HIGH STREETS MATTER

Make More from Every Customer
A practical guide for hospitality businesses

Hospitality businesses across Norfolk and Suffolk are working in a challenging market shaped by rising costs, seasonal demand and changing customer habits. For many cafés, pubs, restaurants, hotels, takeaways and visitor venues, one of the quickest ways to improve profitability is to make more from the customers they already have.

This is especially relevant in Norfolk and Suffolk, where many businesses balance busy visitor periods with quieter trading weeks across the year. Small changes to offers, service and menu design can help increase average spend, strengthen margins and build resilience beyond the peak season.

Increase value, not just footfall

For a hospitality business, small increases in average spend can have a significant impact over a week or a month. If a venue serves 100 customers in a day, adding an extra £2 per transaction through drinks, sides, desserts, upgrades or extras creates £200 of additional daily revenue. This approach helps businesses make better use of existing demand, whether they are serving local regulars in a market town or visitors during the holiday season on the coast.

Four practical ways to increase spend in hospitality

- Offer a relevant add-on, such as a drink, side, sauce, dessert, breakfast option or late checkout.
- Highlight high-margin items, such as hot drinks, desserts, specials, cocktails or sharing boards.
- Make upgrades simple by showing a clear step from standard to premium.
- Use bundles and packages, such as lunch deals, dinner and drink offers, family packages or overnight extras.

Increase spend through helpful service

In hospitality, increasing spend should feel natural, useful and part of good service rather than a hard sell. Staff can make simple suggestions that improve the customer experience while also increasing value. For example: “Would you like something to drink while you wait?”, “Can I add chips, salad or bread with that?”, “Would you like to see the dessert menu?”, or “For a little more, we can upgrade that option.” When these prompts are consistent and genuine, they can steadily lift average transaction value.

Quick win: practical steps to try this week

Choose one or two of these ideas and test them over the next seven days:

- Ask every table or customer one simple add-on question, such as whether they would like a dessert, side or second drink.
- Move one high-margin item to the most visible part of your menu board, printed menu or counter display.
- Create a simple bundle, such as a lunch deal, coffee and cake offer, or meal upgrade for a small extra charge.
- Brief staff on one product to mention this week, such as a special, local product, premium drink or dessert.
- Check whether your signage, menu wording or booking confirmation makes your best add-ons easy to spot.

Practical actions to increase average spend

Make your menu, offer or package work harder
- Give more visibility to profitable items on menus, boards and booking pages.
- Use short, clear descriptions that make dishes, drinks or packages more appealing.
- Keep choice focused so customers can decide quickly and confidently.
- Position higher-value items where customers are most likely to notice them.

Actions you can take this week
- Choose one simple upsell prompt for every team member to use this week.
- Add or refresh one profitable add-on, upgrade or bundle.
- Review your menu, signage or booking journey to make one high-value option more visible.
- Brief staff on what to suggest, when to suggest it and how to do it naturally.
- Track whether average spend changes over the week.

Common mistakes to avoid
- Over-discounting instead of promoting value.
- Offering too many choices and making decisions harder.
- Hiding profitable items on menus or displays.
- Expecting staff to increase spend without guidance or confidence.
- Only focusing on this during busy periods rather than all year round.

Take action
Start with one simple change this week and measure the impact. A small increase in average spend can make a real difference to margins, especially across quieter trading periods.