

Venue & eatertainment briefing

September 2026 edition from Rookoo

A quick reply gets the conversation moving. A useful answer helps an organiser decide.

This edition looks at pricing clarity, the questions customers volunteer and the events already being planned for the holiday season.

THREE THINGS TO TAKE AWAY

Make price easier to assess. An indicative rate can help an organiser judge whether to continue.

Measure usefulness alongside speed. A fast first reply is only the start of resolving an enquiry.

Prepare for interest before the event season. The autumn 2025 group-enquiry sample peaked in October, not December.

We pair international industry research with insights from Rookoo-equipped venues. Belgian findings come from event venues and offer practical questions for operators, including eatertainment businesses, rather than a measure of market performance.

Pricing clarity deserves the first look

In Cvent's international planner research, 35% of respondents identified budget as their biggest concern, while 22% reported a lack of transparency in venue proposals. Cost matters, and so does how clearly a venue explains it. ^[1]

ROOKOO INSIGHT

Across Belgian venues where an organiser explicitly asked about cost, the first reply contained an actual figure in fewer than one in ten. Two thirds referred to a quote, a proposal or a brochure instead.

There are sensible reasons to avoid a premature quote. Event pricing depends on the date, headcount and what is included. But a referral to a proposal leaves the organiser without a figure in the reply itself, even if supporting material may contain one.

For venues comparing well on location, capacity and experience, an indicative price can help customers judge whether to continue. A starting rate, a per-head range or a worked example can provide that orientation, provided the assumptions and exclusions are clear. These are practical options to test; the enquiry analysis does not measure their effect on bookings.

Help the organiser make the first decision

An organiser may need to agree a budget with friends or take an option to a manager before requesting a detailed proposal. Explain whether activity, food, drinks and exclusive space are priced together or separately. For an event venue, distinguish room hire from catering and equipment.

Start with a price the venue can stand behind for a clearly described arrangement. Explain what changes it: the day, group size, session length or private use. If a figure cannot yet be supplied, identify what is missing and when a price can be expected. Cvent's supplier guidance similarly recommends baseline pricing and a clear outline of the offering when an enquiry lacks detail. ^[7]

FOR OPERATORS

When someone asks what an event costs, can they find out without waiting for a quote - a starting rate, a per-head range, a worked example?

Speed and clarity at the first reply

International planner research identifies responsiveness as a sourcing priority. Cvent reports that 24% of planners encounter delays in venue responses. That concerns the wider sourcing process; it is useful context for examining the first contact as well. ^[2]

MEDIAN FIRST REPLY: UNDER ONE MINUTE

Across the Rookoo-equipped venues analysed in Belgium and the UK, median first substantive reply times were under a minute on assistant-handled web chat, WhatsApp and connected mailboxes between 12 August and 11 September 2026. Replies were handled around the clock and across Dutch, French and English.

This measures the first substantive reply, rather than the time to a complete proposal. The practical question is which of your inbound channels can say the same.

Addressing a question and resolving it are different

In the enquiries classified for answer handling, replies answered the organiser's question, answered it in part, or asked for information genuinely needed first, such as a clear event date or headcount.

An enquiry can receive a prompt, relevant response while the organiser still needs a price. Reviewing both response time and information delivered gives a fuller picture of the first contact.

Keep momentum through the handover

Consider an organiser asking about a December evening, dinner for a large team and use of a microphone. A useful first reply can address known catering and equipment options, then ask for the date or headcount needed to confirm the rest.

If a colleague must confirm availability or prepare a proposal, explain what is being checked, who will respond and when. The next person handling the enquiry should see the original request and the answers already given.

FOR OPERATORS

Track time to the first substantive reply, time until the original questions are resolved and time to a usable proposal. Review slower cases alongside the median.

What organisers actually want to know

Across 12 Belgian event venues, 448 qualified enquiries received from 12 August to 11 September were reviewable for the questions organisers asked. Among corporate and private enquiries containing an explicit organiser question, the leading topics were:

• Corporate • Private



Bars are drawn to a 100% scale. Topics can overlap. Percentages use the relevant corporate or private explicit-question base, not all 448 enquiries. The leading three priorities appear in the same order in both groups.

Catering appeared somewhere in roughly three quarters of enquiries, often after a prompt. When the analysis isolated topics organisers introduced unprompted, pricing came first. Standardised fields alone do not show who introduced a subject unless that distinction is recorded. Survey methodology likewise shows that prompting and question format can affect responses. ^[3]

Similar priorities, different planning demands

Corporate enquiries more frequently raised each of the three leading topics. Audiovisual equipment, room layout and capacity each appeared in roughly a fifth to a quarter of corporate enquiries. These help an organiser assess whether an event will work in practice.

Payment and cancellation terms were raised in fewer than one in ten enquiries. Low question frequency does not mean a subject is unimportant: organisers may expect the answer later or assume standard terms.

FOR OPERATORS

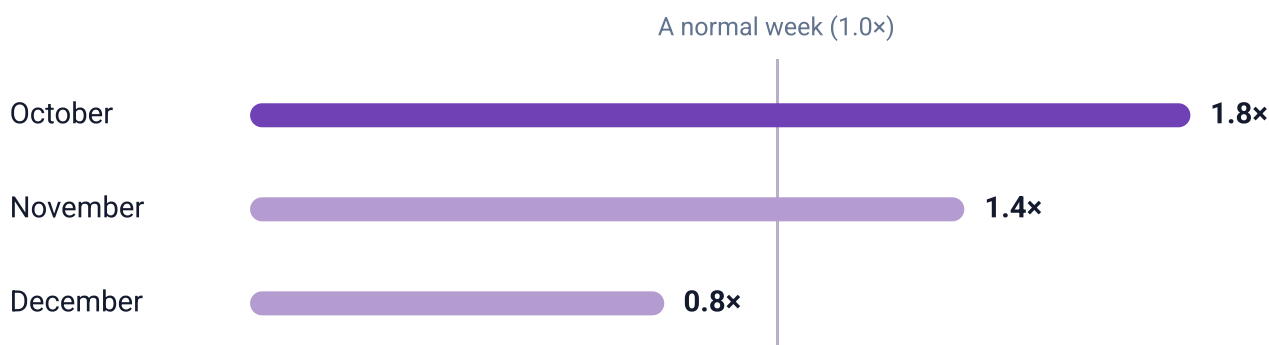
Separate spontaneous questions, answers to venue prompts and unresolved questions. Preserve the original wording where possible: are you seeing what customers wanted to know, or what your form asked them?

Enquiries arrive well before the season

In our autumn 2025 eatertainment enquiry sample, October averaged 1.8× the mid-September weekly rate, with a peak around 20 October at 2.4×. November averaged 1.4× and December 0.8× – below the baseline.

Average weekly group enquiries

Autumn 2025. Groups of five or more, relative to the mid-September weekly rate.



“A normal week” refers to the mid-September 2025 weekly rate. Multiples are rounded. These are incoming enquiries, not confirmed bookings or a Christmas-only segment.

The data puts the planning window earlier

The shared data confirms that the enquiry peak in this sample arrived in October, well ahead of the holiday season itself. For operators expecting the rush closer to December, that moves the preparation window forward. At its peak, weekly interest reached 2.4× the mid-September rate: a clear signal to have campaigns, pricing and enquiry handling ready before that interest arrives.

This is why enquiry data matters: it shows when organisers are actively considering their options, rather than leaving campaign timing to assumptions about the event calendar. Separately, VenueScanner identifies September and October as its busiest months for Christmas-party enquiries, reinforcing the case for early preparation across a different audience. ^[4]

The Rookoo sample covers group enquiries, not a confirmed Christmas-only segment or event dates. It confirms the timing observed in this sample; one season does not predict every venue’s pattern.

FOR OPERATORS

If enquiries rise ahead of the holiday season, does your campaign calendar start early enough to meet that interest? Review your own enquiry history before choosing when to launch.

An experience worth coming back for

Repeat participation and group comfort deserve attention alongside the speed of the booking process. The enquiry is a chance to understand whether the experience will work for everyone attending.

Understand who comes back

KAM's May 2025 study surveyed 500 UK adults aged 18 and over, in a sample described as nationally representative. Nearly one in three had visited a competitive-socialising venue in the preceding year. Among those visitors, 41% reported going at least monthly. ^[5]

This measures participation in the category, not retention at the same venue. Distinguish repeat organisers, returning groups and attendees who later book for another occasion. Compare similar occasions over equal follow-up periods: an annual staff party does not follow the same rhythm as a monthly social visit.

Make the activity work for the whole group

Mintel's June 2026 UK summary reports that 50% of participants aged 16–34 agree that losing discourages more frequent participation. Full subgroup methodology is needed to judge the precision and scope of this finding. ^[6]

Explain beginner guidance, how teams are formed, session length and options for non-playing guests. Make food, dietary choices and alcohol-free options easy to find. Where you offer different formats, distinguish a competitive tournament from a casual group session.

Ask returning customers what brought them back. Test ideas against their feedback and your own booking patterns; the research does not establish that a particular format increases return visits. Carry agreed arrangements from the enquiry to the hosting team.

Belgian event-venue enquiries do not measure attitudes to losing, activity participation or repeat visits. These experience questions draw on the separate UK research above.

Four actions to take from this brief

- 01 Give a starting price or range, with inclusions and exclusions.
- 02 Measure time to resolve the organiser's questions alongside reply speed.
- 03 Prepare holiday offers before October; refine timing using your enquiry history.
- 04 Track repeat organisers by occasion and ask what brought them back.

How we support this work

The findings above stand on their own. For the venues in this analysis, this is how the same questions are handled inside Rookoo.

Pricing in the reply	The first reply draws on your own price lists and pricing rules, including conditional formulas for guest numbers, seasonality or weekends.
Every channel, one inbox	Web chat, email, WhatsApp, Instagram and SMS arrive in one inbox that your team and your AI colleague share, with response targets tracked against business hours.
What was actually asked	Reporting reads the conversations themselves: who enquired, their preferred dates, and why opportunities are won or lost.
Enquiry timing	Reporting shows enquiry volume week by week, filtered by date, team, agent or label, so a seasonal rise is visible as it starts.
Into the event day	Event playbooks carry room setups, AV requirements and dietary notes from the conversation to the floor team, each step with an owner and a time.

What are your own enquiries telling you?

We are happy to walk through the questions above with you, whatever you use today.

[Get in touch to learn more](#)

Rookoo is hosted in the EU, built for GDPR compliance, with a data processing agreement in place for every customer.

Evidence and methodology

EVIDENCE CUTOFF 14 SEPTEMBER 2026

This is an in-quarter Q3 briefing. It does not cover the completed quarter. External research dates and Rookoo reporting windows are stated separately.

What the Rookoo findings cover

The 2026 enquiry analysis covers 12 August to 11 September. Results describe participating venues and the channels or enquiries analysed. Belgian findings relate to event venues; the response-speed sample also includes UK venues.

Topic, pricing and answer-handling analyses use different bases and should not be combined into one denominator. Corporate and private topic-base counts and the answer-handling base are not reported here.

The separate autumn 2025 analysis covers weekly enquiries for groups of five or more at an eatertainment operator from September to December. Monthly averages and the peak week are compared with the mid-September weekly rate (1.0×), not an industry-wide normal. Multiples are rounded; bar lengths are approximate.

That historical sample describes enquiry arrival dates. It is not a confirmed Christmas-only segment, a count of completed bookings or a measure of the dates on which the requested events took place.

How to interpret the results

Enquiries do not equal confirmed bookings. The findings do not establish conversion effects, market-wide trends or year-on-year change across Rookoo venues. Response handling describes assistant-handled channels; it does not assess every inbound channel at each venue.

The external sources are commercial research, platform analysis and methodological guidance. They provide context, not peer-reviewed estimates of Q3 UK venue performance. Geographic scope and differences between event venues and eatertainment should be retained when applying the findings.

Suggested operational actions are options to review or test. They are not measured causal effects of the enquiry analysis.

Reading the sources

Numbered references in the briefing link to the source notes on the following page. Each source title links directly to its publisher.

Source notes

[1] Cvent - Inside Planner Behavior: What Data Reveals About Group Hotel Bookings

Published 9 January 2026. Figures from the 2026 Global Planner Sourcing Report: 1,650 professional planners across six regions, surveyed in July 2025. International supplier-sponsored research; not a UK-only sample.

[2] Cvent - How Venue Sourcing is Changing in 2026

Published 23 March 2026. Uses the same planner research as [1], rather than a second independent survey. Sourcing delays are not directly comparable with first-response time.

[3] Pew Research Center - Writing Survey Questions

Methodological guidance on question format, wording and order. Supports distinguishing prompted from volunteered responses; does not validate Rookoo's classifications.

[4] VenueScanner - 2026 UK Christmas Party Booking Trends Businesses Need to Know

Published 7 September 2026. Platform enquiry and booking analysis. The public summary does not give sufficient sample and extraction detail to treat it as a market benchmark.

[5] KAM - Competitive Socialising 2025

May 2025 consumer study: 500 UK adults aged 18+. Monthly frequency uses the smaller visitor subgroup and measures self-reported category participation, not venue retention.

[6] Mintel - UK Competitive Socialising Market Report 2026

June 2026 public report summary. Precise subgroup size, fieldwork and full question wording are not provided in the summary used here. Treat the losing-related finding as directional context.

[7] Cvent - Craft Winning RFP Responses: A Supplier's Guide to Success on Reposite

Published 15 June 2026. Practical supplier guidance on pricing and proposal content, rather than an empirical study of booking outcomes.