

cra'ster

THE POWER OF BREAKFAST

How Hotels Can Leverage the Most Important Meal of the Day



A CRASTER WHITEPAPER ON EMERGING BREAKFAST TRENDS

September 2025

Contents

- 3 The Overlooked Power Player
- 4 The Hidden Force
- 5 The Marketing Blind Spot
- 6 From Excess to More Intent
- 7 The Hybrid Breakfast
- 8 The Practical Challenge
- 9 What Comes Next
- 10 Signature Solutions
- 11 Contributors
- 12 References

About the Author



Daniel Alderson-Smith
Global Account Director,
Craster

This whitepaper was written by Daniel Alderson-Smith, Global Account Director at Craster. Daniel advises some of the world's leading hotels and restaurants on how to transform everyday service touchpoints into defining brand experiences. With deep expertise in strategic account leadership and design-led presentation, he champions the idea of breakfast as a critical driver of loyalty, satisfaction, and revenue. His work positions breakfast not just as a meal, but as a 'Hybrid Breakfast' opportunity — the balance of curated choice, operational efficiency, and brand storytelling.



The Overlooked Power Player

Why breakfast drives bookings, loyalty, and revenue.

Breakfast is one of the most powerful yet consistently under-valued drivers of guest choice in hospitality. After location and price, the quality and variety of breakfast is consistently the third most important factor influencing hotel choice (*Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 2012; *Booking.com*, 2021; *TripAdvisor*, 2022; *Leite-Pereira, Brandão & Costa*, 2022).

Guests are not only motivated by breakfast availability; they are also willing to pay a premium for higher quality, and they link it directly to satisfaction and loyalty (*STR & Duetto*, 2020; *J.D. Power*, 2023). Nearly two-thirds of travellers (64%) say they would return to a hotel because of its breakfast (*Leite-Pereira et al.*, 2022).

Yet despite its proven influence, breakfast is often under-marketed. Research confirms that 45% of guests look to booking platform photos for breakfast information, and 23% rely on online reviews — yet fewer than 10% of hotels feature breakfast images in OTA galleries (*Leite-Pereira et al.*, 2022).

At the same time, breakfast itself is evolving. Excessive buffets are giving way to hybrid models that combine smaller, fresher displays with à la carte precision. Wellness, sustainability, and regional authenticity are reshaping the way breakfast is delivered and perceived (*Think Hospitality*, 2024).

According to multiple sources (listed above) breakfast is the third most important booking driver after location and price.

64% of guests say they would return to a hotel because of its breakfast.
— LEITE-PEREIRA ET AL.



Breakfast is no longer just an amenity. Increasingly, it is a brand signature — and one of hospitality's most under-used marketing assets.

Daniel Alderson-Smith, Craster

The Hidden Force Behind Guest Choice

Why breakfast influences satisfaction, loyalty, and revenue.

The importance of breakfast in hotel decision-making is well established. A study published in the *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* (2012) concluded that food and beverage quality, particularly breakfast, significantly influences hotel selection and satisfaction, with guests willing to pay more for a high-quality morning meal.

TripAdvisor (2019) reported that 87% of travellers consider complimentary breakfast important when booking, while its 2022 *TripIndex* survey found that 83% of respondents ranked breakfast availability or quality as a top priority, and 65% actively chose hotels based on it. The *Booking.com* survey from 2021 found that 72% of travellers view breakfast as a decisive factor, with 65% of business travellers ranking breakfast quality above amenities such as gyms or pools.

The *Leite-Pereira et al.* (2022) study deepens this evidence. It revealed that 70% of guests consider breakfast “very or extremely important” when staying in a hotel, and 25% ranked breakfast among the top three attributes when choosing a hotel, after location and price. Crucially, 64% of guests said they would return to a hotel because of its breakfast — and among those rating breakfast “very good,” 76% said they would return.

Financial performance data reinforces this. *STR* and *Duetto* (2020) reported that hotels with premium breakfast offerings achieved ADRs between 5–10% higher than competitors. Meanwhile, *J.D. Power* (2023) found that hotels with strong breakfast scores achieved overall satisfaction ratings up to 50 points higher on its 1,000-point scale.

Together, the evidence positions breakfast not as an operational necessity, but as a decisive booking driver, revenue lever, and loyalty generator.

70% of guests consider breakfast very or extremely important.
— LEITE-PEREIRA ET AL.

87% of travellers consider complimentary breakfast important when booking. — TRIPADVISOR

Hotels with premium breakfasts achieve ADRs 5–10% higher than competitors. — STR & DUETTO

Hotels with strong breakfast scores saw satisfaction rise by 50 points.
— J.D. POWER

Breakfast is hospitality’s quiet decision-maker — rarely named, but proven to tip the balance.

Daniel Alderson-Smith, Craster



The Marketing Blind Spot

Why breakfast rarely appears online — and why that must change.

Despite breakfast's importance, it remains underrepresented in hotel marketing. OTA galleries often feature rooms, pools, or lobbies, but rarely the morning offer. We estimate that fewer than 10% of 5-star hotels display breakfast imagery in their top photo sets.

This finding echoes *Leite-Pereira et al. (2022)*, who discovered that while 45% of guests seek breakfast information via booking platform photos and 23% via online reviews, hotel managers consistently under-prioritise showcasing it online. Although 67% of managers agreed breakfast was important to guests, few actively promoted it as a differentiator.

The implication is clear: breakfast is one of the most powerful soft motivators for booking, but it remains largely invisible in hotel brand storytelling.

45% of guests seek breakfast info in booking photos, 23% in reviews
— LEITE-PEREIRA ET AL.

Fewer than 10% of OTA hotel galleries feature breakfast imagery.
— LEITE-PEREIRA ET AL.

Hotels invest millions refining their breakfast offer – yet most fail to show it online. It's the equivalent of building your best stage set and never raising the curtain.

Daniel Alderson-Smith, Craster



From Excess to More Intent

Why the 'Hybrid Breakfast' is becoming the global standard.

In North America, breakfast is being stripped back with precision. For Cojho F&B Consultancy, this often means challenging hotels to elevate their morning offer to match the positioning of the property. Reflecting on a recent project with a luxury client in Colorado, Cojho co-founder **Mitch Prensky** explains: *"The ADR of the hotel was thousands of dollars a night, but the breakfast offering wasn't worthy of that at all."*

His solution was not to expand the buffet, but to focus it. Pastries, smoked salmon, and breakfast charcuterie were presented with care; poached eggs came freshly from the kitchen rather than languishing in a chafing dish.

Co-founder **Jennie Yip** adds: *"Even if it's five great things — that's enough. It doesn't mean less. It just means better chosen."*

In Europe, **Corporate Executive Chef, Miguel Teixeira** is leading breakfast transformation at Corinthia Hotels. With smaller, more intimate properties such as Bucharest and Brussels, the approach has shifted from buffet abundance to minimalist refinement. *"All the food is à la carte now. Small displays, nice pastries, very minimalist — but still with that sense of quality,"* he explains.

In Asia and the Middle East, similar shifts are visible, with wellness-driven and regionalised breakfast concepts increasingly replacing the oversized buffet.

This refinement is increasingly supported by modular display systems — enabling consistency not just at breakfast, but across dayparts and spaces such as spas, gyms, and suites. At Craster, our systems are designed with exactly this flexibility in mind.

Industry observers, including *Think Hospitality* (2024), also note that the era of the oversized buffet is waning. Instead, a new standard is emerging: the Hybrid Breakfast.

As **Daniel Alderson-Smith**, Global Account Director at Craster, explains: *"The Hybrid Breakfast, is fast becoming the norm. Guests are asking for quality over quantity, and operators are responding with hybrid models that balance choice with precision."*



Instead of adhering to the traditional and predictable approach to breakfast, I advise hotels to offer unique, visually appealing, and quality driven breakfast experiences.

Scot Turner, Auden Hospitality



Images courtesy of Corinthia Hotels



All the food is à la carte now. Small displays, nice pastries, very minimalist — but still with that sense of quality.

Miguel Teixeira, Corinthia Hotels



Even if it's five great things — that's enough. It doesn't mean less. It just means better chosen.

Jennie Yip, Cojho F&B Consultancy



The ADR of the hotel was thousands of dollars a night, but the breakfast wasn't worthy of that at all.

Mitch Prensky, Cojho F&B Consultancy

The Hybrid Breakfast

The 'Hybrid Breakfast' concept represents a new standard in hospitality — balancing choice with precision.

What It Is

The Hybrid Breakfast is the new model emerging in luxury and lifestyle hotels. It combines the curated abundance of a small buffet with the integrity of à la carte service, supported by design-led presentation.

Moving away from the excess and waste of traditional buffets, the Hybrid Breakfast is built around:

- Smaller, replenished displays that look fresh and intentional
- Key wellness-driven and regional items, elegantly presented
- Bespoke, cooked-to-order dishes for items that require integrity (e.g., eggs, pancakes)
- Modular design systems to reduce waste and adapt to multiple dayparts

Why It Matters

Guest, Operator, and Brand Benefits

For Guests:

- Feel intentional and curated
- Wellness and dietary needs respected
- Memorable visual moments
- Frequency of replenishment adds freshness

For Operators:

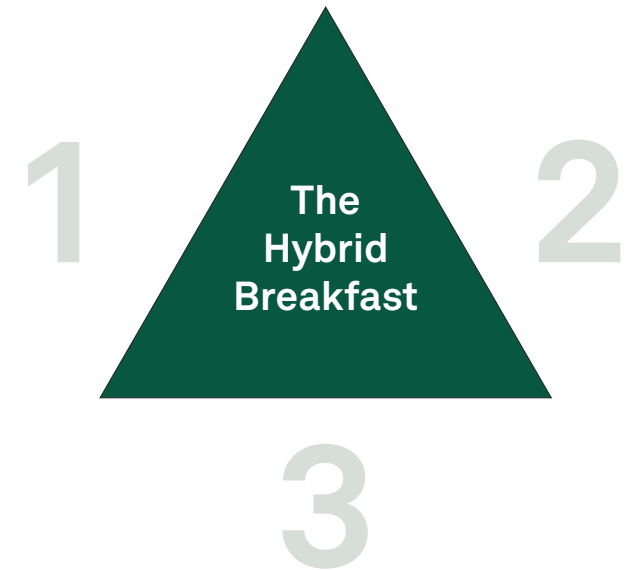
- Reduced food waste
- Lower labour costs
- Increased ADR through premium positioning

For Brands:

- Signature identity for marketing and reviews
- Cross-functional use of design systems
- Hybrid model appeals to both global and local markets

The Hybrid Breakfast presents greater operational efficiencies, allowing for more considered storytelling, and a greater sense of personalisation.

Daniel Alderson-Smith, Craster



1

Curated Buffet

- Small, constantly replenished displays
- Regional and wellness-driven items
- Creates freshness and variety without excess

2

À la Carte

- Bespoke dishes (e.g., eggs, pancakes)
- Served with integrity from the kitchen
- Personalised and premium-feeling

3

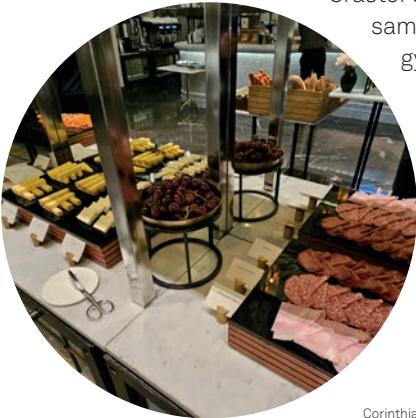
Design-Led Systems

- Modular, flexible, cross-functional
- Less food looks like more, and reduces waste
- Elevates presentation and brand storytelling

The Practical Challenge

Balancing cost, labour, and sustainability without lowering experience.

Breakfast remains one of the most labour-intensive and cost-sensitive services. Operators are under pressure to deliver speed and quality while minimising waste. Flexibility is vital. As **Jennie Yip** notes: *"You can't design breakfast around a fixed setup anymore. It has to flex between business travellers one morning and leisure families the next."*



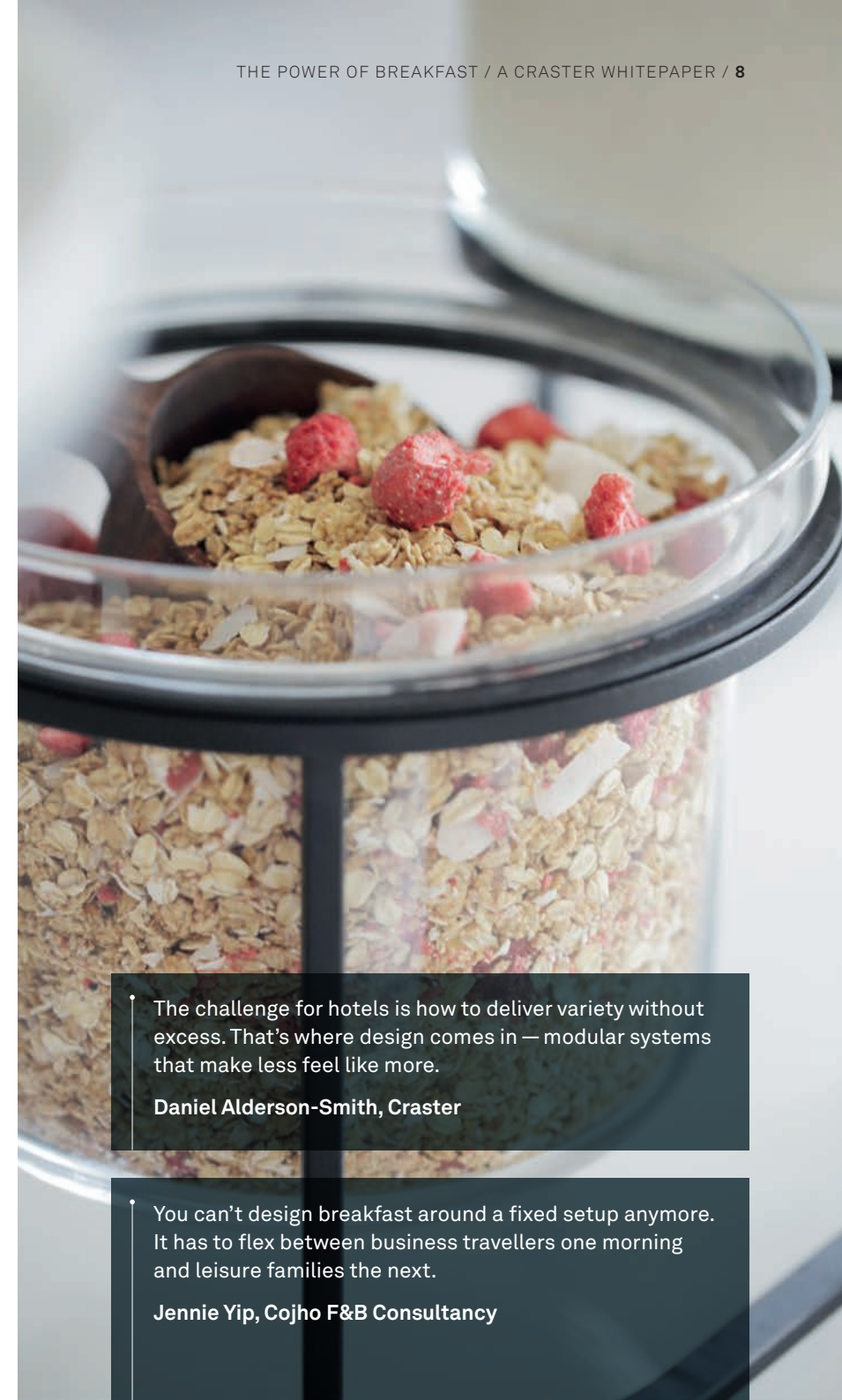
Corinthia Bucharest

Craster's modular systems directly address this need. The same stand can present pastries at breakfast, fruit in the gym, and petit fours in the evening. *"Risers, boxes, trays — it all connects. That's what makes it so useful,"* says **Corporate Executive Chef, Miguel Teixeira**.

Sustainability is also improved: *"With the right combination of pieces, less food looks like more — so we reduce waste without lowering the experience,"* Miguel adds.

With the right combination of pieces, less food looks like more — reducing waste without lowering experience.

Miguel Teixeira, Corinthia Hotels



The challenge for hotels is how to deliver variety without excess. That's where design comes in — modular systems that make less feel like more.

Daniel Alderson-Smith, Craster

You can't design breakfast around a fixed setup anymore. It has to flex between business travellers one morning and leisure families the next.

Jennie Yip, Cojho F&B Consultancy

What Comes Next

Personalisation, wellness, theatre, and community.

Looking ahead, breakfast will evolve along several key dimensions:

- Personalisation at scale, through pre-selected dietary preferences.
- Wellness as the baseline, with plant-based, protein-forward, and functional foods.
- Theatre of presentation, turning service into performance.
- Local marketing, with hotels opening breakfast to attract non-guests and build community.

Industry insight from *Think Hospitality* (2024) suggests the Hybrid Breakfast will dominate: smaller, replenished buffets supported by à la carte elements, greater regional authenticity, and evolving into weekend brunch extensions.

As **Jennie Yip** notes: “People want breakfast that feels intentional. It doesn’t mean less — just better chosen.”

From overlooked service to strategic differentiator.

Breakfast is no longer just sustenance. It is now the third most important booking driver, after location and price. It raises ADR, drives reviews, and anchors satisfaction. Yet it remains under-marketed and underleveraged.

By embracing regional authenticity, sustainability, and design-led solutions, hotels can transform breakfast into a review generator, a booking motivator, and a brand-defining signature. **The Hybrid Breakfast** is the direction of travel — smaller buffets, curated intent, à la carte precision — and it is set to become the new industry standard.

72% of global travellers say a good breakfast is a key factor in hotel choice.
— BOOKING.COM

The Hybrid Breakfast is not simply a format, but a strategic shift. It’s a smarter balance of curated choice, operational efficiency, and elevated design.

Daniel Alderson-Smith, Craster



Signature Solutions

Turning insight into repeatable standards.

The industry's shift toward Hybrid Breakfast models highlights a challenge: how to make curated, design-led experiences scalable across global portfolios without losing integrity.

At Craster, we've seen operators wrestle with this tension — balancing creativity at the property level with the need for consistency, efficiency, and cost control. Our approach has been to translate insight into systems rather than one-off setups.

Through **Signature Solutions**, we partner with brands to:

- Develop modular front-of-house layouts that are both bespoke and repeatable
- Ensure designs reflect the identity of each brand while remaining operationally efficient
- Provide tools that enable local teams to adapt with confidence

Our **Plan tool** extends this further, allowing food and beverage leaders to:

- Visualise curated layouts in 2D and 3D
- Adjust for property-specific footprints
- Generate lifelike renderings before rollout

The result is not just a display, but a scalable design standard that supports both storytelling and operational discipline — ensuring that a brand's most important meal is also its most consistent signature.

At Craster, we believe unforgettable hospitality begins with design-led presentation that transforms everyday moments into defining brand experiences.

Breakfast is no longer just a meal — it's a signature moment that drives bookings, loyalty, and revenue. To explore how these insights can shape your F&B strategy, connect with our team at Craster for tailored examples and system solutions.

Signature Solutions make every layout instantly shoppable — ensuring brand consistency and operational efficiency across global properties.



Our Signature Solutions service transform presentation into a repeatable standard. It gives operators the confidence that every setup, in every property, feels both consistent and elevated.

Daniel Alderson-Smith, Craster

Contributors

About Craster

Craster is a design-led hospitality brand that works with leading hotels and restaurants worldwide. Its mission is to help operators create guest experiences that combine operational efficiency with elevated, design-led touchpoints. By combining craftsmanship with modular systems, Craster transforms everyday service moments — such as breakfast — into defining experiences that strengthen brand identity.



Craster Ltd.
Great Western Studios
65 Alfred Road
London W2 5EU

(UK) +44 (0)203 004 4750
(USA) +1 732 543 7862
info@craster.com
www.craster.com

Industry leaders and experts who shaped this whitepaper



Scot Turner
Founder,
Auden Hospitality

Scot Turner is the founder of Auden Hospitality, an award-winning consultancy helping hotels transform their food and beverage strategy. A former operator with experience opening over 40 restaurants across 14 countries and managing \$175m in revenues, Scot has worked with leading brands including The Dorchester Collection, InterContinental and Alain Ducasse. Under his leadership, Auden was named Best F&B Consultancy in the 2025 Innovation & Excellence Awards, while its podcast Hospitality Huddles earned recognition as one of the industry's top 40.



Miguel Teixeira
Corporate Executive Chef,
Corinthia Hotels Limited

Miguel Teixeira is the Corporate Executive Chef for Corinthia Hotels, where he directs culinary strategy and innovation across the group's luxury portfolio. With more than 19 years of experience in restaurants and five-star hotels, he has mastered the creation and implementation of gastronomic concepts tailored to diverse properties. His career includes senior chef roles at Vila Galé, Mercure Sheffield, CS Hotels & Resorts, and VidaMar Hotels & Resorts before joining Corinthia. Passionate about travel and cultural exploration, Miguel infuses global inspiration into sustainable, high-quality dining experiences.



Jennie Yip
Co-Founder & Chief Creative Officer,
Cojho F&B Consultancy

Jennie brings over 30 years of global hospitality leadership, specialising in food and beverage concept development and operations. She has helped launch more than 80 F&B concepts and seven hotels, working across boutique hospitality and restaurant sectors. Her career includes collaborations with Andre Balazs, Ian Schrager and Jean-Georges Vongerichten, as well as ownership of venues such as the Townhouse Hotel and Miss Yip Chinese Café. Jennie is also a mentor, supporting emerging talent through the James Beard Foundation and Glion Institute.



Mitch Prensky
Co-Founder and Chief Culinary Officer,
Cojho F&B Consultancy

Mitch combines culinary artistry with strategic vision. He trained at the French Culinary Institute, earned an MBA in Entrepreneurship from Wharton, and holds an MS in Organizational Psychology from Purdue. His career spans ownership of restaurants including Supper and Scratch Biscuits, leadership of The Global Dish events company, and senior corporate F&B roles with Hyatt, Bon Appétit, and Zabar's. His work has earned recognition as a James Beard semifinalist and Plate Magazine's "30 Chefs to Watch."

References

Cornell Hospitality Quarterly (2012). *The Effect of Breakfast Quality on Hotel Guest Satisfaction and Choice*. Cornell University, Vol. 53, No. 3, pp. 294–305.

TripAdvisor (2019). *TripAdvisor Survey: Complimentary Breakfast as a Booking Driver*. TripAdvisor Insights, June 2019.

TripAdvisor (2022). *TripIndex Breakfast: Guest Preferences and Habits in Hotel Stays*. TripAdvisor Insights, March 2022.

Booking.com (2021). *Booking.com Traveller Insights: The Role of Breakfast in Hotel Choice*. Booking.com, Global Traveller Survey, November 2021.

STR & Duetto (2020). *The Value of Breakfast in Hotel Performance: Occupancy, ADR, and Guest Retention*. STR/Duetto Industry Report, September 2020.

J.D. Power (2023). *North America Hotel Guest Satisfaction Index Study*. J.D. Power, July 2023.

Auden Hospitality (2024). *Hospitality F&B Report H1 2024*. Auden Hospitality, June 2024.

Leite-Pereira, C., Brandão, F. & Costa, C. (2022). *Breakfast Service in Hotels: Perceptions of Guests and Managers*. GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites, Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 1157–1168.

Krogab (2022). *Profitable Hotel Breakfast Strategy: Turning Morning Service into a Revenue Driver*. Krogab Whitepaper, February 2022.

Available at: krogab.co.uk/profitable-hotel-breakfast-strategy

eHotelier (2024). *Is Your Hotel Breakfast an Overlooked Profit Centre?* eHotelier Insights, August 2024.

Available at: insights.ehotelier.com/insights/2024/08/02/is-your-hotel-breakfast-an-overlooked-profit-center

One Mile at a Time (2024). *Hotel Breakfast: Is It Still the Most Important Meal of the Day?* One Mile at a Time, February 2024.

Available at: onemileatatime.com/insights/hotel-breakfast

Think Hospitality (2024). *Breakfast Trends and Hospitality Futures: From Excess to Hybrid Models*. Think Hospitality Briefing Paper, 2024.