

# Spurred onward as SA's top restaurant

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Each brand was ranked according to its Acentric Brand Model (ABM) Index, a measure of customer-based-brand equity. The index combines 17 attributes; covering product, service, functionality, value for money, brand image and enjoyment. Brand equity is important as it correlates with a brand's share of customers in the market.

Spur excelled on child friendliness, enjoyable experiences and good interior design. Runner up McDonalds' excelled in terms of child friendliness, fast service and good locations.

Overall customers considered quality food to be one of the most important attributes. "While not one of Spur's top listed strengths, the restaurant's still performed well enough in this area and, when combined with its outstanding performance in other areas, it excels as a brand. As for the other brands, it appears there is substantial variation in perceptions of food quality. Woolworths was one of the top performers in this area," says Craig Kolb, MD of Acentric.

In addition to food quality considerations, there is a global trend towards customers demanding healthier menu options. Perceptions of an unhealthy menu seem to have afflicted certain restaurant chains, with certain celebrities becoming embroiled in debates over food health. "As a result, perceptions of food health were measured this year. While food health is not the worst performing attribute on average, there is extensive variation in performance by brand. Kauai was one of the stronger brands in this area, but oddly, Woolworths did not feature as strongly as expected.

"Differences also exist by demographic - for instance, gluten/grain concerns are foremost in higher-income households. It is a concern, that even amongst expensive chains, gluten is hard to avoid."

Cleanliness was also very important to customers. "While in general, restaurants were perceived to perform well on the cleanliness attribute, there is again substantial variation brand to brand. Vida e Café did well in this area as did Europa."

The research also quantified the frequency of general annoyances - not linked to any specific brand.

Besides hygiene, rude waiters and staff who talk loudly are an issue. "Interestingly there are significant differences between segments when it comes to what is considered annoying. For instance, eye contact is more of an issue for certain age groups, while some segments are significantly more likely to take issue with waiters who stand in close proximity when tips are calculated. Bad cell phone reception and order confusion sensitivity is also group specific," he concludes.

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