

SPARK

**THE
CINEMA
SOCIETY.**

**WHAT DO CINEMA GOERS
REALLY THINK?**

**UNPACKING CINEMA
PROMOTIONS AND DISCOUNTS
AS REWARD STRATEGIES**

The Cinema Society Annual Survey 2024

INTRODUCTION

Cinema has long been an iconic part of the UK leisure scene. We all remember our first trip to the cinema. The anticipation, the smell of popcorn and new carpets, the neon, the darkness of the auditorium, the trailers (of course the trailers), and then, finally, the logos and the move from dark to light on the huge screen.

A trip to the cinema is a social experience. It's also one of the few remaining forms of entertainment where you're forced to remove yourself from the pressures of daily life, you can't look at your phone, you can't check your messages, it's just you, your family and friends and the movie.

But what of **cinema as a consumer reward**? How does it make consumers feel about a brand offering them the opportunity to visit the cinema for less?



SPARK operates **The Cinema Society**, the largest cinema benefit club in the UK and Ireland, with over 1 million members. We are also responsible for hundreds of cinema promotions for brands, offering discounted tickets, food, and memberships for all major chains and lots of independent cinemas too.

Each year we ask a representative portion of our **Cinema Society members** about their cinema going habits, how discounts impact their actions and how they perceive brands offering cinema tickets as rewards.

We normally keep this information to ourselves to help us to refine our offering and ensure that we're working effectively for our clients and members. This year we've decided to make the information available to anyone who wants to read it.

We hope you find it as interesting as we do and would invite you to contact us to delve deeper into the information and what it means.

A TRIP TO THE CINEMA MEANS DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE, BUT IT ALWAYS MEANS “SOMETHING” TO EVERYONE.

Cinemas are good for the soul. There are reams of research that tell us that a trip to the cinema can help with a feeling of mental well-being, believe it or not, it's also good for the heart (yep, really!) For more about cinema and wellbeing get in touch...we've lots to share. The world of cinema has had an interesting last 12 months. One minute the naysayers are predicting its end and the next the Barbenheimer phenomenon hits screens and records tumble.

Long-term confidence is high. Tim Richards (founder and CEO of Vue Cinemas) warned that 2024 was going to be a “very, very, tough year” with some good titles (but not enough of them) and it's possible, even likely that the 2024 admissions might not reach the 2023 number. That said, there is still great content to come this year, including:



**DAVE PEARSON,
CEO, SPARK**

Exciting stuff, and things look even better in 2025...

We're looking forward to some incredible releases including guaranteed hit sequels and franchises including: **Captain America: Brave New World, Mission Impossible: Dead Reckoning, How to Train your Dragon, Jurassic World 4, The Fantastic Four and Avatar** (amongst many others) Look out too for the unexpected return of some old favourites including **Downton Abbey 3 and Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy, Star Trek, Blade and even Freaky Friday.**

A trip to the cinema is an event in itself and a memorable one at that. We all remember seeing a really great movie when we were young, we all remember the feeling when the lights go down and the curtains open. We also know that a cinema ticket has a “value” and it's more than an amount of money.

A trip to the cinema means different things to different people but it always means “something” to everyone. SPARK help brands to harness that and we hope to illustrate some of the reasons why that's true.

JULY



AUGUST



SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER



NOVEMBER



DECEMBER



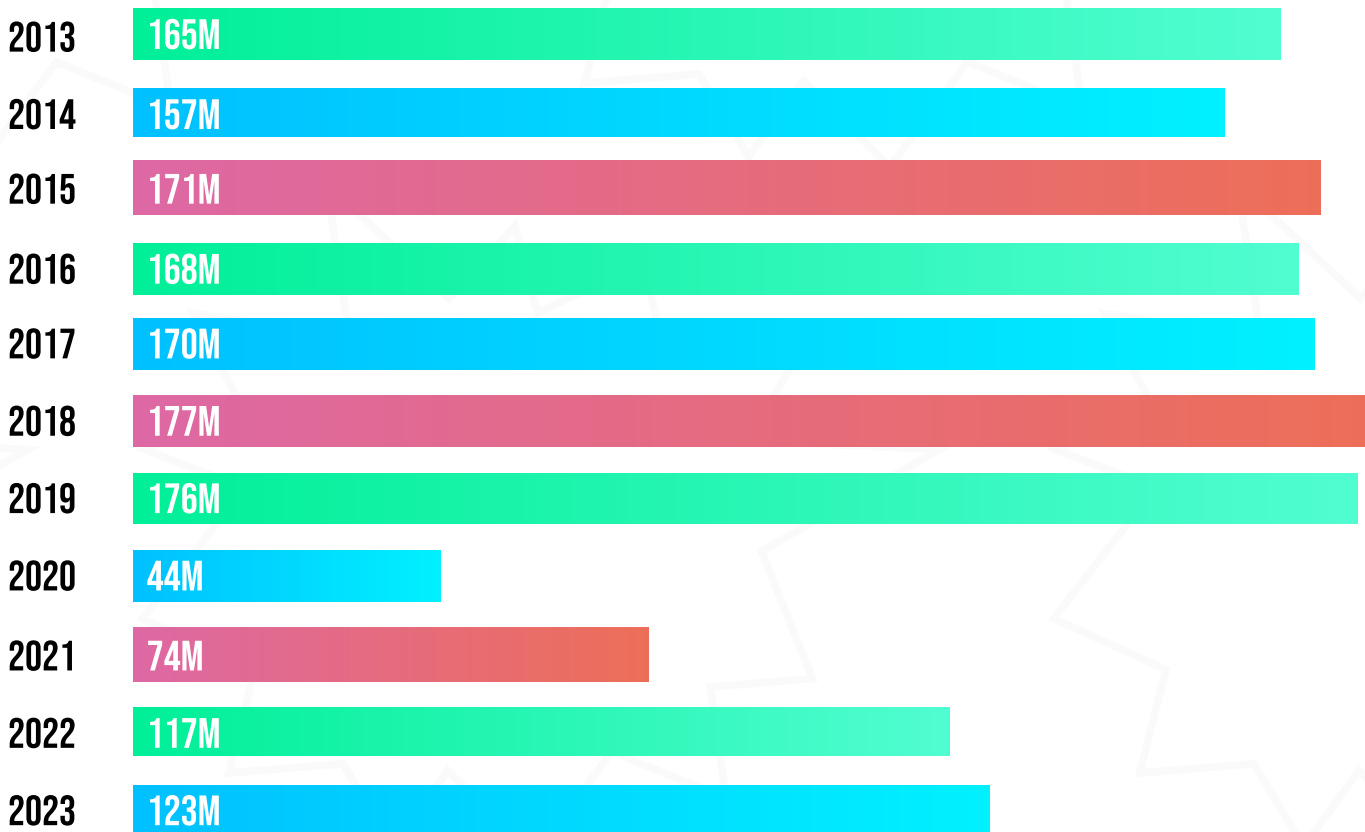
SETTING THE SCENE

The cinema industry has faced a highly publicized and challenging recovery from the COVID pandemic. Media outlets often consider cinema audiences as a barometer for the overall performance of the leisure industry. Additionally, factors like the Hollywood strikes and the cost of living crisis have further slowed the sector's recovery.

But recovering it is. Content has been sporadic with popular titles such as Mission Impossible, Barbie and Oppenheimer interspersed with periods of lower-profile

releases (a nod back to the impact of the writers and actors strikes of 2023). There have been casualties. Empire Cinemas closed their doors for the final time (for their cinemas to be quickly picked up by Omniplex, Everyman and Curzon), some independents disappeared but there have also been high-profile openings from Picturehouse and others.

To illustrate the point, let's look at the number of admissions at cinemas in the last 10 years:



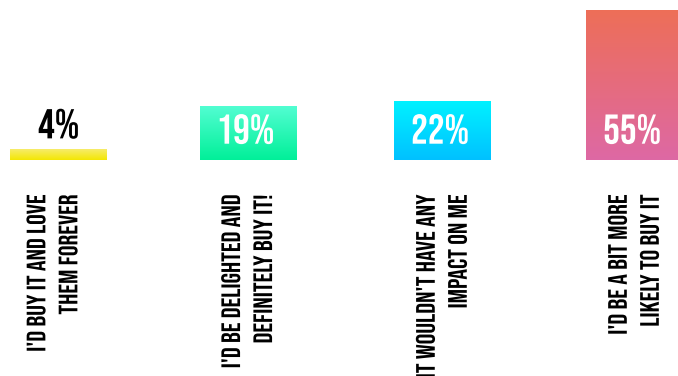
Admissions were up 5.3% on 2022 at 123,618,878 and figures from Comscore confirmed that 2023 saw another step in the recovery of the UK cinema sector, with an increase in box office of over 8% on the previous year. At the same time box office for UK and Ireland broke the £1 billion barrier for the first time since the pandemic.

Source: UK Cinema Association

USING CINEMA TICKETS AS A REWARD FOR PURCHASE

We surveyed over 3,000 individuals from diverse demographics, all of whom had joined our Cinema Society club within the past four years. The majority registered through employee benefit programs or member reward schemes. Among the respondents were those who had activated a cinema discount and those who had registered but had not yet activated their discount.

We asked our members: If a brand at the supermarket or online offered you free cinema tickets for buying their product, what impact do you think that would have on you?



78% of people would be more, or **far more likely to purchase a product** offering a free cinema ticket in supermarkets.

A cinema ticket might carry a high emotional value but its **relatively low unit cost** also makes it a desirable (and easily understood) reward for brands looking to incentivise purchase, potentially far more effective as an instant win or gift with purchase over a prize draw.



ONE BIG PRIZE OR LOTS OF SMALLER PRIZES?

If a brand offered you the chance to win a prize for buying their product what would appeal to you more?



A CHANCE TO WIN ONE HIGH VALUE PRIZE LIKE A HOLIDAY OR FILM PREMIERE TICKETS

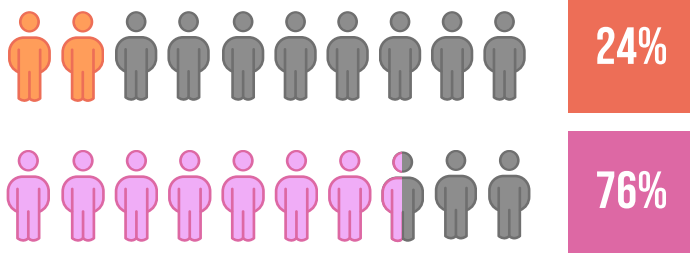
A CHANCE TO WIN ONE OF LOTS OF LOW VALUE PRIZES LIKE CINEMA TICKETS OR SHOPPING VOUCHERS

With multiple prizes available, participants feel they have a better shot at securing at least one of the rewards, making the competition seem less daunting and more approachable. Additionally, the variety of smaller prizes can appeal to a broader range of interests, increasing overall engagement and excitement.



CAN CINEMA PROMOTIONS IMPROVE BRAND VALUE?

How do discounts on cinema tickets make you feel about the brand that's offering them to you?



- IT DOESN'T REALLY MAKE ME FEEL ANY DIFFERENT TOWARDS THEM
- IT REALLY MAKES ME FEEL VALUED



76% of people surveyed told us that being allowed to **save money on their cinema tickets** really makes them feel valued, illustrating how a **relatively low investment** in making the offer available can change an individual's feelings towards a brand, what's more, the **discounts help people visit the cinema more often**, promoting a sense of wellbeing and life-balance.

CAN CINEMA PROMOTIONS HELP CINEMAS?

Do the cinema discounts you enjoy make any difference to how often you visit the cinema?



58%
DEFINITELY, I GO MORE OFTEN
DUE TO THE DISCOUNTS



36%
I PROBABLY GO A
BIT MORE YES

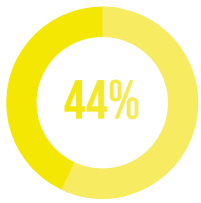


6%
NOT REALLY TO
BE HONEST

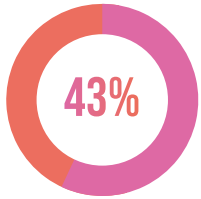
So, it would appear that discounts offered on cinema tickets have a significant impact on the propensity of a person to visit the cinema.

HOW MUCH IMPACT?

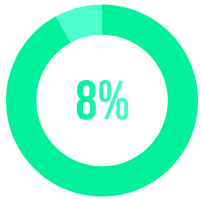
How often do you go to the cinema?



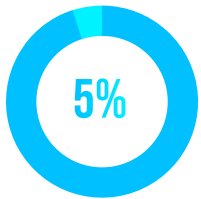
EVERY MONTH



ABOUT FOUR TIMES A YEAR



EVERY WEEK



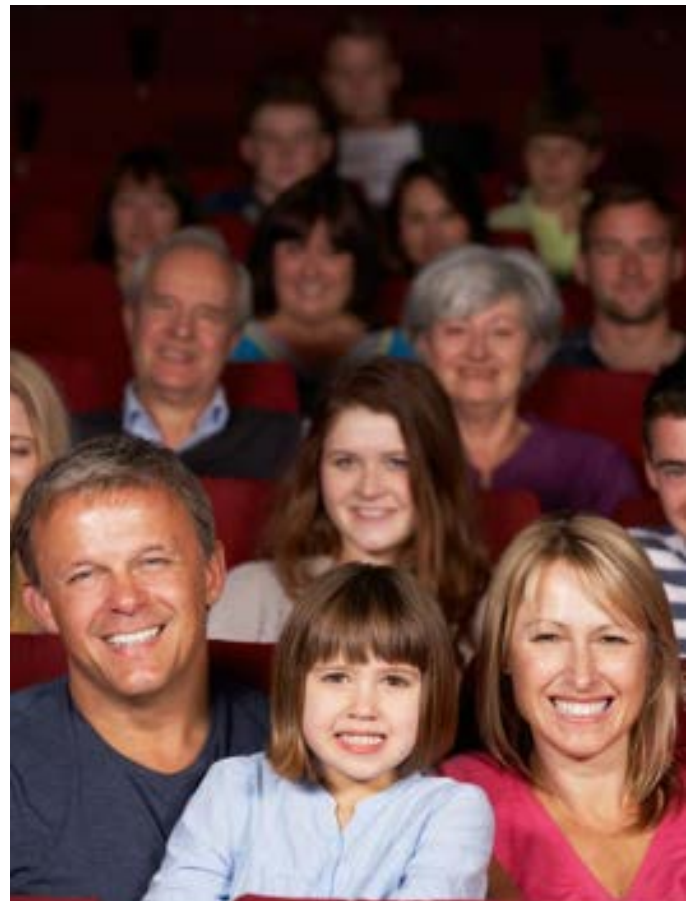
ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR

The total number of **cinema visits in 2023 was 123.6m**, suggesting that the average person in the UK visits the cinema 1.82 times per year, a significant reduction since before the pandemic.



However, members of The Cinema Society significantly outperform those statistics, with 52% saying they **visit the cinema every month** (or more) and a huge 95% stating that they **visit the cinema at least 4 times a year**.

WHILE THE AVERAGE PERSON VISITS THE CINEMA 1.8 TIMES ANNUALLY, THOSE WITH CINEMA DISCOUNTS GO 4 TIMES A YEAR!



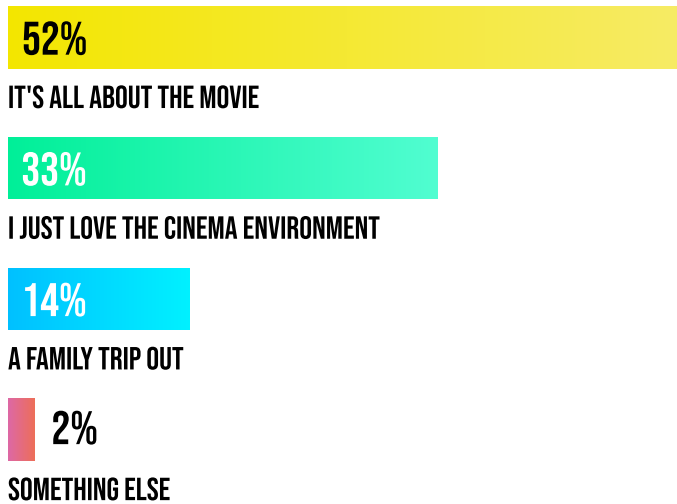
Cinema promotions, handled well, are great drivers for an industry that had a difficult emergence from the COVID pandemic followed by Hollywood strikes and the cost-of-living crisis which slowed the recovery of this sector.

HOW MUCH DO MOVIEGOERS VALUE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF A CINEMA VISIT?

The anticipation, the popcorn, finding your seat, the ads, the trailers, and...the film.

A trip to the cinema is filled with excitement and in recent years cinema companies have sought to differentiate from each other with ever more impressive offerings from the advent of 3D to IMAX to seats that involve you in the film. But what do cinemagoers truly value amongst all these choices? The reality suggests that what they are looking for is something a little more “standard”.

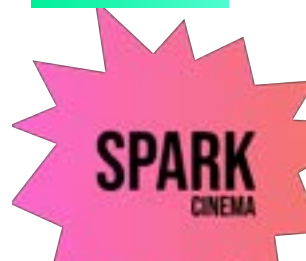
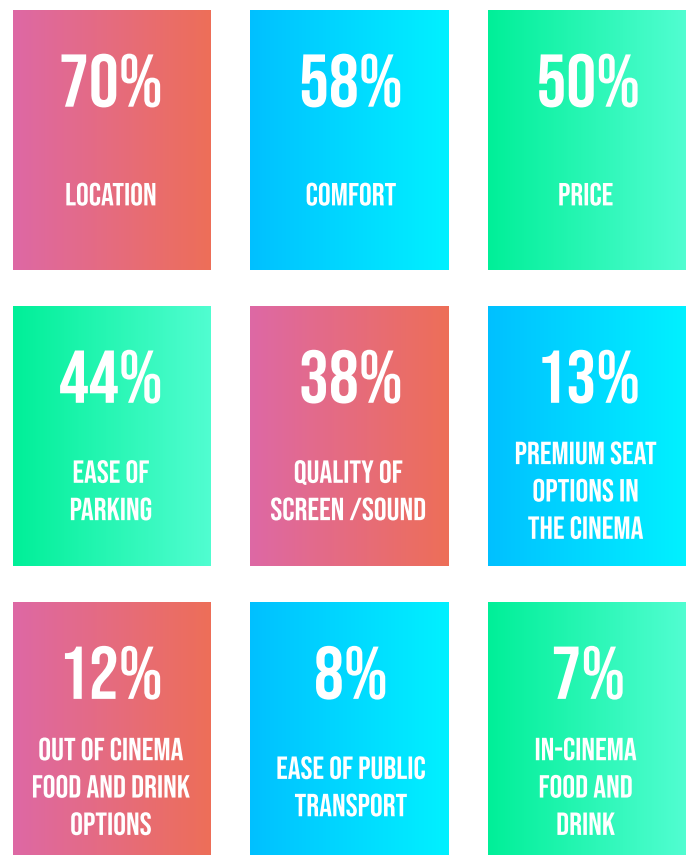
Generally, what’s the main reason you visit the cinema?



Unsurprisingly the **main reason for a trip to the cinema** is the fact that there’s a film on release that people want to see. Encouragingly though for a third of people the most important factor is **simply a love of the cinema environment** – that excitement of a trip to the cinema still exists!



We went on to ask our members what the main factors that drive their decision to visit a particular cinema...



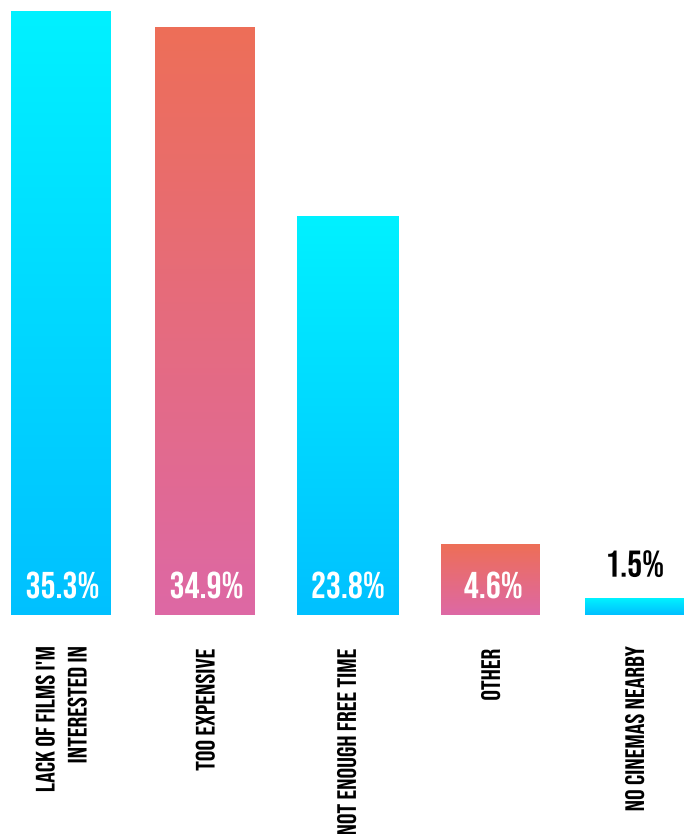
HOW MUCH DO MOVIEGOERS VALUE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF A CINEMA VISIT?



So, unsurprisingly the **location of the cinema** is the most important factor (i.e. how close it is) but what the feedback also suggests is that it's the basics of the **quality of the cinema offering** that has the biggest impact on the choice of where to visit. **Locations, comfort, price, parking and screen/sound**, are way out ahead of the more “premium” factors of seat options and food and drink.



We were also keen to understand what prevented people from going to the cinema more often.

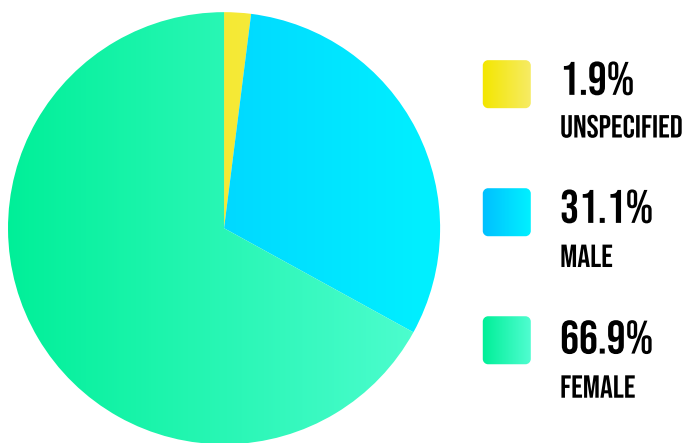


The widely publicized content shortage in cinemas in 2024 was a major reason for the decline in attendance. However, the cost of a cinema visit was also a significant deterrent for people considering a night at the movies, making the discounts enjoyed by Cinema Society members particularly advantageous.

Additionally, busy lifestyles are a factor, with 23% of respondents reporting they can't find the time to visit.

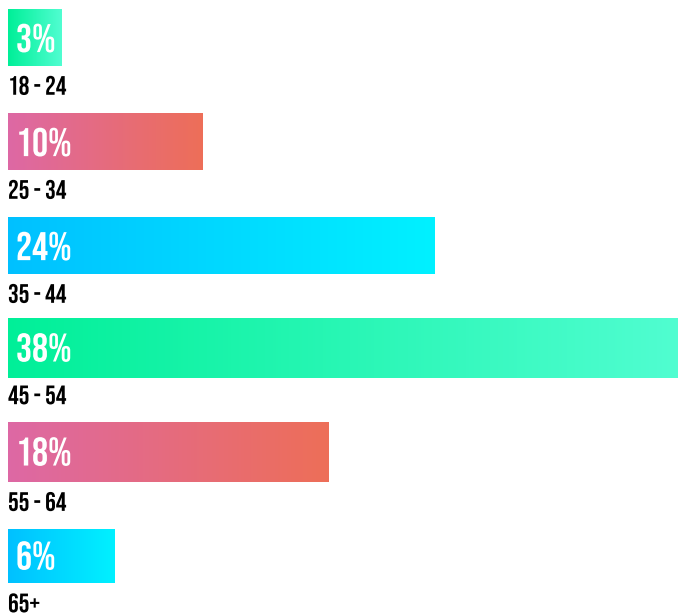
WHO BENEFITS THE MOST FROM CINEMA DISCOUNTS?

Gender



Our registered members are predominantly female, perhaps this demographic is keen to look for discounts and offers, and more likely to choose cinema as a leisure activity.

Age Range



There are significant differences between the age demographics of Cinema Society members registered for cinema discounts and the overall cinemagoing population. The Cinema Society's audience is considerably older, with 62% of its members being over 45 years old, compared to just 12% of the general cinemagoing market in Q1 2023.

Additionally, 86% of Cinema Society members are over 35, in contrast to only 25% of the general cinemagoing public. Studies indicate that this older demographic has not returned to cinemas in large numbers since the pandemic, suggesting that cinema discount offers could play a crucial role in re-engaging this audience.

HOME MOVIE STREAMING...THE END OF THE CINEMA?

“I love Netflix, but fk Netflix. There’s nothing like sitting in a cinema.”
(Dame Helen Mirren, CinemaCon 2019)**

Many things have been predicted to “kill” cinema. Television, wars, pandemics, video, DVD and currently streaming will be cinemas' great nemesis in the eyes of many. But is that the case? Or does a trip to the cinema offer something different from what’s on offer from the streamers? Are the people who are streaming movies the same people who visit their local cinema to watch on the big screen? And is it in the film studio’s interest to allow cinema to die?

When we asked our members what the things are that they love about a trip to the cinema, their responses suggested that a trip to the cinema still has something over watching movies at home...



What do you love about cinema?

58%

WATCHING A MOVIE WITHOUT DISTRACTIONS

57%

BIG SCREEN AND SOUND

53%

TIME WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

47%

DISCOVERING NEW FILMS

33%

A TREAT FOR SELF

27%

THE ATMOSPHERE

19%

COMBINE WITH A MEAL

8%

CINEMA SNACKS

The widely publicised content shortage in cinemas in 2024 was a major reason for the decline in attendance. However, the cost of a cinema visit was also a significant deterrent for people considering a night at the movies, this makes giving away "free" cinema tickets a very powerful thing for brands to do...we know that a trip to the cinema is valued by the public, so giving them a free pass has a huge impact.

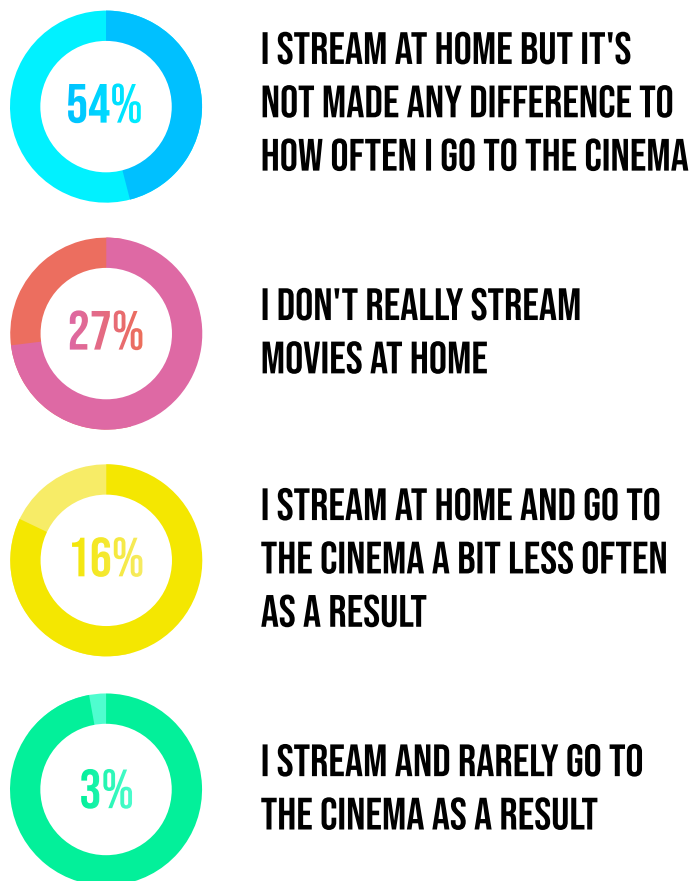
The mobile phone has put paid to being able to watch a film at home without distractions and while home cinema systems are possible, they are still very expensive and cannot possibly compare with the **size and scale of the big screen in cinema.**

We also asked the audience what the **worst things about a trip to the cinema** are with the **cost being the number one** worst thing (we'll tell you the rest but you'll need to get in touch!)

HOME MOVIE STREAMING... THE END OF THE CINEMA

We went on to ask the audience what impact home movie streaming had on their behaviour, and as a whole, the reaction suggested that there is very much room for both...

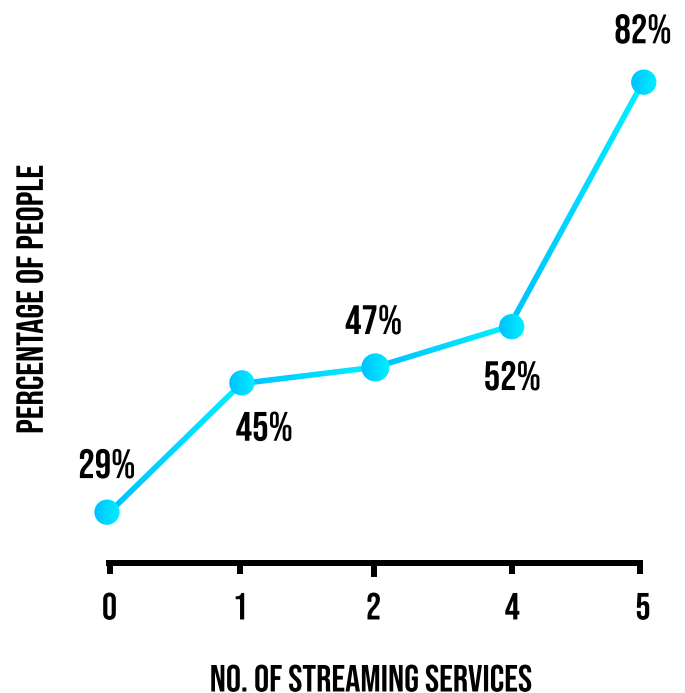
Think about streaming movies at home, which of the following statements is most appropriate to you?



On the whole, their responses suggested that **home streaming is complimentary to the cinema** experience with only 19% suggesting that the ability to stream movies

at home had made any difference at all to how often they visit the cinema. The 27% who told us that they don't stream movies at home at all surprised us a little!

Indeed, the **FAME research in 2019 (Q1)**, published by DCM suggests that those people that do stream movies at home have a higher propensity to go to the cinema the more they stream:



So generally, the more streaming services you have subscribed to, the more often you go to the cinema. **Streaming strengthens cinema – it doesn't weaken**

SUMMARY

At SPARK we love the cinema and we're delighted that so many of the people that we work with, supply, and partner feel the same.

There's no doubt it's been a challenging time for the industry but even with the number of blockbusters limited by strikes, **cinema retains** its iconic place at the centre of the entertainment industry.

Newly built leisure facilities seek out cinema partners to "anchor" their offering. **Cinemas still have the power** to attract restaurant tenants, shops and stores and, most importantly the paying public.

Through The Cinema Society and our promotional campaigns, SPARK harnesses the lasting power of cinema for brands, bringing the glamour of Hollywood to your customers.



Get in touch to find out how cinema promotions can impact loyalty and customers' perception of your brand.

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All figures unless otherwise stated are from The Cinema Society 2024 Annual Survey

Survey dated: 4th April 2024

Profiles: Cinema Society Active member – Sample size 35, 549, Cinema Society Registered member – sample size 52,712

Total respondents: 3,164



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