

RESEARCH REPORT · 2026

THE CONNECTED FLOOR

How hospitality connects its people, operations and AI in 2026 — and what it costs when the systems behind service don't talk.

RESTAURANTS · HOTELS · PUBS
· QSR

68%

of operators say their tech lets them down **at least weekly**. Inside: why — and what to do about it.

75%

name manager admin the biggest cost

11%

have people + ops fully connected

80%

already use AI daily or are piloting

READ ON →

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Hospitality teams on the floor. Stock image.

INTRODUCTION

Service happens on a connected floor

Hospitality has always been about people, the welcome, the warmth, the experience. But behind every good shift sits a stack of systems: the rota that got the right people in, the clock that paid them correctly, the training that made them confident, the POS that captured the sale, and the reports that told the operator whether any of it worked.

When those systems talk to each other, the floor runs. When they don't, the work falls to people, usually a manager, moving numbers between screens instead of leading a team. This is the hidden tax of disconnection, and it is paid in hours, in accuracy and in morale.

This report looks at the systems layer of hospitality through the eyes of the people who own it: operators, and increasingly the HR and people leaders responsible for how a business hires, schedules, trains and pays. Their verdict is blunt. Technology is meant to make the floor easier to run. Too often, it does the opposite.

What follows is not a snapshot to file away. It is a mirror, sometimes uncomfortable, of where the industry stands on people, operations and AI as 2026 begins, and a practical view of what a genuinely connected floor could look like next.

“Technology should make life on the floor easier, not harder. This research asks a simple question: are the systems behind hospitality actually connected, or are our people the integration?”



Gerard Forde
Founder, Bizimply

FOREWORD

Why we created this research with Bizimply

THE PROBLEM

We spend every day speaking with hospitality leaders, from independents to multi-site groups, and the message is consistent: tech should make life easier, but far too often it fragments the day instead. Teams are bogged down by clunky, disconnected platforms, and change feels risky.

Nowhere is that felt more sharply than in the people function, where recruitment, onboarding, scheduling, time and attendance, training and payroll are supposed to join up, and rarely do.

OUR GOAL

To give operators clarity and confidence: to stop reacting to disconnected systems and start building a floor where technology supports the team, streamlines operations and improves the guest experience.

We partnered with Bizimply because they live in this exact layer, the people and operations systems that decide whether a shift runs smoothly. This report is honest about where we are, and hopeful about where we can get to.



Chris Fletcher

Founder & CEO, Tech on Toast



The people behind the systems. Stock image.

“Great hospitality runs on great teams, and great teams need systems that work together. When scheduling, attendance, HR and payroll finally connect, managers get their time back and give it to the floor. That’s the shift this research points to, and it’s the future we’re building for operators.”



Conor Shaw
CEO, Bizimply

This research explores

01

Reliability

How often technology fails operators, and what that failure costs.

02

The admin tax

Where manager time goes when systems don't talk to each other.

03

Stack sprawl

How many systems operators juggle, and which ones are universal.

04

The connectivity gap

How joined-up the people layer really is to the operations layer.

05

AI in practice

Where operators use AI today, and what holds them back from more.

06

The path forward

What operators want next, and how to build a connected floor.



The floor where hospitality happens, service in full flow. Stock image.

Research methodology

This report is based on a structured survey of hospitality operators across the UK, spanning restaurant groups, hotels, pubs and QSR. Respondents included owners, HR and people leaders, operations managers and general managers. Throughout, findings are reported as **percentages of respondents**, rounded for clarity.

HOW THE DATA WAS COLLECTED

- Online survey distributed via email, industry partners and social channels.
- Closed-ended questions, multiple choice, ranking and scale items, for measurable, comparable results.
- Scenario questions on behaviour during system failures and onboarding.

WHO TOOK PART

- A mix of single-site and multi-site operators.
- Roles including owners, HR & people leaders, GMs and ops managers.
- Sectors spanning restaurants, pubs and bars, cafés, QSR and hotels.

HOW THE DATA WAS ANALYSED

Responses were aggregated and analysed for patterns across six themes, reliability, cost, stack complexity, connectivity, AI adoption and platform strategy. Narrative insights interpret those trends. All figures in this report are expressed as percentages; no participant counts are reported.

A note on reading the figures. Every statistic here reflects the share of operators who responded in a given way. Where percentages for a question do not total 100, respondents either selected multiple options or the remainder fell across other answers.

The floor is running on tech that lets it down

68%

of operators say their technology lets them down **at least every week.**

Weekly failure is not an edge case, it is the baseline experience of running a modern hospitality business. And the consequences travel straight into decision-making: when systems don't hold up, the data behind them can't be trusted, and the floor slows down.

50%

say disconnected data leads to **slower decisions.**

35%

say it means **lost revenue insight.**

35%

say **forecasting** becomes guesswork.

The cost of disconnection is measured in manager hours

Ask operators where disconnection hurts most and the answer is not the software licence, it is the person in front of it. When systems don't share data, someone has to bridge the gap by hand, and that someone is almost always a manager who should be leading the shift.

This is the disconnection tax: skilled, expensive people spending part of every week as a human integration between systems that were supposed to connect on their own.

75%

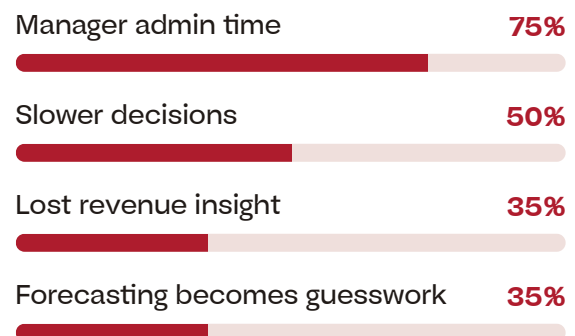
name **manager admin time** as the single biggest cost of disconnected systems.

THE WEEKLY DRAIN

~50%

of operators spend **multiple hours every week** manually moving data between systems that should already be connected.

WHERE DISCONNECTION SHOWS UP



"The most expensive integration in most hospitality businesses isn't a piece of software. It's a manager with two screens open."



David McCarroll
Operations Tech Lead

The scale of the sprawl

Disconnection has a cause: there is simply a lot to connect. The modern hospitality stack has quietly grown into a sprawl of specialist systems, each essential, few of them speaking the same language.

40%

juggle **4 to 6** different tech systems every week.

30%

juggle **7 to 10** systems every week.

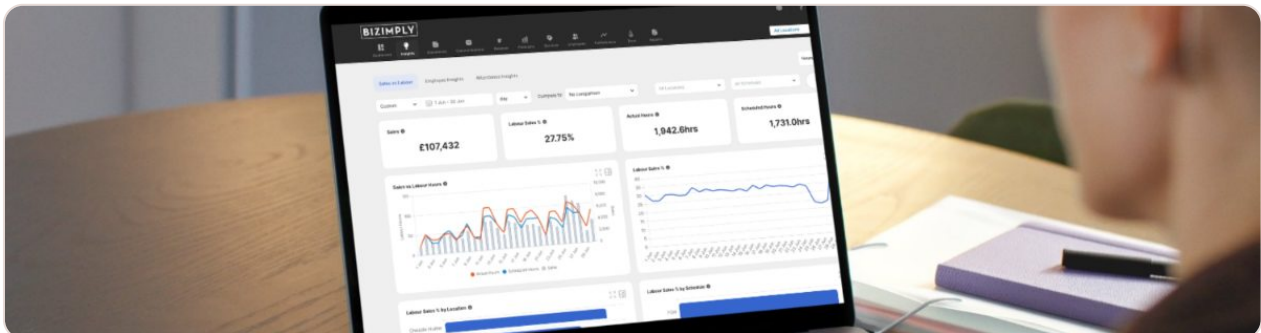
SYSTEMS IN NEAR-UNIVERSAL USE

Stock, Scheduling & T&A, and Payroll

~90%

POS and Training systems

85%



Scheduling, attendance and labour cost in one connected view, the kind of join-up operators say is missing across the wider stack. Product view: Bizimply.

50%

onboard a new starter onto **all** their tech systems within just **1 to 2 days**, a sign that when the stack is joined up, people move faster.

The stack that runs the floor



40%

juggle **4 to 6**
systems every
week

30%

juggle **7 to 10**
systems every
week

The connectivity gap between people and ops

11%

Only 11% say their **people-layer tools**, ATS, scheduling, training, payroll and tips, are **fully connected** to their **ops-layer tools**, such as POS and BI. The rest report mostly, some, minimal, or no connection at all.

THE INTEGRATIONS OPERATORS WANT MOST

1 Scheduling + Payroll

2 ATS + Onboarding

3 Scheduling + Training

The gap isn't abstract, it lands on the frontline. Access is still gated by managers rather than designed around the individual team member.

6%

say **all** frontline staff can access every system from their own device without needing a manager.

Two layers that barely speak

PEOPLE LAYER

ATS

Scheduling

Training

Payroll

Tips

11%

FULLY
CONNECTED

THE OTHER 89%
BRIDGE IT BY HAND

OPS LAYER

POS

Business
intelligence

Stock control

Reporting

6%

say **all** frontline staff
can reach every
system without a
manager

MOST-WANTED FIXES

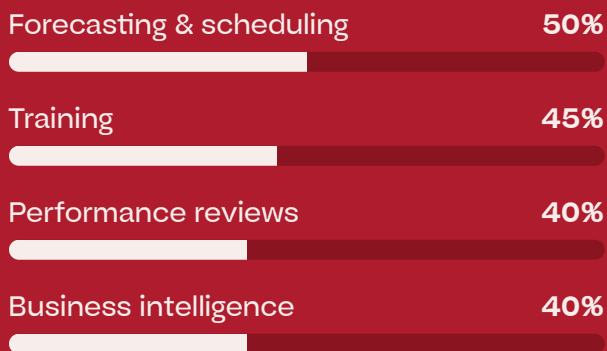
Scheduling + Payroll • ATS +
Onboarding • Scheduling + Training

AI is already on the floor

80%

are already using AI daily, or actively experimenting with it. The question is no longer **whether**, but **how well**.

WHERE OPERATORS USE AI TODAY



85%

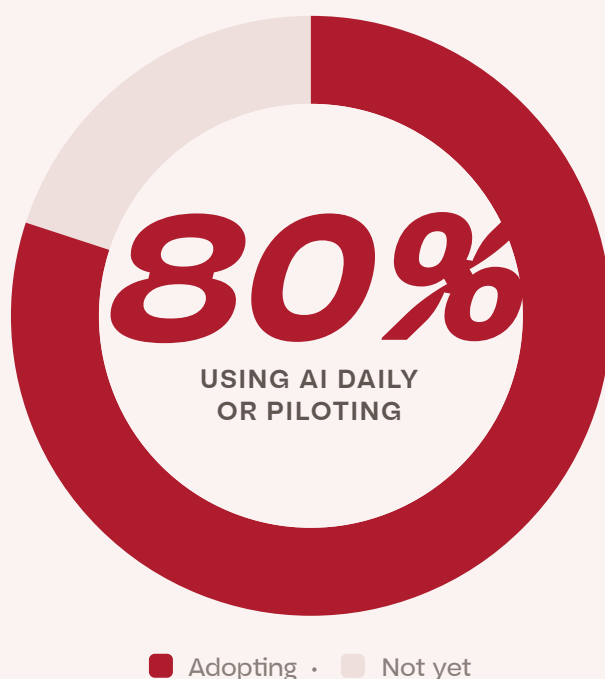
see AI as **supportive**, automating grunt work, not replacing their teams.

35%

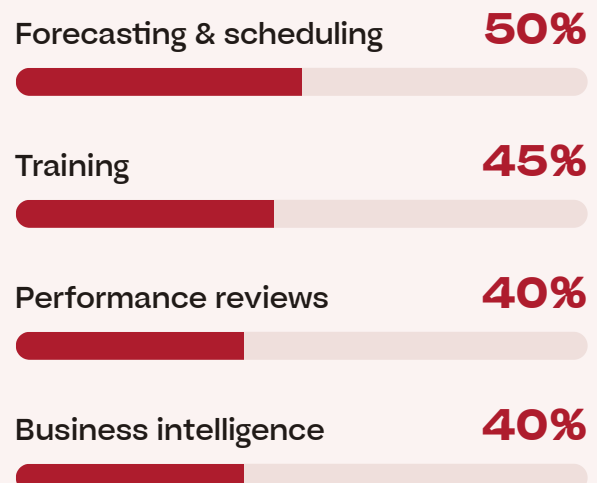
cite **trust and accuracy** as the top blocker to doing more with AI.

The appetite is there and the fear is not. What holds operators back is confidence in the data, and data confidence is exactly what a connected floor delivers. AI is only as good as the systems feeding it.

Already in use, not on the horizon



WHERE AI IS WORKING TODAY



85%

see AI as
supportive —
automating
grunt work, not
a threat

35%

cite **trust &
accuracy** as
the top blocker
to doing more

Best in class, connected, not one big box

Operators have a clear view of the future they want. Faced with a choice between a single mega-platform that does everything adequately, or best-in-class tools that connect cleanly, they choose connection over consolidation by a wide margin.

50%

**Best in class +
integrated**

want specialist tools that are genuinely well connected to one another.

15%

One single platform

favour a single mega-platform to run everything.

“The operators who get ahead will be the ones whose systems talk to each other. When nobody has to fill the gap between systems, leaders can stay on the floor and the time and money quietly being spent in the office getting systems and data to talk comes straight back.”



Sarah Puleston

Head of People & Culture, KZ Holdings



The connected floor in practice: people, schedule and attendance in one place, on the devices teams already use.

Recommendations for operators

01 Count your stack, and your hand-offs

Map every system a manager touches in a week and every point where data is moved by hand. The manual hand-offs are your disconnection tax made visible.

02 Connect the people layer first

Start where the pain is highest and the wins are fastest: scheduling to payroll, ATS to onboarding, scheduling to training. These are the integrations operators ask for most.

03 Put systems in the team's hands

Design for frontline self-service. Every task that needs a manager to unlock it is a bottleneck, and a reason data goes stale.

04 Earn the right to use AI

Trust and accuracy are the blockers, and both are downstream of connected data. Clean the connections and AI forecasting, scheduling and BI become genuinely useful.

05 Buy for connection, not consolidation

You don't need one box that does everything. You need best-in-class tools that connect, evaluate integrations as seriously as features.



The people a connected floor gives time back to. Stock image.

CONCLUSION

Connection is the strategy

The picture from the floor is consistent. Technology fails often, the cost of disconnection is paid in manager hours, and the people layer and operations layer still barely talk to each other. Yet operators are clear-eyed about the fix: not fewer tools, but better-connected ones, and AI they can finally trust.

The connected floor isn't a product. It's a decision to make systems work for people. The operators who make it will spend less time moving data and more time doing what hospitality has always been about, running a great shift.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

The Connected Floor · Live event

Tuesday 21 July · 9:00-11:30am · Caravan, Covent Garden

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

Who produced this report

TECH ON TOAST

Tech on Toast is the community and media platform for hospitality technology. We connect operators with the people, ideas and tools shaping the future of the industry, through research, events and honest conversation about what actually works on the floor.

techontoast.community

BIZIMPLY

Bizimply is the workforce management platform built for hospitality, bringing scheduling, time & attendance, HR and payroll together so managers spend less time on admin and more time on the floor.

bizimply.com



Stock image.

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