

The Generation Hospitality Can't Afford To Lose

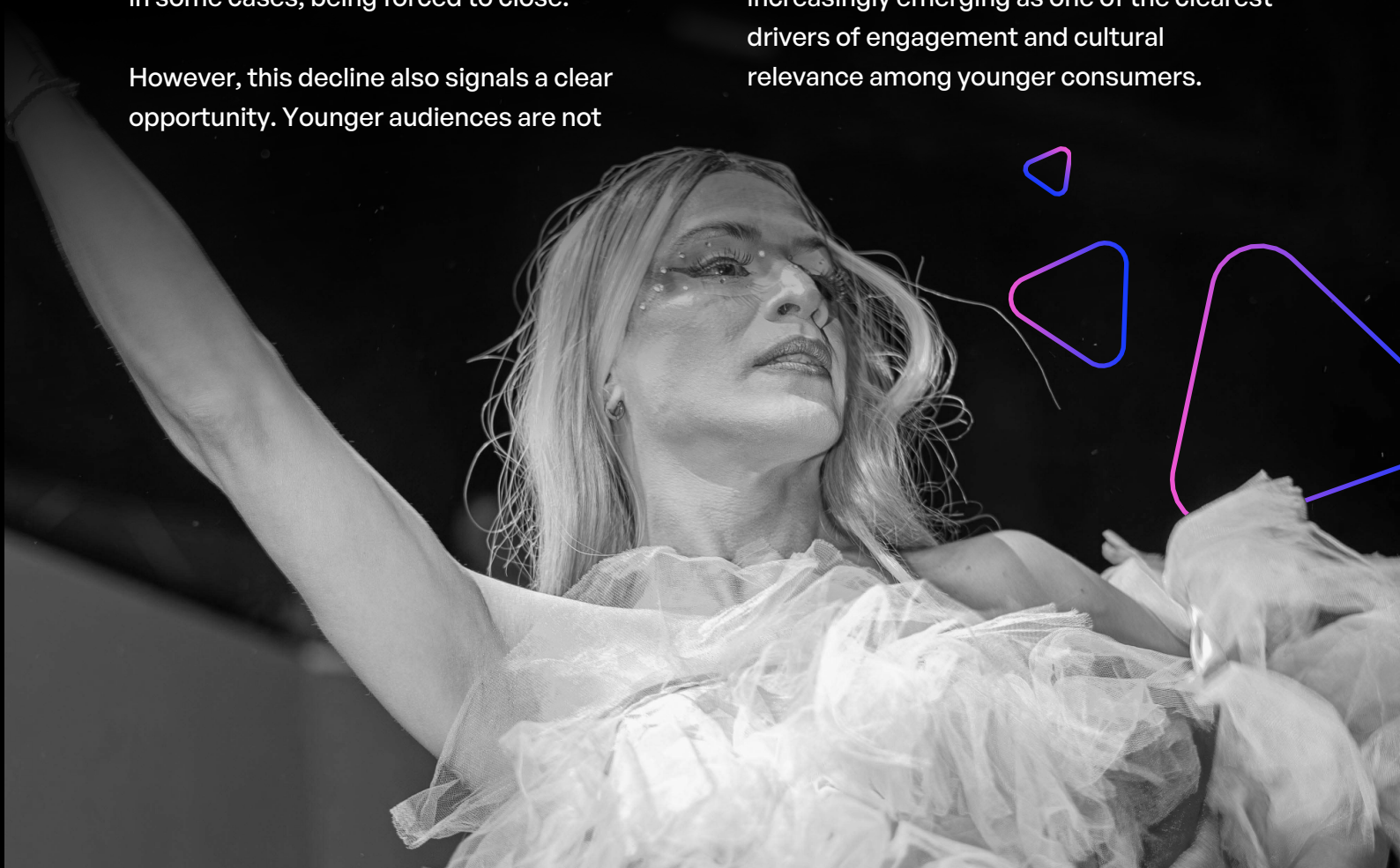
Rising living costs and a growing focus on health have led many Gen Z consumers to rethink the traditional night out. For 18 to 25-year-olds in particular, participation in nightlife has noticeably declined, as tighter budgets and shifting priorities push wellness, saving, and more intentional spending to the forefront.

This behavioural shift is already impacting the hospitality sector, with venues and cultural spaces seeing reduced footfall and, in some cases, being forced to close.

However, this decline also signals a clear opportunity. Younger audiences are not

disengaged entirely - they are simply more selective. Experiences that feel meaningful, social, and worth the spend, such as live music and unique, immersive events, have the potential to re-engage this audience and redefine what going out looks like for a new generation.

As a result, hospitality brands are increasingly having to rethink what motivates younger audiences to leave home and spend money, with live music increasingly emerging as one of the clearest drivers of engagement and cultural relevance among younger consumers.



Why Live Music Resonates With Gen Z

For Gen Z consumers, social experiences are increasingly driven by identity, emotional connection, and shareability. Having grown up in a highly digital and on-demand environment, younger audiences are becoming far more selective about what justifies leaving the house and spending money.

Live music increasingly fulfils many of these expectations by offering experiences that are difficult to replicate digitally, including:

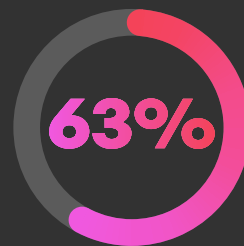
- atmosphere
- spontaneity
- discovery
- emotional connection
- shared real-world experiences

This behavioural shift is reflected in the data, with 63% of Gen Z consumers saying they are more likely to go out when live music is part of the experience.

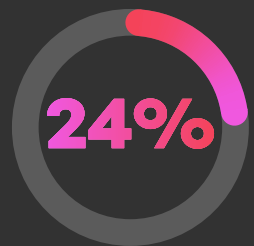
Live music not only drives attendance but also has a clear impact on spending behaviour among Gen Z. Data shows a 24% increase in spend among 18 to 25-year-olds when live music is present, demonstrating that the right atmosphere can unlock greater commercial value. Alongside this, there is a notable 30% trade-up in premium drinks, indicating a willingness among this audience to invest more when the experience feels elevated and worthwhile.

Around 68% are more likely to return to a venue after discovering a new artist there, showing that these experiences leave a lasting impression that extends beyond a single visit. In addition, 70% continue to engage with the artist after the event, whether through streaming, social media, or future gigs, creating an ongoing connection that links back to the venue itself. This behaviour highlights how live music is increasingly transforming venues into discovery-led social spaces rather than purely transactional hospitality environments.

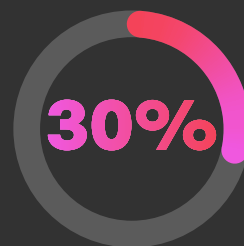
Among Gen Z consumers:



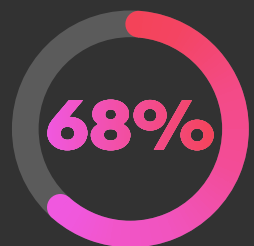
are more likely to visit
a venue when live music
is present



Spend increases
by 24%



Premium drink
purchases increase
by 30%



are more likely to return
after discovering
a new artist

The Commercial Opportunity for Hospitality

For hospitality operators, these behaviours translate into a clear commercial opportunity. Live music is no longer simply an entertainment add-on or marketing tool. It is increasingly becoming a measurable driver of attendance, spend, loyalty, and repeat engagement among younger consumers.

This suggests that curated entertainment is increasingly becoming a revenue driver rather than simply an operational cost.

As hospitality businesses compete harder for discretionary consumer spend, experience-led programming is becoming one of the clearest differentiators between venues that retain cultural relevance and those that struggle for repeat engagement.

The venues winning with younger audiences are increasingly those creating experiences that feel intentional, social, and worth leaving home for.



How Venues Can Win Back Gen Z

Gen Z are not rejecting social experiences altogether - they are becoming more selective about what feels worth their time and money. As traditional nightlife declines, experiences that feel meaningful, immersive, and culturally relevant are becoming increasingly important.

The findings in this report show that live music plays a powerful role in re-engaging younger audiences. It drives attendance, increases spend, encourages repeat visits, and creates stronger emotional connections between consumers, artists, and venues. For Gen Z, venues are no longer just places to go out - they are spaces for discovery, identity, and shared experience.

This also reinforces the increasingly important role hospitality venues now play within the wider live music ecosystem.

For many artists, bars, restaurants, hotels, pubs, and social venues represent the earliest stages of audience building, live performance development, and fan discovery. These environments are increasingly becoming part of the cultural journey between emerging artists and larger grassroots music venues, helping create more regular paid performance opportunities while simultaneously driving engagement and loyalty for hospitality operators.

As hospitality continues shifting towards experience-led consumer behaviour, live music is becoming far more than background entertainment.

For Gen Z, going out is no longer habitual it is intentional. The venues that create experiences worth discovering, sharing, and returning for will be the ones that retain cultural relevance and win the next generation of consumers.

Research conducted by OnePoll on behalf of GigPig between 20th–26th February 2026 among a nationally representative sample of 2,000 UK adults aged 18–25.

