



Customer sustainability engagement guide



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Introduction

Each year, around 20 million people visit Lincolnshire, bringing some £2.49bn to the county's economy. Now more than ever, customers are looking for sustainable businesses, with 58% of consumers saying they are thinking more about sustainability now than before COVID-19. As such, it's important for businesses to gather customer opinions on sustainability so that they can keep up with changing trends.

This resource is designed to help small and medium-sized hospitality businesses in Lincolnshire to better engage customers with sustainability, gain insight into the value customers place on sustainability, and understand what customers think of existing green initiatives.

DEFINITION



Customer engagement: Customer engagement is the ongoing interaction between a business and its customers. It encompasses much more than just the transaction and includes every interaction between a business and its customers.





Why should I survey my customers on sustainability?





Why should I survey my customers on sustainability?

Why is it important to engage your customers and get their feedback on your existing, or future, sustainability initiatives?

There are many benefits to engaging your customers in sustainability. Your business can:

- **perform better** - Businesses that successfully engage customers perform as much as 23% better than their competitors
- **keep up with changing customer demands** - 61% of travellers state that the pandemic has made them want to travel more sustainably in the future, and at least 30% of UK consumers claim to purchase products based on ethical and/or environmental credentials
- **improve how it's perceived** – Engaging customers in sustainability can boost your image as a responsible business
- **implement sustainability better** – Customer feedback will help you understand how existing green initiatives are perceived
- **start planning its next steps** – Feedback can provide insight into what new sustainability initiatives customers might like to see





Where and how do I survey customers?





Where and how do I survey customers?

Take the time to find out what's important to your customers, and how you can meet their expectations.

There are a variety of potential ways to assess customer understanding of your sustainability initiatives, and using multiple channels will ensure you reach as many as possible:

- ✓ Online – social media, website, review websites such as TripAdvisor
- ✓ Newsletters and marketing emails
- ✓ In person – verbal discussions with customers
- ✓ On site – engagement systems to monitor your customers' opinions

Where in the customer journey should you look for their feedback?

Depending on the nature of your business, sustainability-focused questions could be asked:

- ✓ pre-arrival – on your website, on social media, or via a booking confirmation email
- ✓ during their visit to your business – ask customers for feedback directly or monitor customer opinions by giving them the opportunity to vote on ideas through engagement systems, e.g. a feedback book, a token to put in a slot, or an interactive screen.
- ✓ during departure - ask a question or two as the customer leaves
- ✓ post departure - send the customer a follow-up email after their purchase





Question examples





Question examples

Questions will vary depending on your type of business and customers. A few suggestions for questions you could ask customers are displayed below, alongside some potential answers.

Existing initiatives

- ✓ How aware are you of our sustainability initiatives?
Very aware, Aware, Neutral, Unaware, Very unaware
- ✓ Which of our sustainability initiatives did you notice?
[List of your sustainability initiatives] - e.g. no single-use items, locally sourced products
- ✓ How effective is the communication of our sustainability work?
Very effective, Effective, Neutral, Ineffective, Very ineffective
- ✓ Would you like to see more details on our environmental and sustainable initiatives?
Yes, Unsure, No

Purchasing decisions & future initiatives

- ✓ How important is sustainability when choosing a [your type of business – e.g. hotel, café, visitor attraction, etc.]?
Very important, Somewhat important, Somewhat unimportant, Very unimportant
- ✓ Did our efforts to be more sustainable influenced your decision to use our business?
Yes, Unsure, No
- ✓ Are you willing to pay a higher price for a more sustainable product or service?
Yes, Unsure, No
- ✓ Would our efforts to be more sustainable impact your decision to purchase with us again in the future?
Yes, Unsure, No
- ✓ How likely are you to recommend us to others as a result of our focus on sustainability?
Very likely, Likely, Unlikely, Very unlikely





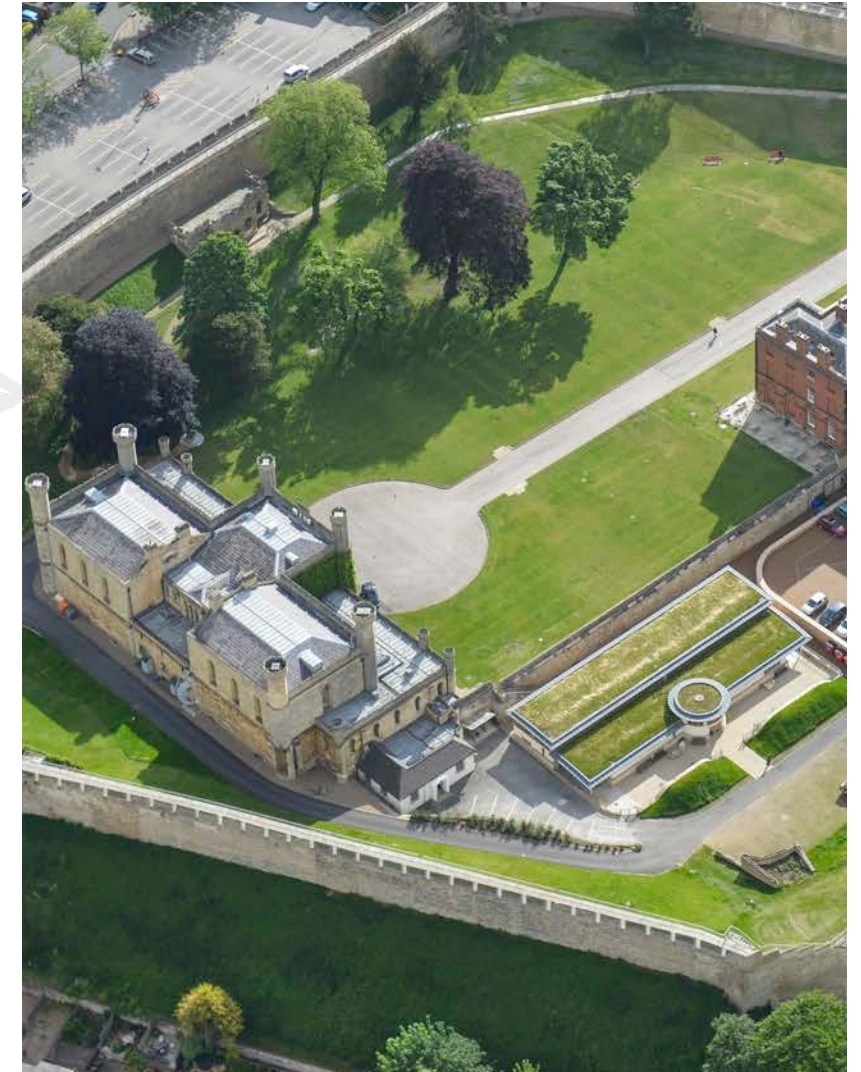
Question examples

Which sustainability initiatives do you feel are most important in a [your type of business – e.g. hotel, café, visitor attraction, etc.]?

- ✓ Reducing food waste
- ✓ Reducing single-use items
- ✓ Encouraging sustainable travel
- ✓ Reducing energy consumption
- ✓ Partnerships with local organisations and charities
- ✓ Promoting and increasing awareness of local culture and heritage
- ✓ Supporting the local environment by planting trees, participating in local clean-up operations, or supporting biodiversity projects
- ✓ Engaging in charitable activities, including donations and volunteering
- ✓ Installing or investing in renewable energy (solar panels, wind turbines)
- ✓ Promoting the local economy by creating jobs, providing training, and supporting local communities
- ✓ Improving green spaces within the business's grounds - plants, green walls, green roof, vegetable garden

Specific to accommodation businesses

- ✓ Would you use separate bins for recycling and organic waste in public spaces [and in bedrooms]?
Yes, Unsure, No
- ✓ Would you opt out of daily room cleaning, or reuse towels, in exchange for a reward (e.g. free drink)?
Yes, Unsure, No
- ✓ Would you be willing to offset your travel and emissions generated during your stay?
Yes, Unsure, No





Customer Sustainability Engagement Checklist

✓ Review the Customer sustainability engagement guide

- ☐ Review the communication channels you currently use
- ☐ Research new communication channels you can use to reach more customers and improve their engagement
- ☐ Choose when to survey your customers in their customer journey, from pre-arrival to departure
- ☐ Select the questions you want to ask your customers
- ☐ Ask your customers your chosen questions
- ☐ Now that you have collected feedback from your customers, you're ready to take action!





Customer sustainability engagement questionnaire guide

Supporting Lincolnshire's hospitality businesses with their sustainability journey, one simple step at a time

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Don't forget to inspire others with all your sustainability initiatives by sharing them on social media using the hashtag **#GreenHospitalityLincolnshire**

This toolkit was compiled for Lincolnshire County Council

by [Considerate Group](#).



CONSIDERATE

