

Leading the way: Hospitality businesses driving impactful change

With the cost of living crisis continuing to impact consumer disposable income, and with new immigration rules from government likely to exclude even more foreign workers from the hospitality sector, the pressure is likely to rise for good businesses before it falls.

Temps de lecture : minute

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Need for community engagement

While the hospitality sector is clearly suffering in the current political and economic landscape, so too are communities. Over the past year, a quarter (25%) of working families in London have struggled to feed their families on multiple occasions. It is clear that people in local communities also need help.

While it would be tempting for hospitality businesses to focus on self-preservation right now, I ask all of them to consider: ask not what your community can do for you, but what you can do for your community.

Hospitality venues are important community hubs, providing a vital space for friends, families, and vulnerable people during trying times. The winter months are especially hard for vulnerable people in the community, and food businesses can make a meaningful impact on the lives of those who need them most.

Practical strategies for driving impact

With the diversity and creativity of the hospitality sector, food businesses can support communities in many ways. Providing space for local clubs to meet and socialise, offering affordable and nutritious food for those who need it, working alongside local charities are just a few ways that businesses in the hospitality sector can easily support their local community.

Ahead of Christmas, Mercato Metropolitano has launched a festive campaign that will help 1,190 families and vulnerable people in hard-to-reach communities. The holiday initiative will bring people together through a Santa's Grotto, free of charge to SEN children and those at Evelina Hospital, a soup kitchen event with entertainment and music on Christmas Eve and a free Christmas Lunch on Christmas Day for everyone in the community who wants it. With many people in the UK struggling this winter, now is the time for to open hearts and spaces to help tackle the issues faced by the most vulnerable communities.

Economic and political context

While the change can start locally, businesses in the hospitality sector cannot help communities if they are not supported by the government. For the past several years, the government has failed to address the true needs of businesses, avoiding responsibilities and implementing policies that only scratch the surface, rather than providing solutions and improvements. Increasing the national living wage by 9.8% to £11.44 an hour is not enough, and it definitely does not compensate for new immigration plans that will further disrupt the hospitality industry by taking away valuable employees.

While the hospitality sector has its own challenges, it is still vital that large and small businesses recognise their unique potential to act as

agents of change. People need the hospitality sector to go beyond the role of service provider and recognise their place as community hubs, spaces to stay warm, meet and make friends and enjoy food together. By understanding this and offering up space for community initiatives, social clubs for children and the elderly and championing sustainability at the heart of it, the hospitality sector can become a powerful force for good and embody the transformative potential of business to shape the lives of people and communities across the UK.

Email the following addresses about how to attend the free events at Mercato Metropolitano:

Christmas Grotto, running until 24 December, 10am – 5pm –
rise.london@gmail.com

Christmas Eve Disco Soup Kitchen and Christmas Day Lunch –
community@mercatometropolitano.com

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