

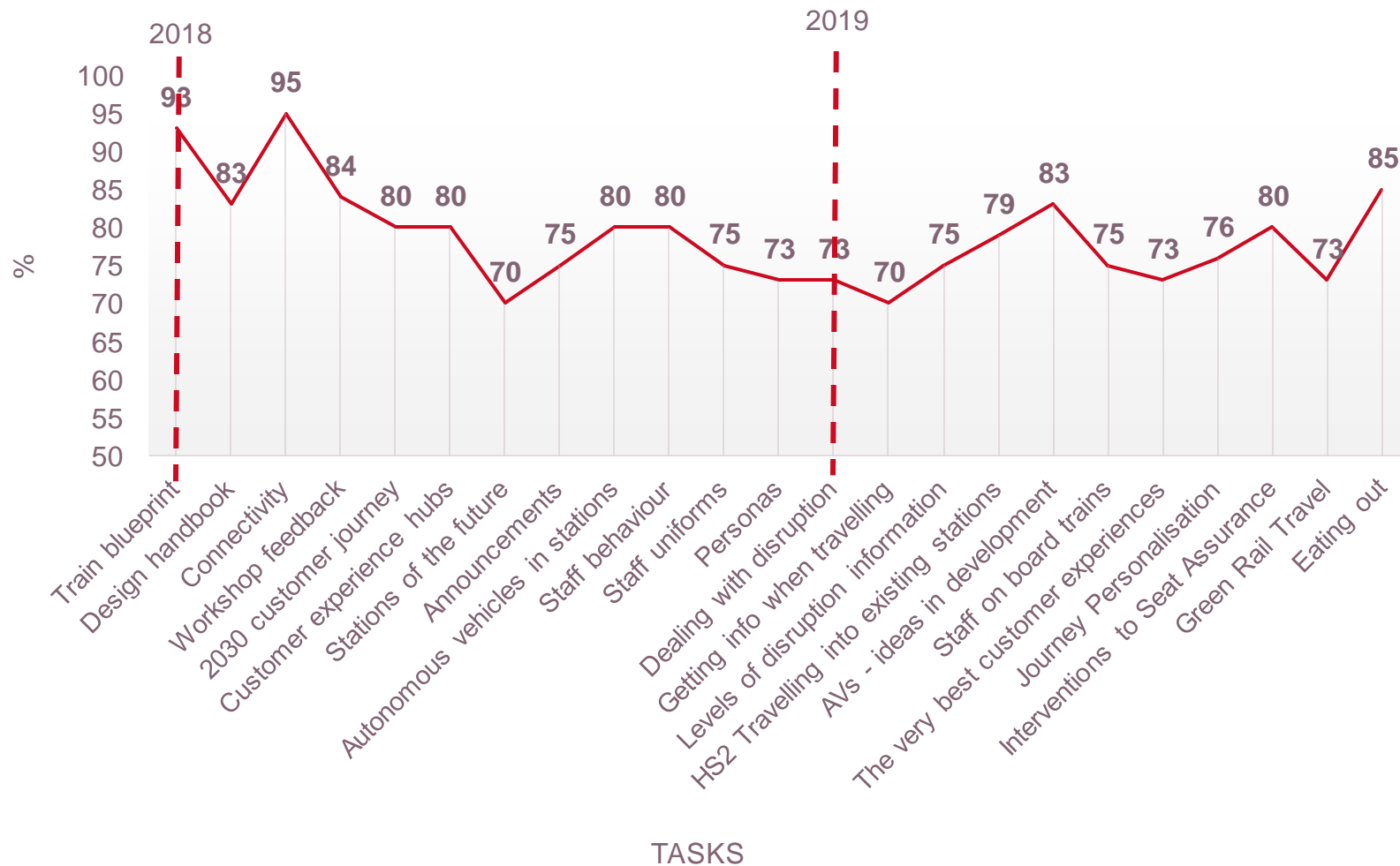


HS2 Customer Community Eating Out – February 2020 Debrief: 25/03/20


Agenda

1. Task debrief – Eating Out
2. Next task
3. Workshop
3. AOB

Community participation



The task



We'd like you to think about a recent experience you've had **eating out** that was really enjoyable. This could be at a restaurant, café, pub or anywhere else.

Where was it? What did you have?

What made it enjoyable?

How did you decide where to eat on this occasion?

What factors were important?

What sources did you use to help you decide?

Have you ever had a **great catering experience while travelling**?

What made this great?

How was it similar or different to the experience you described above?

What would you **expect from catering on HS2**?

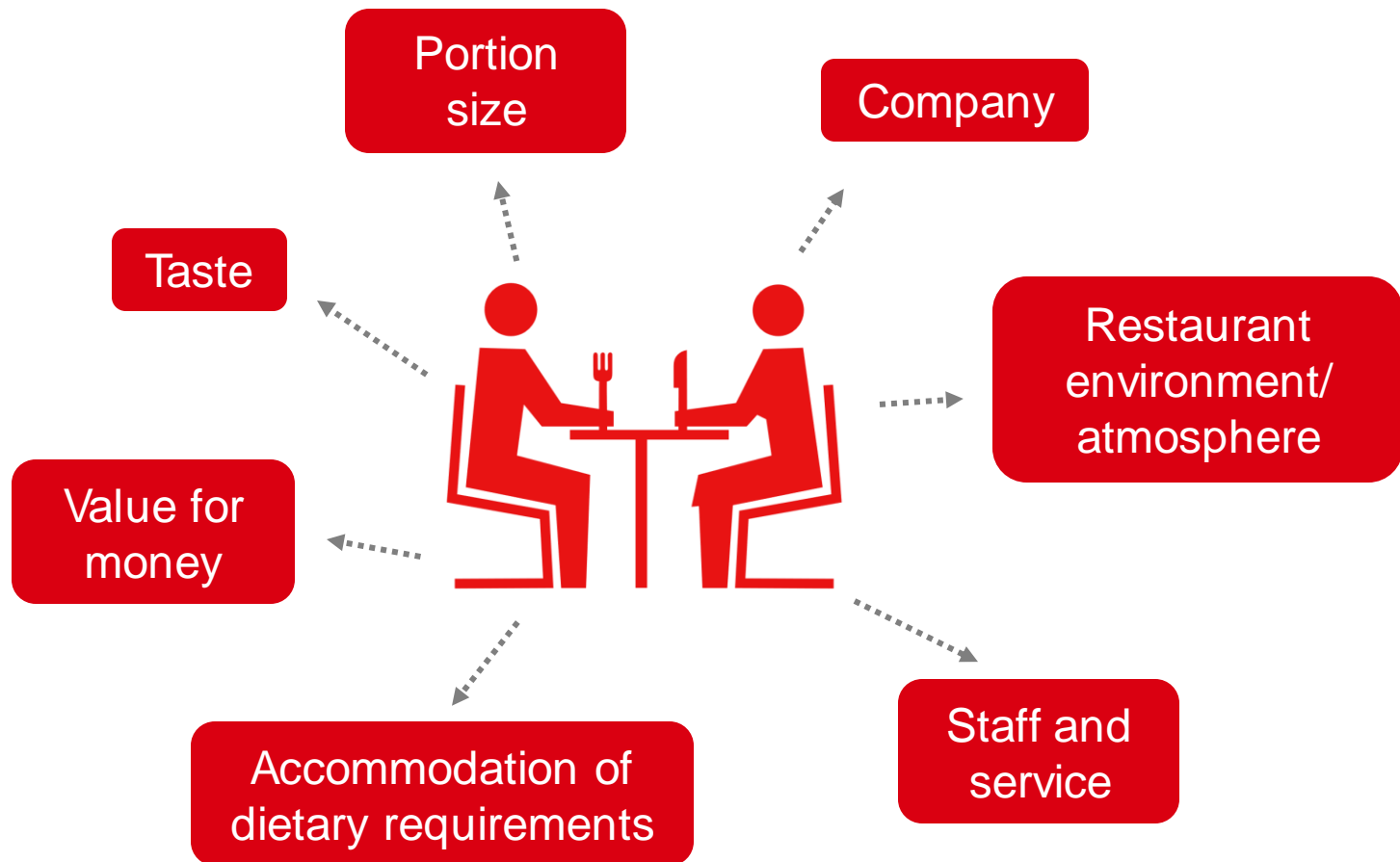
Would you like the service to be all at seat or have somewhere to socialise (such as a bar or restaurant)?

Any particular brands you would like to see?

How important would the catering on HS2 be for you?

What does makes a great eating out experience?

A range of factors can contribute to a great experience



But the meal itself is often the hero



Drivers of choice change depending on the needs of the specific eating occasion, and changing life circumstances



"I recently became vegan which I am loving and currently looking at the food world with new eyes, especially eating out so this is a really well timed task for me!"

I ate out at a vegetarian restaurant called Lilly's in the centre of Ashton Under Lyne. Lilly's is a vegetarian specialist restaurant which has a large Vegan menu with it which makes it easier to choose for someone who might make simple mistakes on a new eating lifestyle.

The main thing that made it enjoyable was that I was around like minded people who were eating similar meals and it put me at ease (I am a little disorientated with my new lifestyle change and little things like this put me at ease)"

Male, 31-40, Business

If people are on the go, convenience and price are stronger drivers than atmosphere



*"I was thinking about restaurants I'd been to and was about to describe one then changed my mind after having a snack lunch in the city centre one day. **I went to Greggs simply because it ticked all the requirements on the day:***

Quick

Reasonably priced

Good menu choices - sweet or savoury, hot or cold, veggie or other, and choice of drinks clean

Somewhere to sit down for ten or fifteen minutes (I didn't have much time to spare so couldn't manage a "proper" sit-in lunch) And lastly but arguably most important, service with a smile

There are plenty of other sandwich choices about to choose from, both national brands and local independents, but I chose Greggs because it was closest to where I had my meeting"

Male, 51-60, Business

But if the purpose of the outing is to enjoy a meal, the atmosphere and social setting become key

"This experience was afternoon tea at the Six Restaurant at the Varsity Hotel and Spa in Cambridge.

The location, company and of course the food made it incredibly enjoyable!

My friend and I wanted to make a special occasion of things** and we both love afternoon tea, given that the weather was meant to be lovely - **a restaurant with rooftop views sounded like the ideal place for lunch.

Female, 18-23, Business



Sometimes the best experiences occur when they are not expected



“My friend and I were walking around Abel Tasman on the South Island of New Zealand. It’s a tough walk and you go in and out of cliffs and rainforests then onto beaches. Beautiful experience. As we’re walking the route we stumbled across a five star restaurant - only accessible by sea. It was awesome. Such a great location, totally unexpected and the food was unreal. It was similar to the above place because the staff were fantastic, the food was too and the look of the place was great. Felt real classy.”

Male, 31-40, Commuter

People look to a range of sources to aid their decisions of where to eat



"I grew up within an 8 mile radius of Bath, and used to go there regularly; so as a consequence I have knowledge of good local restaurants. I also spoke to my parents and other family members to seek their views and recommendations."

Male, 18-23, Commuter

Dietary requirements are common, and for many are a key part of the process of finding somewhere to eat



"I am coeliac (so cannot eat gluten) and also lactose intolerant. My views of all eating out experiences are influenced by this. Like all people with dietary disease and food allergies, I have been given food that was promised to be safe, but turned out not to be so. I'm therefore a cautious eater out of home.

This was a boutique restaurant with rooms in the Cotswolds. Chef had been advised of my dietary issues, and I had a personalised menu. We started with a sharing plate, and the bread was served separately, so I could enjoy the rest of the platter without fears of cross contamination. Then I had beef in red wine with vegetables. The dessert was roasted pear, toasted walnuts and a raspberry sorbet. It was gorgeous.

Care and attention given to each and every course. I had total confidence that they had my back with regard to safety. And it was absolutely exquisite too."



Female, Commuter, Business & Leisure

What are current experiences of catering on transport?

Great catering experiences on transport are rare and expectations are low

Many people said they had never had a great catering experience on transport

“

I will be totally honest and say I have never had a great catering experience whilst travelling on a plane, boat or Train...it has been average at best. if I am travelling in the past I would stay away from hot microwaved breakfast items like sausage rolls or egg and bacon barmes as they usually smell as bad as they taste and I didn't fancy spending £3 - £4 on them.

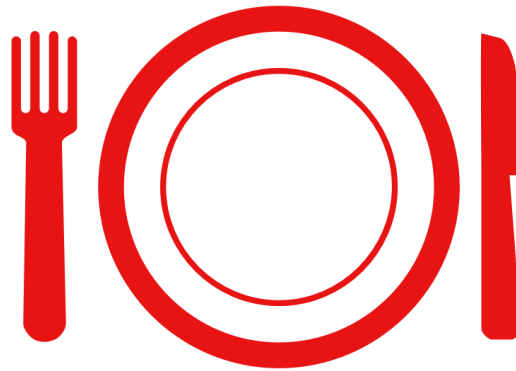
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Male, 31-40, Business

Lack of freshness, limited options and poor value for money define modern train catering for many of the community

“usual crap like sandwiches and crisps and chocolate...And normally they are over priced”

“bland and unexciting and normally very over priced”



“it was very basic. The service was unmemorable. The food was of a poor quality”

“tends to be marked up considerably more than what you would pay in the stores”

“basic quality and not cooked fresh”

Great catering experiences on trains are seen as a nostalgic thing of the past



A few years ago it was possible to enjoy quite a reasonable meal in a train restaurant car. The railway companies have replaced these with more profitable catering arrangements. In the recent past, it has been on a couple of heritage railways where I have had a good catering experience. This was for a cream tea and also a full evening meal. It was similar to my hotel break in terms of the service and food quality but served in a very different but nice environment.

Obviously it would not be realistic for HS2 to replicate the service provided by heritage railways or special trains.



Male, 61-70, Leisure

However some positive experiences on airlines



“Recently I travelled with Emirates to Dubai and the catered food on the flight was incredible. I was astonished at how fresh and delicious it all tasted.

***The freshness of the food** made the experience very enjoyable. The fact that it didn’t seem like a microwave meal was great and made the food taste even fresher. It was served on dishes and not in those plastic tupperware style tubs. It could be a psychological impact but for me it seemed like it had been put together by the airline team right there on the plane - which I know is very unheard of but it felt like it.”*

Female, 18-23, Business

*“With British Airways, when I flew to New York. Regular variety of snacks. **High-quality meals considering the environment in which it was prepared.** Great customer service.”*

Male, 18-23, Commuter



What does this mean for HS2?

People expect catering on HS2 to be better than on other trains, but don't necessarily expect it to be as good as a restaurant experience

- Good quality
- Fresh
- Value for money
- A range of healthy and 'treat' options
- Catering to a range of dietary requirements – vegan, vegetarian, gluten free, etc
- Efficient service

"Clearly so much choice would be unreasonable to expect. But I'd love to have a choice."

Female, Business, Commuter & Leisure

"High standards, a wide variety of food, healthy food options, quick food, cheap and easily accessible."

Female, 24-30, Business & Leisure

"I would not expect restaurant standard but I would expect improvement from a normal train service. I would expect more than cold snacks, but also hot meals and a good variety."

Female, 24-30, Business

While people can imagine something great, there is cynicism around whether this could be delivered



“Well if you mean hope I have thoughts but if you mean expect as in what I think will happen then I expect it to continue being over-priced captive audience exploiting rubbish like normal.”

Male, 24-30, Leisure

“I’d like it to be similar to the Orient Express - but I’m not sure how viable that is given the limited time. By similar I mean the dining could be an experience in itself, sit down food and top service. In reality I’m not sure it’s possible, but the thought of a high end finished train car with great food makes me feel quite excited about what could be achieved.”

Male, 31-40, Commuter

“To be honest, I wouldn’t expect things to be much different to today’s options. The same small spaces and movement restrictions would apply, and even if food were brought on board via deliveries, I wouldn’t expect there to be much choice, for me.”

Female, 51-60, Leisure

Some don't see catering as that important, particularly when it comes to shorter journeys



"People are not getting on a train for the dining experience. They are going from a to b as soon as possible."

Female, 51-0, Commuter

"As journeys that have been promised on HS2 would be around an hour, catering would not be that important most of the time."

Male, 51-60, Business

"It would only be slightly important, as I would usually buy something from the station before boarding, however if I knew that the onboard options were both tasty and reasonable priced I would consider buying onboard."

Female, 31-40, Business & Leisure

Views on all-at-seat versus a bar or dining car are divided across the community



| All at seat | Both available | Dining car/Bar |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More secure – don't have to leave my belongings behind• Logistically easier and more efficient – how would a dining car/bar work during rush hour?• Easier for those with mobility issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognised that people have different preferences so good to cater for both• Some people might like at seat for some journeys, but would enjoy a social area for longer or leisure journeys | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would make the experience memorable/akin to nostalgic train journeys e.g. Orient Express• Creates a pleasant environment• Keeps smell/rubbish/mess contained to one area |

Views on all-at-seat versus a bar or dining car are divided across the community



| All at seat | Both available | Dining car/Bar |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>"The problem with areas to socialize etc is if you leave your seat, what happens to your laptop or belongings. With security as it is you would have to take it with you which would be a." pain. Being served at your seat would be great."</i></p> | <p><i>"It would be nice for there to be a bar area with seating, but with the choice to go back to the seat, so it needs to be possible to eat at seat. Some people like myself, especially when travelling would prefer to keep to themselves."</i></p> | <p><i>"I would like there to be a bar in which to socialise; to make travelling HS2 a more memorable experience."</i></p> |

The option for both would be the ideal, but the community understand this could be difficult to deliver

People's priority is to get to their destination on time and comfortably

From the communities' perspective:

- the catering experience is secondary
- and while nice to have, shouldn't be the priority, and
- certainly shouldn't be at the expense of delivering an efficient service

"Obviously it would not be realistic for HS2 to replicate the service provided by heritage railways or special trains. I cannot see a restaurant being logical in terms of the journey time but the at seat service would be very welcome. My experience with bar/service counters on long distance trains is not very good. The narrow width of the train makes for little space and often the area is dominated by a few business people as if they are in a pub and leaving little room for others."

Male, 61-70, Leisure

If HS2 is to deliver a superior customer experience, catering to a wide variety of dietary requirements will be essential

"I expect flexibility with catering, again to cater for those with allergies or special diets"

Dietary requirements

"If the offerings were something like Pret or Exki (Belgium/Netherlands) - with soups that are free from allergens, plus something like rice cakes or corn cakes, that would work for vegans/people with allergies"

"Quality foods and beverages catering to passengers with many different dietary needs"

"I would now expect a Vegan option in a snack form and hot form"

Information about what catering will be available is key for those with dietary requirements

People with very specific dietary requirements don't necessarily expect to be able to eat what is available on transport

But if they are informed of what is available, they can plan in advance and bring their own food if needed

“

For the premium pricing I'd expect the food offering to be high quality. With ingredients and/or an allergy menu to hand. Even if it can't accommodate for me specifically, there are many like me or many with life threatening conditions. So just to know whether we can or can't eat while travelling would be important.

”

Male, 18-23, Leisure

A spread of views on brands

1

Many don't care about particular brands, as long as the quality and price is good

2

For some, availability of locally sourced/emerging brands is important

3

Others are looking out for mainstream brands like Pret, Costa and McDonalds

A spread of views on brands

1

Many don't care about particular brands, as long as the quality and price is good

"Brands are not important, it is freshness, choice and quality that would make the difference."

2

For some, availability of locally sourced/emerging brands is important

"The most current & popular on the market - being cognisant of eco-friendly & calorie careful credentialsand some emerging/start up brands (maybe from local suppliers near to HS2 Stations)."

3

Others are looking out for mainstream brands like Pret, Costa and McDonalds

"I would like to see McDonald's or some other similar brands where I can get a good hot meal; main, side and drink for about £5. If it is out of that price range it becomes poor value for money, especially having paid probably a very premium price for a train ticket and only have a short amount of time to consume food on the train."

Key findings

1

Many different factors drive a great eating out experience, but the meal itself is always important. Other factors such as ambience and environment vary in importance depending on the needs of the occasion

2

Many have not had a great catering experience while travelling, and train catering in particular is associated with poor quality and poor value for money

3

HS2 is expected to deliver a better catering experience than what is currently offered on other trains, but there is cynicism around how much better it can be, and some concerns about it not being affordable

4

For most, the purpose of the journey on HS2 will be to get from A to B and the catering will come secondary to a fast, timely and comfortable service – especially for short trips

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