

Hospitality Hiring Insider

Report 2 of 4

Age Diversity In Hospitality

**Building an
age diverse
hospitality
workforce**

Caterer.com
LEADERSHIP COLLABORATIVE



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Introduction

The over 50s workforce is growing, and they offer employers a wealth of untapped talent.

As it stands, a third of the UK's workforce are over 50, and in 20 years' time, one in four people in the UK will be over 65 years old. This means that an age diverse workforce is both desirable and necessary, and age-inclusive hiring, including flexibility with work arrangements, is an essential consideration for employers of all shapes and sizes.

Hospitality employers already have a head start. Since the pandemic, our research shows that 165,000 additional over 50s have started working in the sector, and that there will be many more to come.

The stats show that older workers are attracted to a career in hospitality, with over half of employers saying they've seen a surge in over 50s applying for their vacancies in the last 12 months. Plus, many of these are people returning to the industry, bringing back the experience and skills the sector is seeking in order to thrive.

So, it's little surprise that 3 in 4 hospitality employers now believe that engaging over 50s talent is key to them meeting their hiring goals.

It's not just about filling talent gaps; it's about strengthening your team, fostering an inclusive culture, and elevating the experience for your customers.

In this second instalment in a series of four short reports, we'll dive into how the older talent pool can help ease your hiring headaches, and how you can begin building and benefitting from an age diverse workforce.



Calvern James

Director of
Hospitality,

Caterer.com

165k

more over 50s have started working in the UK's hospitality sector since the pandemic

77%

of hospitality employers believe over 50s are key to solving the sector's labour shortage

**OVER
HALF**

of hospitality employers have seen an increase in over 50s applying for vacancies

2/5

employers believe that age diverse teams improve employee retention

34%

of employers believe age diverse teams are more productive

29%

of over 50s who have joined the sector have previous hospitality experience

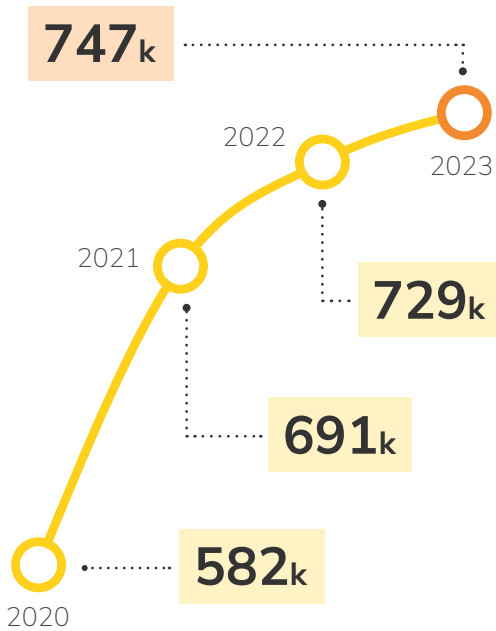
Caterer.com commissioned the following research through Opinium:

2,000 UK adults between the period of 8th September 2023 – 12th September 2023

100 hospitality hiring decision makers between 7th September 2023 – 13th September

An age diverse hospitality workforce

A growing number of over 50s working in the UK's hospitality sector:



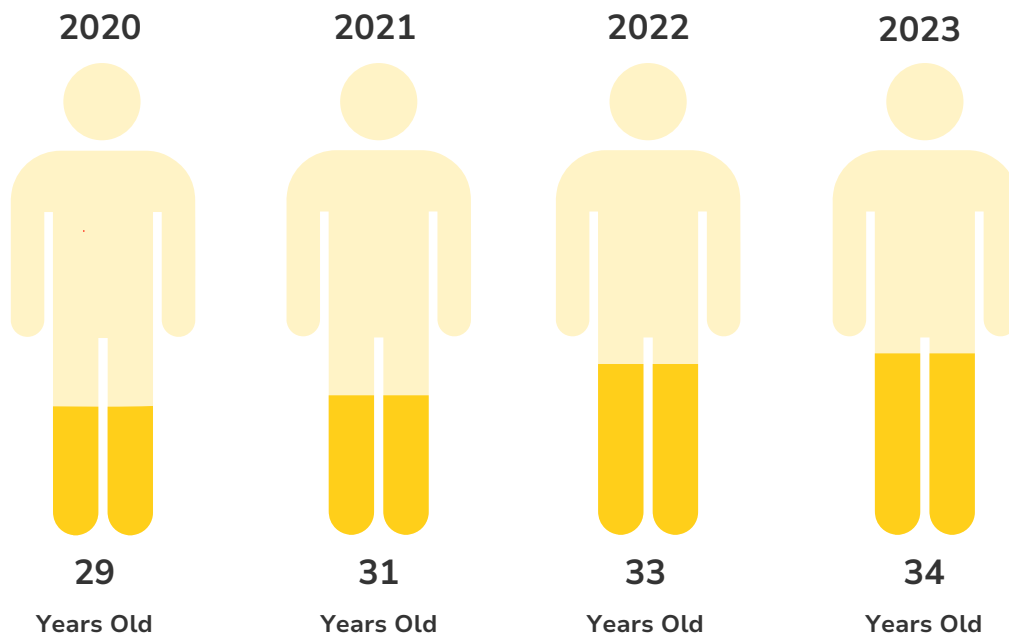
Recent Caterer.com research found that almost 40% of hospitality employers have put age diversity at the top of their DE&I targets for 2023.

It seems it's paying off, with 165,000 over-50s joining the hospitality sector since the pandemic. That's not just a minor shift - but an accelerating trend, and the result is the average age of hospitality workers is rising every year, and now stands at 34 years old.

In fact, a third (34%) of all hospitality workers are now over 50 years old, which has jumped from 28% in just a few short years.

In hospitality, these experienced over 50s pros are making their mark as General Managers (45%), in Front of House/Customer Service roles (24%), and, of course, they're lending their expertise in the kitchen as Chefs (24%).

Average age of hospitality workers:





52%

of hospitality employers have seen an increase in over 50s applying for vacancies in the last year.

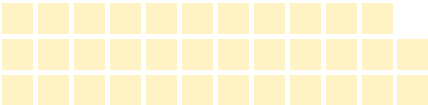
Over half of employers in the industry have seen a surge in applications from over 50s in the last year, making it little surprise that there have been 165,000 over 50s joining hospitality since the pandemic.

The benefits are becoming clear, especially since employers have pinpointed areas where over 50s tend to shine. This includes delivering an exceptional customer experience (39%), a rock-solid work ethic (37%), top-notch problem solving (35%), and a keen understanding of business (33%).

Our research found that among the growing wave of those entering hospitality, a fifth (20%) hail from the retail sector, while success has been found recruiting from diverse fields like business services (11%), education (10%), and even healthcare (9%).

Where employers believe over 50s excel compared to younger colleagues:

35% Ability to problem solve



37% Strong work ethic



39% Customer experience



Hospitality employers actively hiring over 50s talent



Our latest insights found that half of UK hospitality businesses are actively hiring over 50s into their workforce and making the simple, but necessary, tweaks to their recruitment efforts in order to attract them. Take a look at the four reports in this series in which we offer actionable guidance and tips you can use to focus on engaging older workers and building an age diverse workforce.

The hospitality sector has long faced a talent gap, with demand outstripping supply. This has been created over several years by a wide range of factors including customer demand and growth of the sector, the impact of changing immigration laws, the focus of education, and the impact of the the pandemic years. This has driven hospitality employers to adapt their methods, in order to attract and retain the talent they need, and many businesses have already begun turning to the ready, willing and able talent found among the UK's over 50s workforce.

This is a trend that's gaining momentum. In October 2022, 25% of employers in the industry believed that over 50s were key to resolving the sector's labour shortages. Fast forward to today, and that figure has skyrocketed to 77%.

While there's been a huge step forward in attitudes, and many employers are paving the way in actively building age diverse workforces, there is much more that can be done to engage the available over 50s talent in the UK and bring it into the hospitality sector.

77%

of hospitality employers now believe that over 50s are key to solving the sector's labour shortage

1/2

of hospitality employers are actively hiring over 50s

The benefits of hiring over 50s: your workplace culture



So, over 50s are looking for work in hospitality - but they're not just a quick fix to fill vacancies.

As we've seen, 29% of over 50s who have entered hospitality in recent months have previous experience in the sector. This helps them not only dive right in themselves but has tangible benefits to the team they join. 43% of employers believe having an age diverse workforce is improving their team's experience across the board, with a range of skill sets benefiting the entire workforce.

But the benefits don't stop there. A significant 39% report improved employee retention, keeping valuable talent in the fold, while 36% see a welcome reduction in employee turnover, saving time and resources.

What's more, over a third (34%) of employers believe age diverse teams are more productive, showing that when different generations come together, they create a dynamic work environment that works.

To ensure your workplace culture is the best it can be, and your team is operating at their full potential, check out the rest of our series to embed age diverse hiring strategies into your organisation.

29%

over 50s who have joined the sector have previous hospitality experience

Benefits of age diverse teams according to employers:

Enhanced experience level



Improved employment retention



Improved productivity



The benefits of hiring over 50s: your consumers experience

A positive story also emerges when looking at the view of consumers. Our research found that 73% of people don't mind what age the person who serves them is. It's not just indifference though, as a fifth (19%) of people between 18 and 34 would actually prefer to be served by someone their senior.

At the same time, we know that consumers increasingly expect brands to live and breathe their values and commitment to diversity. As a result, 20% of people say they are more likely to be attracted to a brand or enjoy being in a venue that employs a variety of ages. This rises to 26% of the highly valuable 18–34 year-old market, showing the long-term brand loyalty that can be fostered through a diverse team.



20%

of consumers prefer a hospitality venue with an age diverse workforce



3 in 4

consumers have no preference on the age of the person who serves them

The benefits of hiring over 50s: your bottom line



52%

of consumers prefer a hospitality venue with an age diverse workforce

69%

of hospitality employers believe employees over the age of 50 are more likely to upsell

Crucially, hiring over 50s could benefit your bottom line too.

Over half of employers think that over 50s see more success in driving repeat business - with 69% positive that they are more adept at upselling customers too. This seems a logical result of them having more experience in customer engagement, but when we take a closer look at the traits consumers expect - and what employers are seeing in their over 50s team members, you'll see why.

Consumers value traits like a positive attitude (49%), efficiency (46%), attentiveness (40%), and strong communication skills (35%) in employees, and say these traits would encourage them to become repeat customers.

Meanwhile, employers state that, compared to younger colleagues, their over 50s team members excel in their interpersonal skills (27%), work ethic (37%), attention to detail (26%), and communication skills (29%).

This suggests that an age diverse team really helps meet consumer needs, and can help boost revenue as a result.

Why hospitality appeals to over 50s



72%

of employers believe the cost-of-living crisis is motivating more over 50s to join the hospitality sector but making people happy is key!

The top reasons over 50s are considering a job in the hospitality sector:

Because they like making people happy



To supplement their pension



For the social benefits and workplace culture



So, why is a career in hospitality turning older, wiser heads?

Our research has found that people in their 50s are choosing hospitality because they like making people happy (32%) and are craving a positive work culture and social interaction (25%). Many are looking for a sense of purpose that benefits their wellbeing (25%), and others find it appealing because it offers flexibility around other commitments, such as their family (18%).

So, while 72% of hospitality employers believe that the rising cost of living is the main driver behind the trend, it's actually more related to the social and personal motivations of over 50s, and it's these elements that can be spotlighted through advertising to help older workers see hospitality as their landing spot.

Read the rest of our series to find out how you can build a hiring approach that speaks to the wants and needs of an age diverse workforce.

Overview of Caterer.com

Caterer.com is the UK hospitality industry's hiring platform matching the right people with the right jobs.

Caterer.com has unrivalled technology, teams and solutions to help businesses reach the right hospitality people with their jobs and brand messaging. With search, match and apply tools unlike any other, Caterer.com is built to find you the right hospitality hires for future business success.

Supercharge your hiring success with our vast range of innovative business solutions and insights.

Equality Boost

A diverse and inclusive workforce is key to strong business performance. Engage the right people for your roles in a diverse talent pool with our bespoke targeting tools.

CVDB

Take direct control of your hiring and find the ideal person quickly with our CV Database. Our intuitive search and filters mean you can easily reach the most relevant people for your jobs in our database of over 4.4 million profiles.

Appcast Xcelerate

Pin-point the best candidates, quickly. Our sophisticated technology uses rule-based algorithms to distribute jobs to the best places throughout the entire web and engage the people you need.

Universum

Become an employer of choice and attract the best talent by developing the right value proposition, expertly crafted messaging and a strong visual identity.

Mya

Our Conversational AI superstar allows you to connect quickly with the right candidates by communicating with them at every stage of their application process, so they find you more efficiently.

Access valuable support & insights

Benefit from peer-to-peer insight and thought leadership. Our Caterer.com Hospitality Leadership Collaborative is an open community that pulls on joint forces to provide peer-to-peer support

Discover more in the series



Economic & workforce
overview



Employer
Case Studies



6 Simple steps to becoming
an age-friendly employer

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