

Consumer research examines how online ratings influence restaurant selection

Studies from BrightLocal and Opinas highlight evolving review behavior among U.S. diners

MI, UNITED STATES, February 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- According to the [Local Consumer Review Survey 2026](#) published by BrightLocal, reading online reviews has become nearly universal among U.S. consumers evaluating local businesses. The report also highlights a gap between intention and behavior: 94% of consumers say they are open to leaving reviews, but only 69% reported writing one in the past year.



A satisfied customer enjoying his meal — positive dining experiences often turn into great Google reviews.

Hospitality industry analysts say this gap is prompting restaurants to reconsider how and when they request customer feedback.

Rather than relying primarily on post-visit reminders or verbal requests, some restaurants are introducing review prompts at the end of the dining experience, when customer impressions are still recent.

Data from "[Restaurant Review Insights 2026](#)," a research dataset published by Opinas, a platform that provides AI-assisted responses to Google reviews, indicates that QR code and NFC prompts presented at checkout were associated with a 74% higher likelihood of a review being written before the customer left, compared with delayed review requests. The findings are based on aggregated data from more than 1,000 restaurants analyzed in 2025.

Researchers say the growing importance of online ratings reflects broader changes in how consumers discover and compare local businesses through search engines and mapping platforms. In competitive dining markets, small differences in average ratings may influence search visibility and customer consideration.

Food quality and service remain central to customer satisfaction, but industry analysts say online reputation metrics are increasingly part of the evaluation process when consumers compare dining options.

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