

The Global Bartender Report 2026

Turning bartender advocacy into sales growth

Powered by BarSights



The On-Premise remains the most powerful environment for building drinks brands

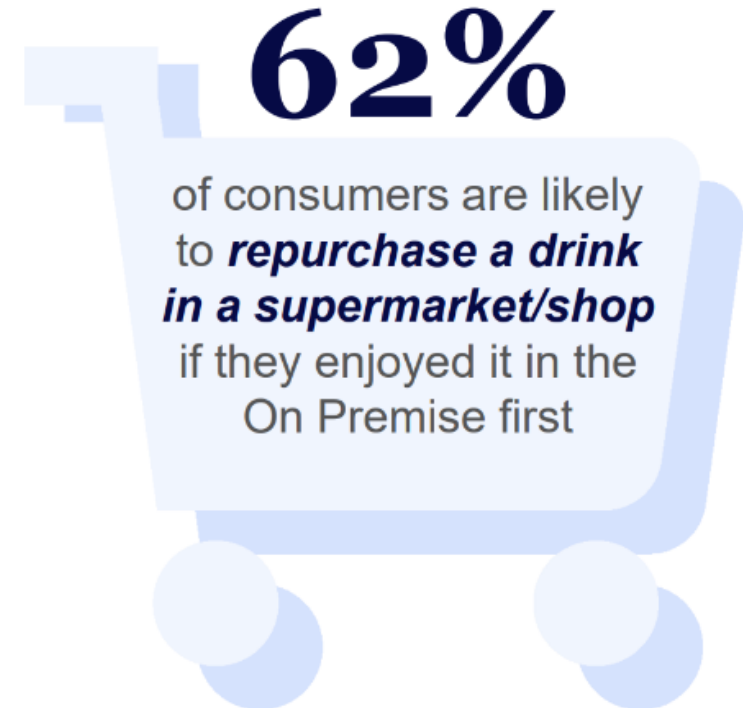
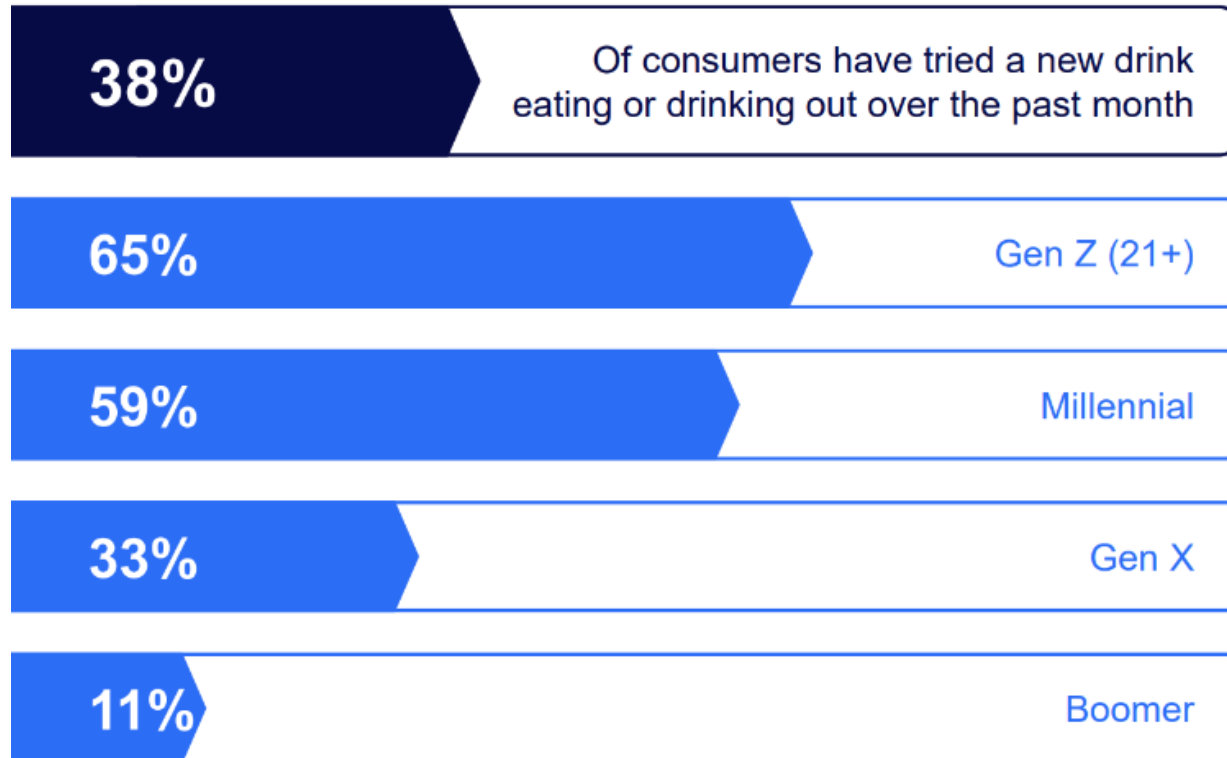
But most brands don't measure or optimize the moment that drives purchase recommendation



On-Premise is:

- Where consumers discover and try new drinks
- Where premiumization happens
- Where bartender recommendations shape choices

Consumers are most likely to experiment with new drink in the On Premise, demonstrating the importance of the channel on a wider scale



Source: NIQ APRIL 2026 US ON PREMISE PULSE REPORT SAMPLE (171 - 1493) ; CGA REACH US April - May 2025. Sample: 726 - 1235

What consumers experience in On-Premise doesn't stay there – it shapes what they search for, what they trust and what they buy later

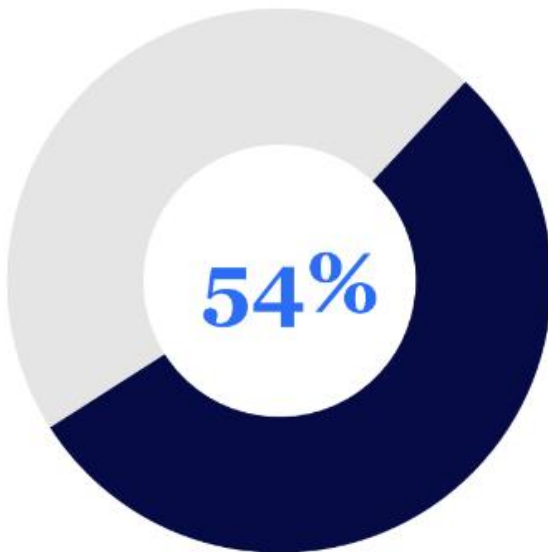
Occasion, experimentation, and omni behavior are reshaping growth

Consumers engage with BevAl across channels, but each channel has a different job

In which of the following ways have you purchased Beverage Alcohol in the past 3 months? Select all that apply.

On Premise

Trial, social proof, premium cues, bartender/menu influence

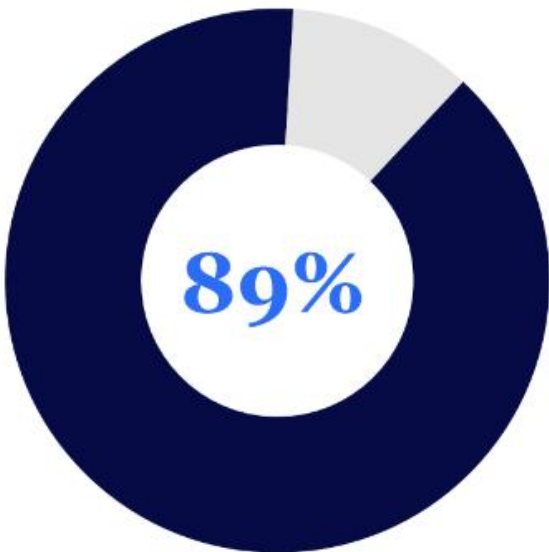


% \$ CYA

-0.2%

In Store

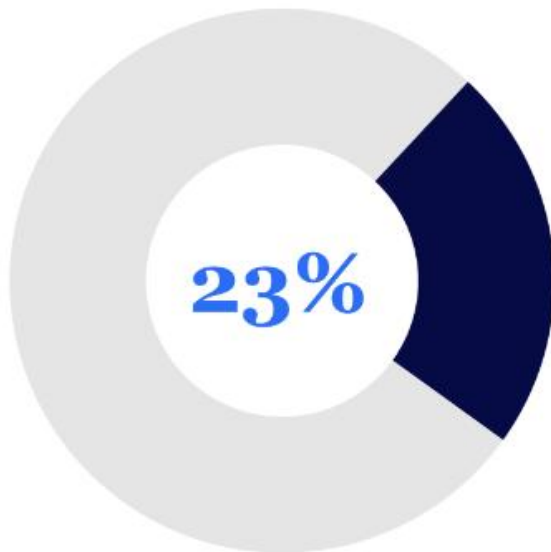
Basket-building, availability, price/value



-3.0%

Online

Planning, comparison, recommendation, replenishment



+4.0%

Source: NIQ BASES Category Shopper Fundamentals 2025; % \$ CYA = On Premise OPM; Off Premise RMS; Omnisaales BevAl; 52 weeks ending 2/21/2026

How consumer **preferences** translate into **purchase** is evolving:

Consumers are increasingly looking for information on what to buy before they get to the bar or shelf

Consumers are:

- **Researching More**
- **Comparing More**
- **Using Digital Tools** (search, content, AI)

74% of consumers are already using AI for discovery

Source: NIQ x Kearney; The New Growth Frontier: How agentic commerce and AI tilt the scales toward challenger brands; Kearney research, January 2026, n=750



In a world informed by AI how can you influence that recommendation?

Bartender and advocacy shows up beyond the bar – in articles, competitions and online content, which in turn is informing AI

✓ What I *do* use

My recommendations are typically built from:

- Bartender interviews and expert roundups (e.g. industry articles, tasting panels)
- Spirits competitions and reviews
- Consistent patterns across multiple credible sources
- General knowledge of how flavour profiles interact in cocktails

Brands that win bartender advocacy are more likely to appear in digital and AI driven choices

At the centre of influence is the bartender

- **Recommends**
- **Guides trial**
- **Builds confidence**
- **Creates brand meaning**
- **Informs digital content – social, articles, via competitions**
- **Drives what consumers go on to repurchase**



Bartenders control a significant share of purchase decisions: small shifts in recommendation can translate into **thousands of incremental serves**

88% Of bartenders globally typically make a drinks recommendation every shift

95% Of Bartenders say the guest will order that recommended drink most times or more

Meaning the average premium+ bartender influences **10,976** consumer drink decisions over the course of a year

**Increasing recommendation =
increased volume + premium mix**

2025 Barsights

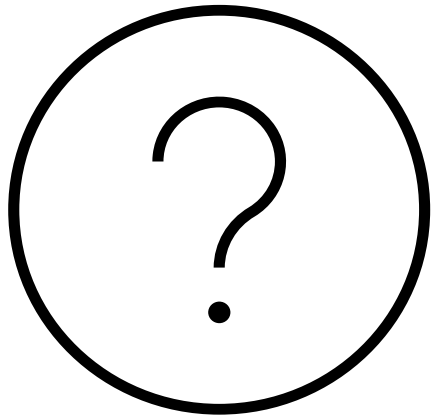
Bartender recommendation is one of the few levers that directly drives both immediate sales and long-term demand

Immediate sales ➡ Volume and Value via trade ups

Long term demand ➡ brand preference and repeat purchase

But most brands **don't fully understand how to unlock the drivers of brand advocacy to accelerate growth**

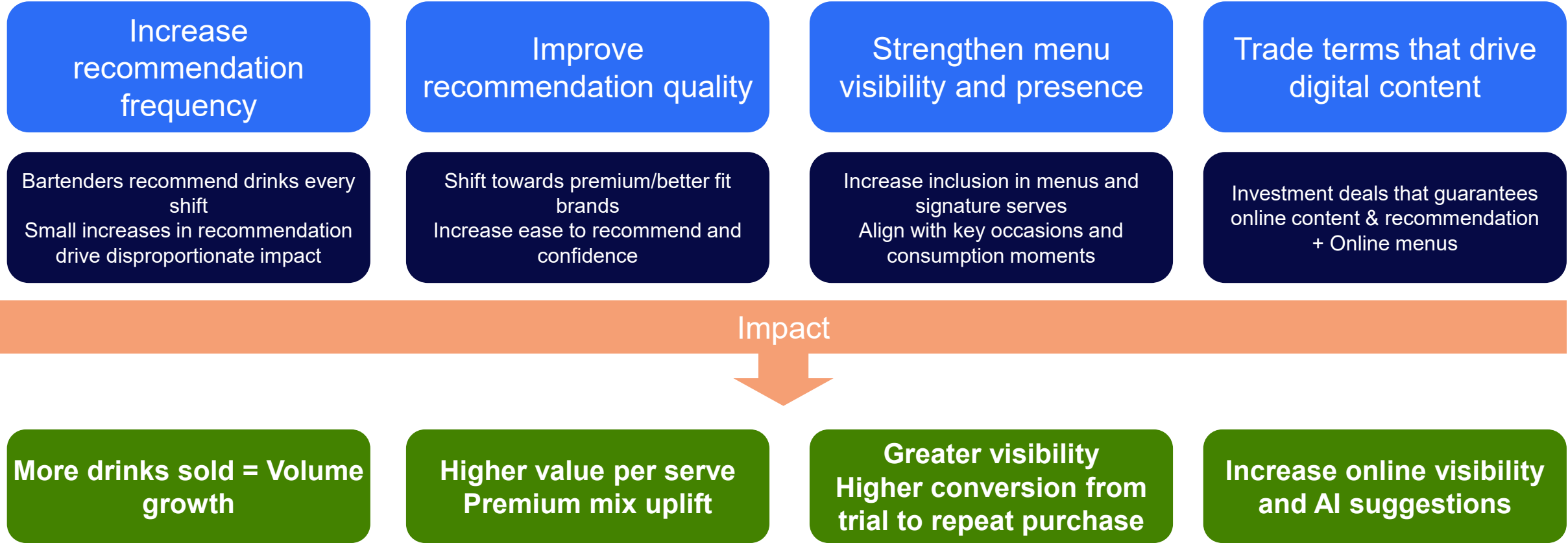
Driving growth requires you to understand how to:



- Increase recommendation rate to drive volume growth
- Win menu placements to strengthen visibility and distribution quality
- Maximise ambassador impact to improve recommendation and engagement
- Deliver activations and experiences that drive measurable impact
- Build bartender led experiences that increase loyalty and repeat purchase
- Secure brand presence in cocktails and serves to drive conversion

How Bartender advocacy translates into revenue growth

1 bartender influences **10,976 drink decisions per year**
Even small changes in advocacy scale rapidly across outlets and markets



More Serves x Higher Value x Stronger repeat purchase = Sustained revenue growth

A small shift in advocacy drives disproportionate growth



The 2026 Bartender study helps you :



Change how you think about on trade investment - Not just distribution, visibility and activation, but creating repeatable, scalable recommendation signals

If you're not actively shaping bartender recommendation, **you're leaving one of the most powerful growth drivers in the category to chance**

Winning brands won't just show up in bars:

They will

- ***Shape what bartenders recommend***
- ***Scale the influence beyond the bar***
- ***Ensure it appears in every consumer decision – including AI***

NIQ are the global experts for hospitality research, with trusted partner networks for Bartenders worldwide

A dedicated network for research with hospitality professionals

Over years of sector research and engagement, NIQ's hospitality network delivers unparalleled access to staff and decision-makers across the global hospitality industry.

Our B2B research capabilities provide actionable insights that shape strategies, strengthen partnerships, and drive growth. We help brands connect with the right people and uncover the insights needed to succeed..

Our global credentials...

- **100,000+** network of hospitality professionals available
- **60,000+** hospitality professionals surveyed
- **250+** hours of B2B interviews moderated
- **90+** separate projects delivered
- **26** global markets covered – and capabilities across the globe

Combining B2B expertise with Bartender specialism

Within our broader B2B capability, our bartender network is our most established and mature segment. Through partnerships with both global and local industry organisations, NIQ connects directly with bartender communities – enabling high-quality, hard-to-reach samples at unmatched scale.



powered by **CGA** intelligence



BarSights

What sets NIQ apart

- BarSights is the **largest study into hospitality professionals globally**, surveying 1,700 hospitality professionals around the world, allowing for comprehensive insights into a crucial audience for you and your brands.
- The study is **strengthened by working with bartender associations**, through capturing high-quality responses from committed hospitality recipients.
- Data is analysed by **NIQ's On Premise experts**, delivering high quality and actionable insights to improve advocacy, drive staff recommendations and gain share.



Driving beverage success in the On Premise

How the report can support your bartender strategy

Drive advocacy of brands: Bar staff play an invaluable role in the consumer path-to-purchase and can be vital influencers of consumer decision making through their recommendations. This report will be key for ensuring staff are recommending your brands.

Unprecedented Insights: Gain a deep understanding of bartenders' demographics, work experience, industry knowledge, and preferences, allowing for targeted strategies tailored to their needs.

Market Intelligence: Stay ahead of the competition by accessing valuable data on popular drinks and emerging trends, at both a global and regional level, as told by those who know the industry the most.

Optimize Engagement: Understand how best to interact with bartenders from online communities and engagement programs, to the role sales reps will play.

Strengthen Supplier-Bartender Relations: Understand how bartenders interact with suppliers, their sentiment towards brands, and drivers behind their supplier preferences, facilitating stronger partnerships and collaboration.



Survey Content Topics: 2026 Global Bartender Report

Survey content will include more trended insights around the evolution of advocacy preferences and trends. 2026 topics broaden the utility of this research outside of just advocacy teams.

**Recommendations & Brand
Advocacy**

**Menu Development &
Commercial Viability**

**Brand Ambassadors &
Relations**

Creating Experiences

**Brand Partnerships &
Activation**

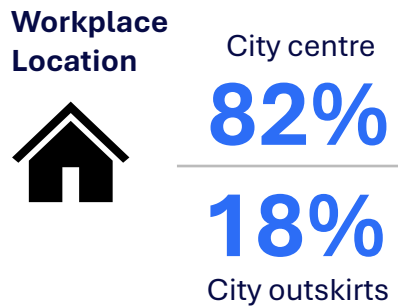
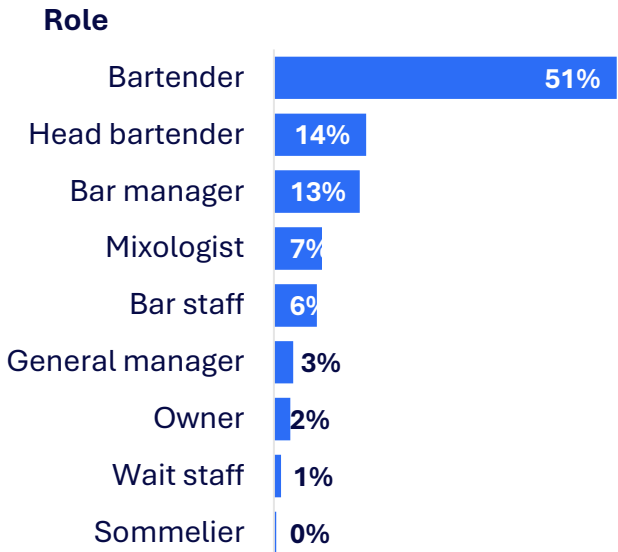
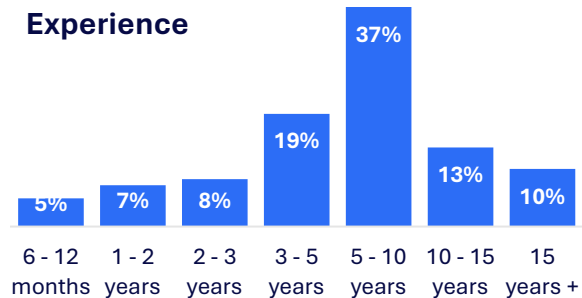
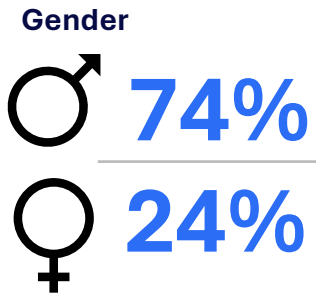
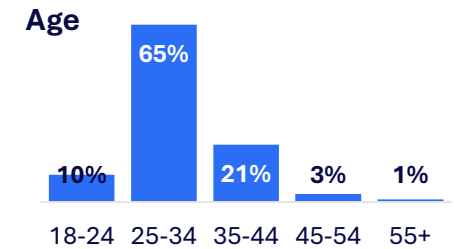
**Key Trends Across Drink
Categories**

**Brand Support &
Engagement**



Meet the 2025 sample – which will be replicated and expanded for 2026

1529 bartenders with 6+ months experience surveyed



Food-led outlets
14%

Independent venue / small group with a cocktail focus (\$\$\$)	50%
Premium restaurant (\$\$\$)	40%
High-end restaurant (\$\$\$\$+)	10%



Drink-led outlets
59%

Independent venue / small group with cocktail focus (\$\$\$)	74%
Premium venue (\$\$\$)	19%
Luxury / high end venue (\$\$\$\$+)	7%



Nightclubs
6%

Independent venue / small group with cocktail focus (\$\$\$)	55%
Premium venue (\$\$\$)	27%
Luxury / high end venue (\$\$\$\$+)	19%



Hotel bars
22%

4 stars	37%
5 stars	63%

Source: BarSights Global Bartender Report 2025, sample: 1529

Quality is at the forefront of guest needs when ordering drinks out, creating real opportunities for trade-up and the premium space

What do guests want?

‘Consistently **high-quality brands**’ were ranked

#1

As the brands best placed to thrive in 2025, according to bartenders

*“Guests are opting more and more for **quality over quantity** when it comes to what they are drinking, and are much more willing to listen to bartender recommendations than ever before”*

58%

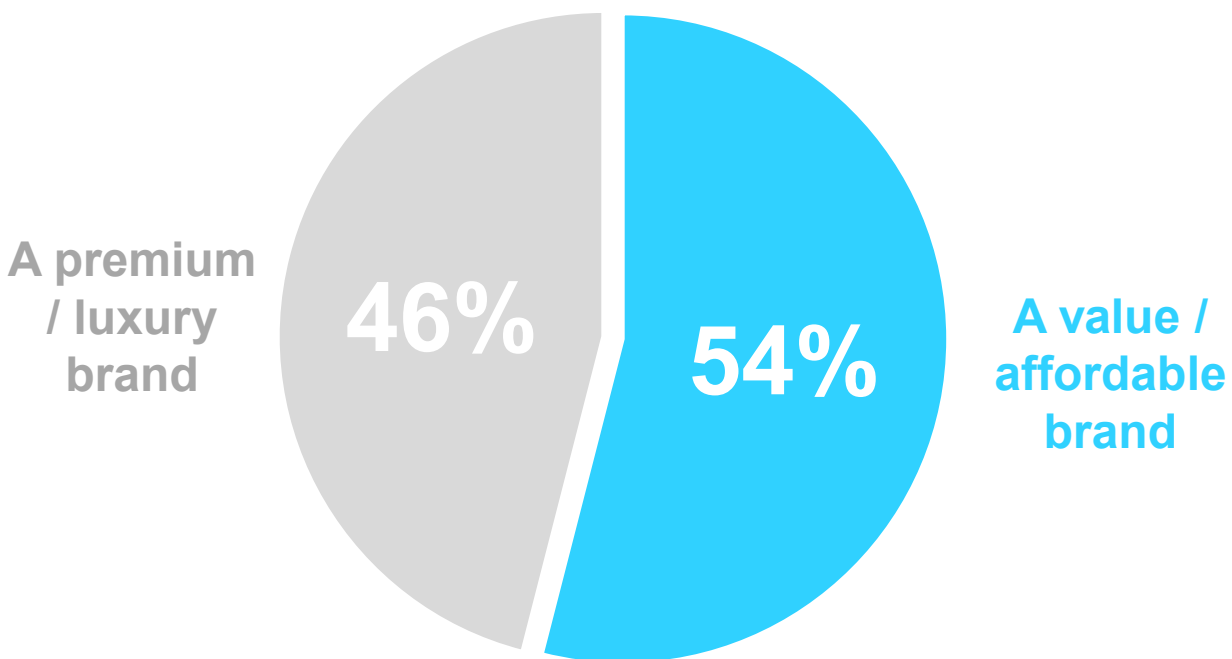
Of consumers globally are likely to **pay extra for a better-quality drink** when in the On Premise
+20% vs 2024

2025 data sample output

Source: BarSights Global Bartender Report 2025, sample:1525; REACH Global 2025, sample: 33,201

However, this doesn't directly mean bigger price tags will win; product quality must make the drink a good value option to match the price point

What types of drink brand do you typically recommend?



“

[I usually recommend] Brands that don't gouge for their quality. There are a lot of exorbitantly expensive newer Japanese whiskies that are simply bad

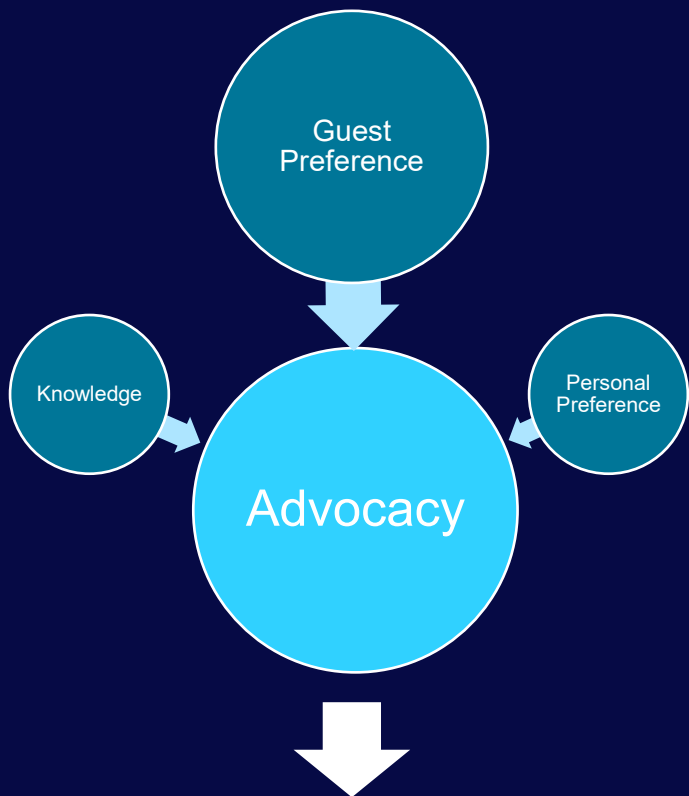
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2025 data sample output

Source: BarSights Global Bartender Report 2025, sample: 1459 - 1487

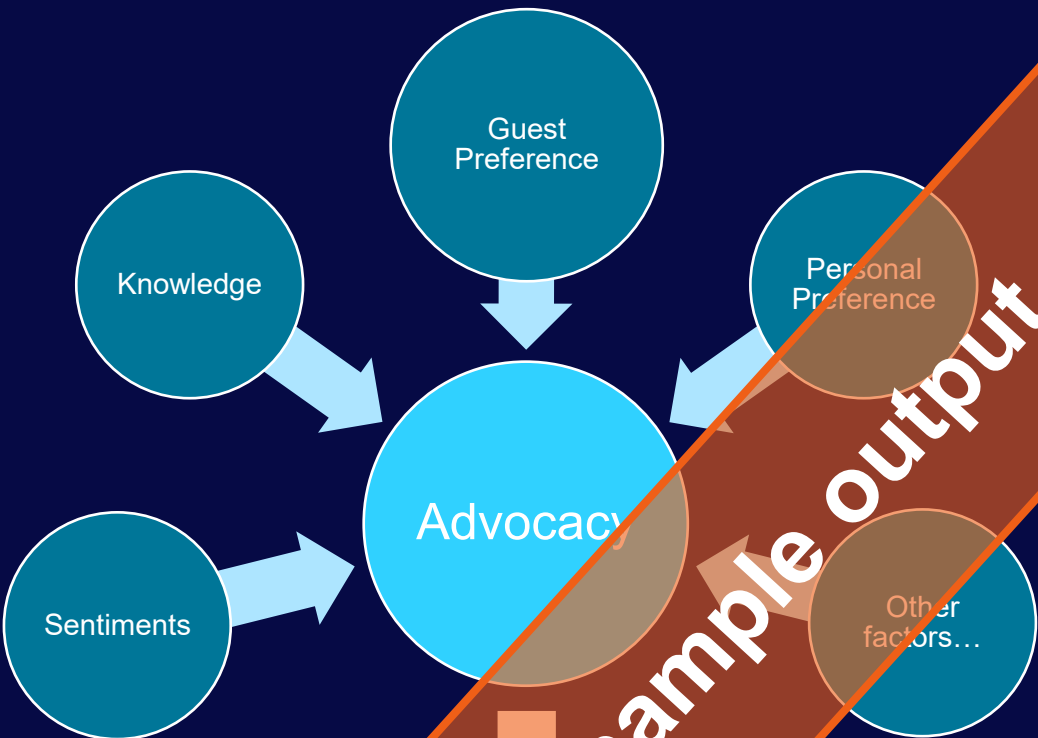
Summary

Less experienced bartenders



Advocacy preference for well known, trusted 'crowd pleaser' brands

More experienced bartenders



Advocacy preference for more unique, brands that guests may not have heard of, but will deliver on their needs

2025 data sample output

The strength and diversity of Supplier A, Supplier B and Supplier C portfolios have evidenced the sentiment outcomes from product quality globally

Please write your favourite brand below

Please write the reason why you chose that brand as your favourite in the box below

#1	Supplier A	14%
#2	Supplier B	14%
#3	Supplier C	11%
#4	Supplier D	8%
#5	Supplier E	8%

Supplier A

"They represent a solid community and provide top quality products. They also provide a range of options to meet a wider target audience."

"I think that they have a solid overall lineup of spirits in their portfolio. Even if some of the brands aren't my taste they are popular and our local reps have given us so much information and knowledge on the brands that I can respect them for what they are."

Supplier B

"They have a diverse spirit portfolio that caters to my palate."

"Because from the early stage I entered into the hospitality industry, I heard the name of it, and I like it very much from the beginning."

Supplier C

"I find they are consistent in their flavour and accessible from most retailers, helping create classic and consistent staples!"

"I think they have a great portfolio of quality products."

Source: BarSights Global Bartender Report 2025, sample: 1529

*"I think **people need to stop hosting panels where people talk about their feelings**. I'm so bored of it. I don't want to sit on another, I do it to support people, but **who has time to go to a panel and talk about feelings with no action**. All I can think when I see brands doing this is, what is the takeaway? What is the action? Instead of just ticking a box, **do something that has a bit more meaning and redirect the funds in a way that's going to make change**"*

Anna Sebastian (Celebrate Her)



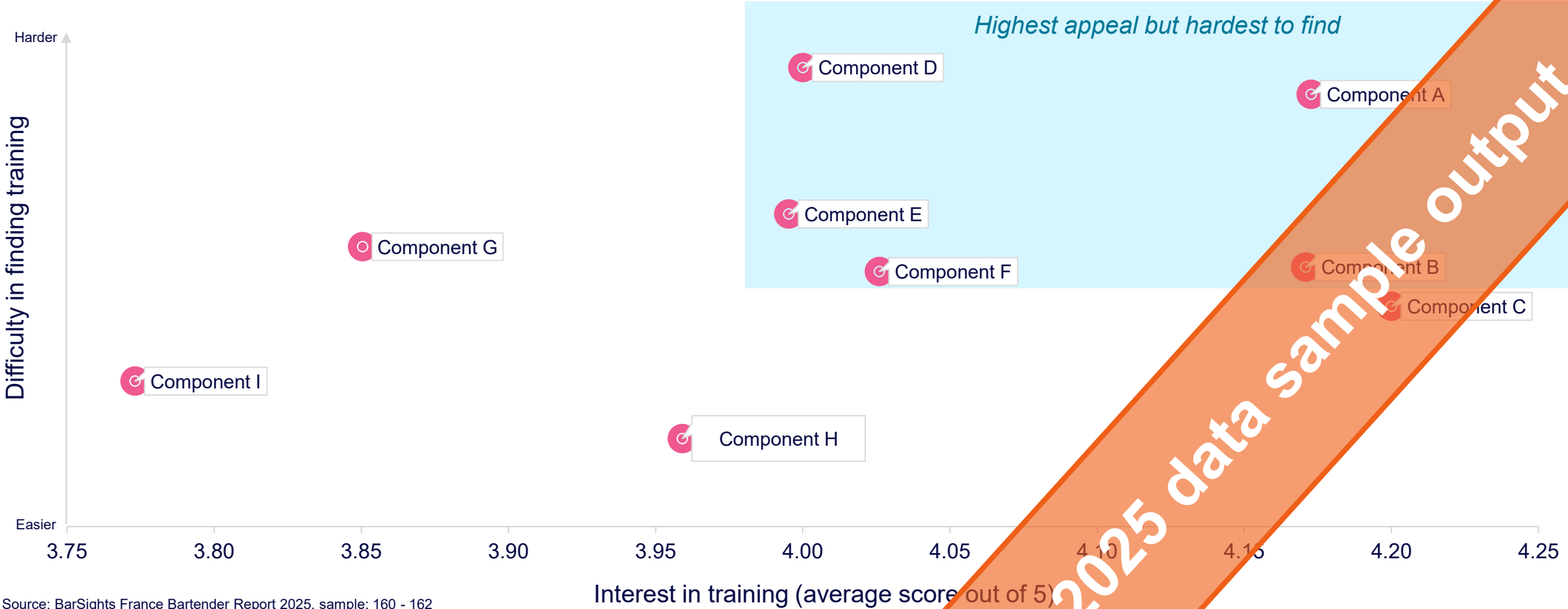
*"We're moving away from **virtue signalling to, practicality and tangibility**. And yes, of course it's important to talk about issues to raise awareness to them for sure. [...] **At some point someone needs to do something, otherwise it's just a lot of talk.**"*

Danil Nevsky (The Indie Painter)

2025 data sample output

Component C is one of the most appealing training resources for bartenders, however, there are gaps that suppliers can fill with training needs through Component A and D

How easy do you think it is to find good training / education resources for these areas?
On a scale of 1 to 5, how interested would you be in receiving education / training in the following areas?



Source: BarSights France Bartender Report 2025, sample: 160 - 162

Country-level reports

Market insights based on a robust sample of bartenders

- Understand the market nuances and the needs of hospitality professionals at a market level by purchasing country level BarSights insight.
- Market-level reports are available for all countries included in the study and provide a rich insight into how to win with hospitality professionals, how to drive advocacy and the trends impacting specific countries

What you will receive

- An in-depth report providing market level findings and recommendations allowing you to build relationships with this crucial audience, delivered in local language
- A virtual presentation of findings, delivered by NIQ experts
- Individual market reports available for purchase

Reports available:

UK&I	Iberia	Korea
USA	Mexico	India
France	Australia	Japan
Germany	Emerging Asia	Global



Additional Bartender & hospitality staff capabilities

With NIQ's network of hospitality professionals and bartenders, we can undertake customised, ad-hoc research with this critical audience to meet the needs of any specific brief with high-quality insights



Quantitative

- Online surveys with specific target groups to robustly measure and assess performance
- CATI interviews with harder-to-reach and niche audiences for specific queries

Qualitative

- In-depth-interviews to provide depth, explore topics of interest and gauge opinion
- Focus groups and moderated discussions for debate and thought leadership
- Virtual / non-moderated VoxPop style recordings

Mixed methods

- Concept testing, workshops and feedback from professionals for logistics & operational feedback on NPD and redesigns
- Mobile diaries and longitudinal studies for on-going research
- Trend identification study

Contact Us

Get in touch to find out more



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