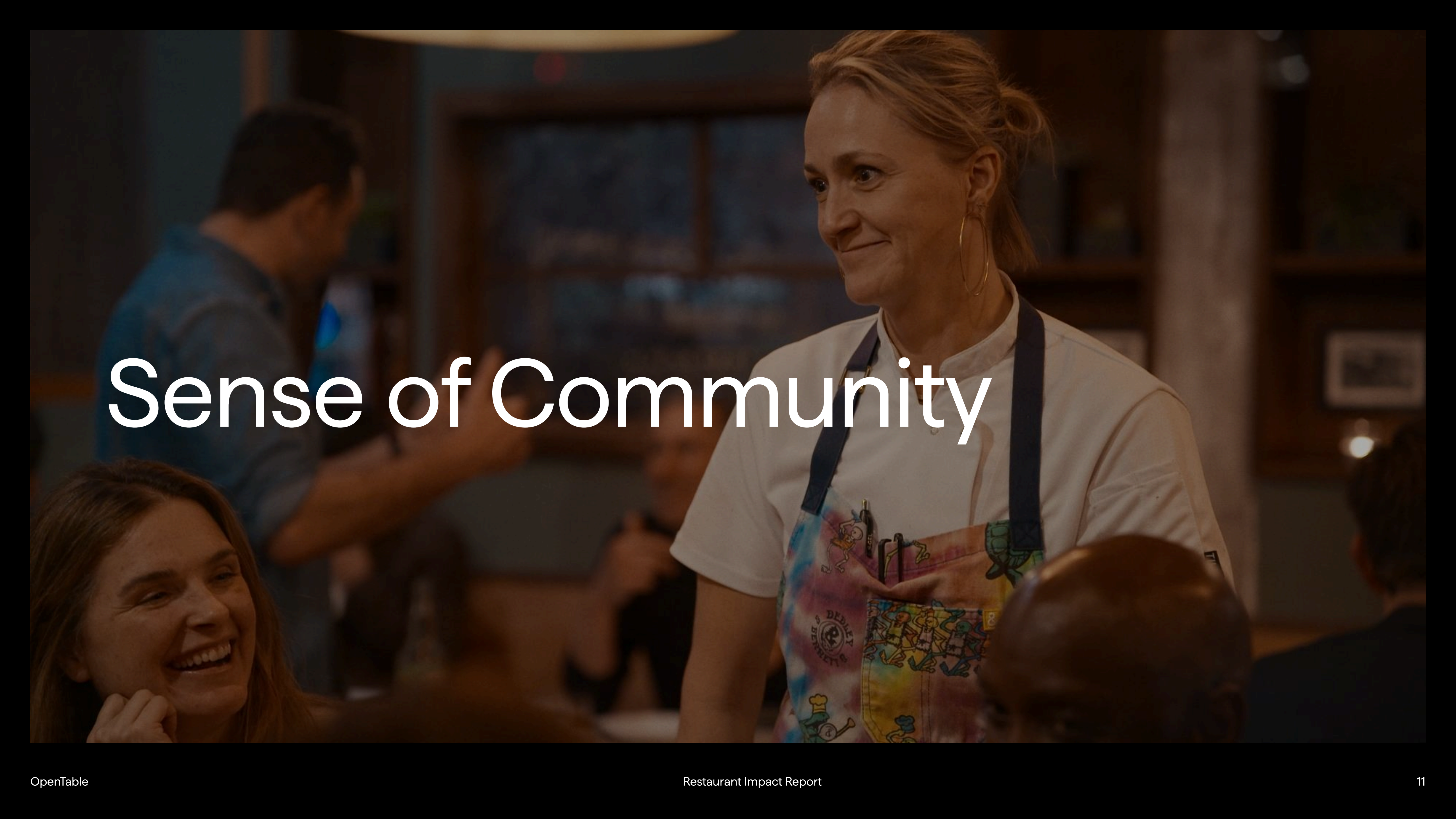
The average per-person restaurant spend over the last 12 months in the US, up +3% year-over-year.²

Share of US operators who hire groups that may face barriers to employment:⁴



Net staffing change among US operators
over the past year⁴



A photograph of a restaurant interior. In the foreground, a woman with long brown hair is smiling and looking towards the right. In the background, a woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a white shirt and a colorful apron with cartoon characters, is smiling and looking towards the left. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and restaurant decor.

Sense of Community

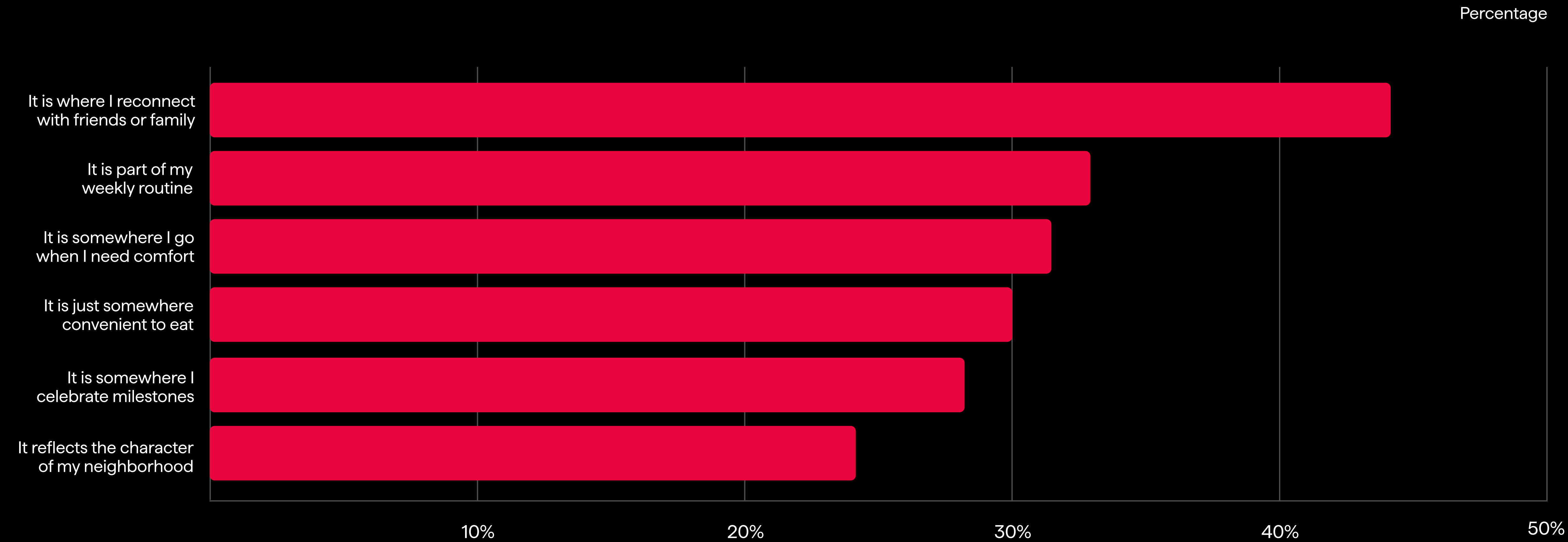
The best seat in the house is the one that brings communities together.

Long before it's a business, a restaurant is a gathering place. It's where first dates turn into anniversaries, birthdays become traditions, and a familiar face behind the counter makes a new neighborhood feel like home. These “*third spaces*” bridge life between home and work, providing the human connection that ties a community together.

In fact, nearly a quarter of US diners (23%) call their local restaurant their “third place,” rising to nearly two-fifths (39%) of Gen Z, while 88% of diners agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes are important in building a sense of community.¹

How diners experience their local restaurants

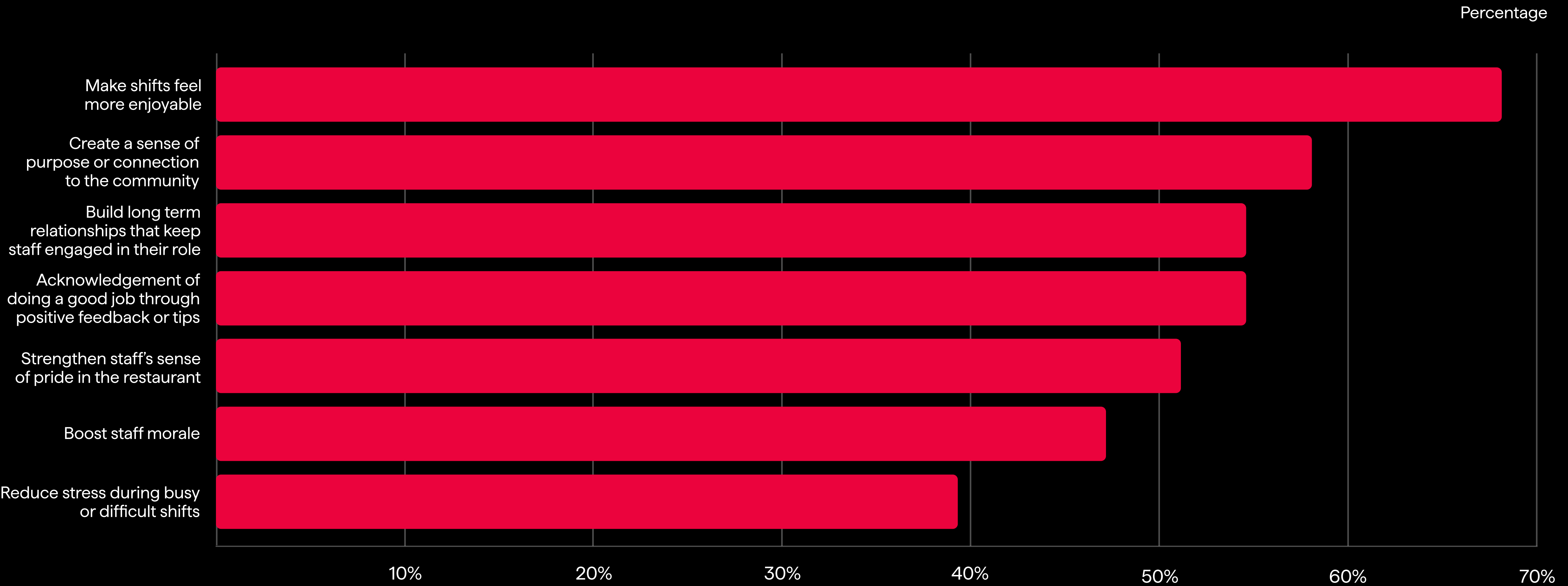
Which of the following describes the role your local restaurant, café, pub or bar plays in your life?¹



¹excludes respondents who selected "none of these"

The ‘regular’ effect

The connection goes both ways. These are the ways that regular guests have a positive impact on US operators⁴.



⁴excludes respondents who selected "none of these"

“I opened Una 30 years ago, and it’s been there through all the ups and downs of my life. Our hope is to be that for our guests too – a place that inspires people, where they can celebrate wins or come to feel safe and cared for after a difficult day. Restaurants do so much more than meets the eye including bringing people together and strengthening communities.”

Anthony Mangieri, Chef & Owner of Una Pizza Napoletana



Personal Wellbeing

A little joy, one table at a time.



There's something about sitting down for a meal that makes the rest of the world feel a little quieter.

A dinner with friends can turn a hard week around – in fact, nearly two-third of US diners (62%) are likely to book a meal out to feel better or reconnect with people when feeling stressed or low, rising to 79% amongst Gen Z diners.¹ Restaurants give us permission to pause and be fully present, with 84% of diners saying dining out locally directly boosts their personal and social wellbeing.¹

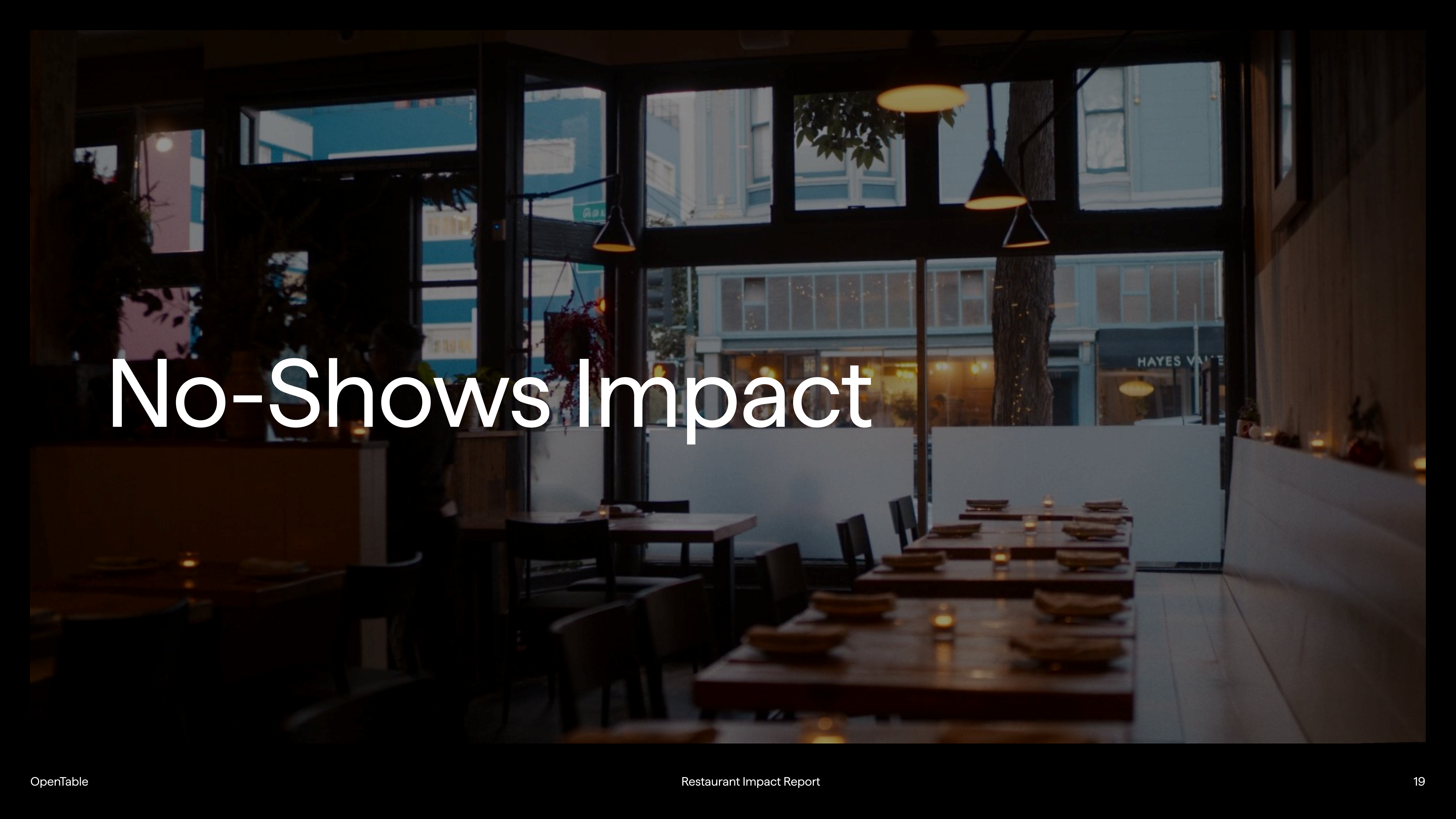
It's a vital role that operators see firsthand: 100% of US operators believe restaurants are important to people's social lives and wellbeing.⁴

“Sharing a meal at a restaurant is one of the oldest ways of bringing people together, because sitting around a table lets us focus on each other,” said Dr. Martha Newson, Associate Professor of Psychology at University of Greenwich in London. “Our research with over 10,000 people worldwide found face to face contact remains a strong predictor of wellbeing, as social bonds deepen through eye contact and shared experiences.”

“Guests come to Dakar NOLA – and dine out in general – for a sense of connection. To feel welcomed, seen, and part of something bigger than themselves. The food is an important part of that experience, but it’s really the hospitality, the energy, the music, the stories, and the sense of community that bring people back. At Dakar, our approach is based in teranga, the Senegalese tradition of generous hospitality. It’s about opening your table and making people feel at home, whether they’re joining us for a special occasion, a night out with friends, or simply discovering something new. We want guests to leave with more than a great meal. We want them to leave feeling not only nourished but nurtured.”

Effie Richardson,
Managing Director & Co-Proprietor of Dakar NOLA



A dimly lit restaurant interior with large windows overlooking a city street at night. The text "No-Shows Impact" is overlaid in white. The restaurant has wooden tables and chairs, and the windows show a view of a city street with buildings and a tree. The text is centered and large, making it the focal point of the image.

No-Shows Impact

Every empty table has a real cost.

Restaurants power local economies, host our communities, and nurture our wellbeing—but they do that best when their seats are filled.

With tight margins, an unhonored booking isn't just a missed dinner—it can impact a restaurant's bottom line. Yet despite 67% of US diners agreeing that not turning up for a reservation seriously harms a restaurant's business,¹ no-shows remain a challenge for restaurants. The great news is that US diners are stepping up, with overall no-show rates down 4% year-over-year.⁵

“A no-show isn’t just an empty table, it’s a sunk opportunity cost. We’ve already set aside the table, organized our books, planned food prep and scheduled staff, and at the last minute, it’s almost impossible to recover that loss. Restaurants are beacons of connection and comfort for diners, but we can only keep serving that role when diners show up for us, too. Diners: we have your backs, and we hope you’ll have ours.”

Aaron Bludorn, Chef/Partner at Bludorn Hospitality Group



The true cost of a no-show (table for two)



When a table sits empty, the chain reaction can be immediate: food is wasted, shifts are overstaffed, and other guests are turned away. On average, US restaurant operators say a no-show table for two costs restaurants \$80.⁴

Beyond revenue loss, consequences of no-shows to a restaurant include:⁴

- Turned away other bookings, impacting relationship-building (56%)
- Staff costs (51%)
- Wasted food & stock (49%)

When and where empty tables happen

While no-shows remain an issue, OpenTable US data points to precisely when restaurants are most vulnerable—and where online bookings are turning the tide.

Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays

The days of the week with the highest no-show rates over the last 12 months⁵

Valentine's Week

The week of Valentine's Day (February 8, 2026) saw the highest no-show rate in the last 12 months.⁵

Online Reservations

The booking method driving the largest overall reduction in no-shows.⁶

10:00pm

The most common time slot for no-shows in the last 12 months.⁵



Who Shows Up, Who Doesn't

The top 10 cities with the lowest proportion of no-shows include:⁵

- Boulder, CO
- Cambridge, MA
- Dublin, GA
- Franklin, TN
- Hilton Head Island, SC
- Naples, FL
- Portland, OR
- Santa Fe, NM
- Sarasota, FL
- Wilmington, NC

The top 10 cities with the highest proportion of no-shows include:⁵

- Anaheim, CA
- Fort Lauderdale, FL
- Jacksonville, FL
- Memphis, TN
- Miami Beach, FL
- Miami, FL
- Myrtle Beach, SC
- Orlando, FL
- Rancho Cucamonga, CA
- Troy, MI



A high-angle, close-up photograph of a restaurant table. Several white plates are visible, each with a different dish. In the center, a large piece of roasted meat is being cut with a fork. To the right, a plate features a dark, textured meat patty with a corn cob and a dollop of white sauce. Another plate shows a piece of meat with asparagus. Hands are visible using forks and knives. There are several glasses of water and one glass of beer. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the table and the diners' clothing.

How to Be a Great Diner

Small habits, big impact.

A reservation is more than a note in your calendar—it's a promise to a team that has ordered ingredients and scheduled staff specifically for your arrival.⁵

Here's how you can help keep that positive momentum going:

- Only book what you plan to honor: Avoid double-booking multiple restaurants for the same occasion.
- Cancel early if plans change: Giving even a few hours' notice allows a restaurant to fill your seat from their waitlist.
- Manage bookings online: Modify or cancel your reservation with a single tap in your booking app.
- Remember the team behind the table: Recognize that staffing and fresh food are aligned around your booking time.

A person wearing a white lab coat or chef's coat is holding a white paper bag, likely a takeout container, in front of a large display of oranges. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and market stalls, suggesting an outdoor market setting. The overall image has a dark, muted color palette with a semi-transparent dark overlay.

For Restaurants: Tools to Protect Your Revenue

Avoiding empty seats with technology.

Diner awareness is crucial, but restaurants shouldn't have to rely on good intentions alone. OpenTable equips restaurants with tools built to help reduce no-shows and protect the bottom line. →

Deposits, credit card holds, custom policies

Require card details, deposits, or late-cancellation fees for high-demand shifts to help reduce the risk of no-shows and late cancellations. Restaurants using deposits see a 60% reduction in no-shows globally.⁷

Prepaid experiences

Secure upfront payment for special events, set menus, and more to give restaurants greater planning certainty. Prepaid Experiences help reduce no-shows by up to 45% and late cancellations by up to 66% compared to non-Prepaid Experiences globally.⁸

Automated confirmations & reminders

Send branded SMS and email confirmations upon booking and reminders 24–48 hours before the reservation, making it easy for guests to confirm or release their table.

Online waitlist & Notify Me

Fill last-minute cancellations by offering freed-up tables directly to eager guests waiting in line.



Final Thoughts

A table for two is never just a table for two.

It is a team at work, a local business contributing to the economy, and a place where neighbors become friends, celebrations begin and difficult weeks feel a little lighter.

Dining out isn't just something we do for ourselves; it's an active investment in the places that bring our communities to life.

“Every reservation honored is a vote of confidence in local hospitality. By pairing diner awareness with smart technology, we can ensure these vital spaces continue to thrive for years to come.”

– Amy Wei,
Chief Operating Officer at OpenTable



Methodologies and Sources

¹ **Diner Consumer Research:** An online survey was conducted by Ripple Research among 1501 US general consumers who dine out at restaurants, with major cities weighted at 250. Fieldwork was carried out between 28 July 2026 and 4 August 2026. All data was collected in accordance with MRS (Market Research Society) and ESOMAR guidelines, ensuring ethical standards and robust data quality.

² **OpenTable US Data:** OpenTable looked at seated diners and average spend per person from online reservations for all active restaurants on the OpenTable platform in the US from 1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026 and compared it to the same time period in 2024/2025 (2 July 2024 - 1 July 2025).

³ **National Restaurant Association,** State of the Restaurant Industry, 2026

⁴ **Restaurant Consumer Research:** An online survey was conducted by Ripple Research among 355 US restaurant workers. Fieldwork was carried out between 28 July 2026 and 4 August 2026. All data was collected in accordance with MRS (Market Research Society) and ESOMAR guidelines, ensuring ethical standards and robust data quality.

⁵ **OpenTable US Data:** OpenTable looked at overall no show diner rates and per day of week, time slot, week of the year and per city from online reservations for all active restaurants on the OpenTable platform in the US from 1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026 and compared it to the same time period in 2024/25 (2 July 2024 - 1 July 2025).

⁶ **OpenTable US Data:** OpenTable looked at no show rates per reservation method for all active restaurants on the OpenTable platform in the US from 1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026 and compared it to the same time period in 2024/25 (2 July 2024 - 1 July 2025).

⁷ **OpenTable Global Data:** OpenTable looked at no show rates for all active restaurants on the OpenTable platform globally with and without deposits from 1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026.

⁸ **OpenTable Global Data:** OpenTable looked at no show and late cancellation rates for all active restaurants on the OpenTable platform globally with and without prepaid experiences from 1 January 2025 - 31 December 2025.

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