CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Trends in Hotels & Restaurants around the world

MOOD:MEDIA

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&
Restaurants around the world

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NEW CHALLENGES IN THE
HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS
SECTOR

The customer experience is undergoing a profound change. Like many other sectors, Hospitality has been directly impacted by e-commerce; it faces a hyper-informed consumer, who wants everything, right away. It's a real challenge that requires companies to transform their internal practices and their relationship with customers, on both physical and virtual levels. How should brands address these new demands? What is the role of the physical space in the customer experience? How do brands elevate their guests' experience?

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To answer these questions, Mood Media has identified four major trends (immersion, community, customisation, and convenience) that will transform the physical moments between brands and their customers.

These four trends guided us to better understand the disruption to both hotels and restaurants. Tourism has been one of the first sectors directly impacted by e-commerce and has had to adapt before other industries to find new ways to elevate the customer experience. In this trend book, Mood Media's expert network compares the initiatives of major chains, independent brands and pure players worldwide. The result is an amazing compilation of case studies that show how much the customer experience is ever-changing!

THE FOUR MAJOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TRENDS

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The trends are global and uniform and can be summarised in four major movements.

If we had a passion for acronyms, we could talk about the CICC phenomenon: a Custom-made experience that enables an Immersion into the brand's heart, fostering a sense of Community that offers Convenience to its customers.

Immersion

Getting consumers immersed in the brand's universe has become imperative. To achieve this, brands have two very important tools at their disposal: art and play. Art is also starting to become a strong trend in restaurants, especially via augmented reality.

Community

WIth the development of conversational technologies e.g. chatbots and artificial intelligence (AI), brands are now closer to their customers' daily lives where they create real communities around them. If in the hotels and restaurants industry, the notion of community is more inclusive, it takes new forms, particularly related to the new way of life or a societal commitment.

Customisation

While this trend has been key for the past 10 years, in transforming retail stores. Customisation is a big part in the hotel and restaurant industry, taking many forms relying heavily on technology.

Convenience

Digitalisation has deeply renewed the approach to convenience, to better accommodate a customers' core needs. Today, it only takes a few seconds to order a meal or book a hotel room.

Hotels

The hotel industry has started to evolve and is reaching a turning point that is transforming services; one of the sectors that has been impacted the most by e-commerce is tourism.

The arrival of disruptive business-models such as Airbnb has quickly put the sector under pressure to offer an exceptional customer experience. The evolution of technology such as robots and AI has provided hotels the tools they need to enter a new era. Hotels are reinventing themselves and are quickly answering today's four major customer experience trends identified by Mood Media. Our experts have selected six iconic examples for each trend, looking at both established chains and independent hotels, luxury and affordable offers all over the world.

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Immersion

A natural customer experience trend for hotels is immersion. Customers who want to immerse themselves fully want access to a "transformational" experience where they want access to the best local cuisines, unique experiences and local cultures. As immersive experiences become more popular among customers, their needs are also growing and they are asking for more. Immersion can become a challenge for some hotels when trying to meet one or more customer needs.

Immerse yourself in the heart of nature

The Null Stern Hotel, Toggenburg Valley, Switzerland, is a hotel without a roof or walls. The idea is to offer visitors the opportunity to sleep under the stars but in a very comfortable way. This is a new and inventive way to immerse guests into a local setting.
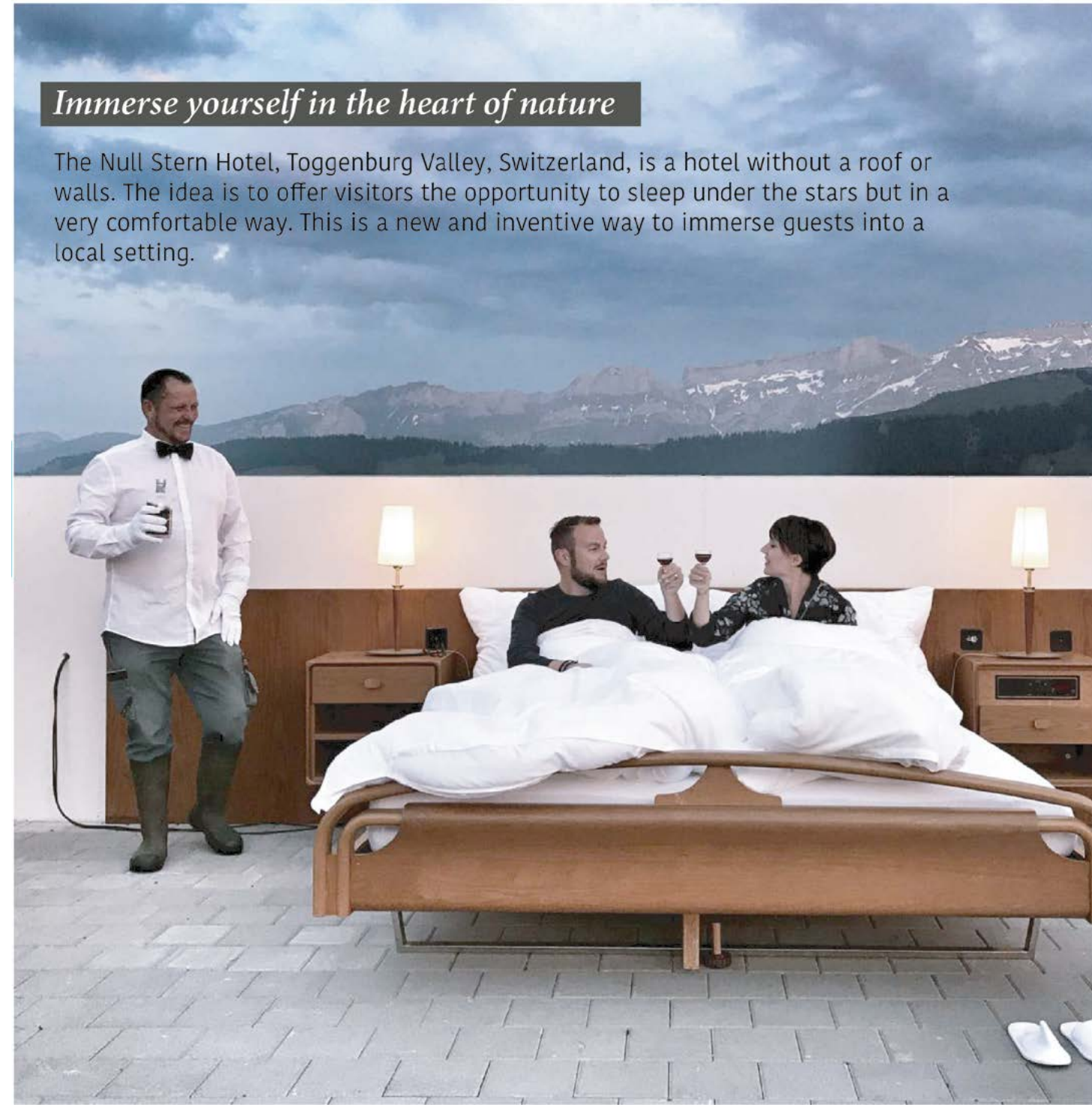
Refocus yourself in New York

In the heart of the
Financial District in New
York City, the John St.Hotel
Assembly is dedicated to
providing a space
dedicated to well-being for
both locals and travellers.
Vegetable walls, Ayurvedic
breakfast, sound therapy,
meditation rooms, yoga
studios, detox smoothie
bars, and tea ceremonies
are on the programme.

A new concept of short-stay accommodation for travellers

Designed by Ora-Ïto for the Accor Group, the idea is to offer comfortable
accommodation in containers and placed an unexpected setting without altering the
landscape or impacting the environment. The experience was trialed in the heart of
nature facing the peaks that encircle the Morzine-Avoriaz, France.

Flying NestIMG0923Sebastien Dupic-JPG

Flying NestIMG0924Sebastien Dupic-JPG

Immerse yourself in virtual reality before you arrive

Immersion begins even before guests have arrived at the Hilton's flagship hotel in Asia, The Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, through the use of virtual reality. In the hospitality sector, this technology is particularly interesting: rather than reading descriptions, customers can experience the destination on their own as well as discovering nearby attractions once they arrive, adding to the hotel experience. The Conrad Maldives Rangali Island is a hotel partly immersed in the ocean; a virtual reality app allows guests to choose whether they would prefer to sleep above or below the Indian Ocean. Other hotels like the Atlantis Hotel in Dubai make it possible to take a virtual tour to choose your room.

Arctic immersion

Arctic Bath is a spa resort located south of the Arctic Circle in the middle of a river, the hotel has six rooms in secluded cabins. The hotel houses a cold-water pool, sauna cabins, a treatment room, a relaxation lounge and a restaurant offering a "super-local" menu. Arctic Bath symbolises simple pleasures, joy; an immersive experience in a preserved landscape. During the summer months, visitors can enjoy forest walks, kayaking or diving in the midnight sun.

Discovery by the road

Designed by the German company Das Rollende, Rotel Tours is a double-decker bus that allows you to travel comfortably in groups across several countries. It is equipped with a kitchen, as well as multiple beds and bathrooms to help individuals discover Italy, Greece, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, and India. A trip closer to the locals.

MOOD:

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Community

When trying to streamline the customer experience, it's important to consider both digital and physical concepts. Customers are not fully satisfied with digital experiences alone, and many want to have physical experiences as well to satisfy their needs, hence why hotels play a major role in cities.

OYO :
an event ambassador hotel

In India, the OYO hotel brand has launched a programme, "OYO Near You", which plunges customers into the Indian culture. The hotel has developed a very strong event policy in cities such as Bengaluru, Goa, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Jaipur, Hyderabad and Punet. By attending parties, food tastings, comedy shows, and workshops, guests can access the local culture beyond the clichés. Local artists such as Anubhuv Bassi, Indie Trigg, Muzikophilers, and DJ AJ all perform at the hotels' events.

JO & JOE recreates the market place to create sharing experiences

The Accor Group's "The Open House" at JO & JOE hotels offer new experiences to guests every day such as yoga, DJs, Ukulele lessons and music concerts where locals and travellers can relax and enjoy an engaging stay. The group has just opened its doors in Paris and already plans to develop the concept internationally.

The Circle", between Appart Hotel and Youth Hostel"

The Adagio hotel group has launched a new concept in Paris aimed at "promoting community." Several spaces in the hotels are entirely dedicated to sharing and meeting such as a shared kitchen, co-working spaces and a library of objects in which the customers can relax and use; everything is thought out to encourage people to meet. The aim of "Le Cercle" was to redefine the traditional values of the hotel industry by introducing more relaxed uniforms for employees as well as allowing check-in to happen from anywhere in the building.
Le Cercle is a perfect balance that creates a strong bond with hotel guests and the brand.

Transforming youth hostels to become places of work and training

The Selina group established a new generation of youth hostels in Latin America (Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Ecuador, and Colombia). Located in "magical places" such as beaches or forests, the strong entertainment policy includes surfing classes, co-working spaces, and other community offers. Customers can relax and work in different zones within the hotel. Mexican hostels even offer a programme dedicated to IT developers, with a 12 week training and corporate coaching.

Hotels at the heart of the entrepreneurial ecosystem

In Asia and Australia, the premium hotel chain, Kafnu has created real "urban villages" to allow entrepreneurs and creators to meet. Kafnu combines accommodation, workspace, professional networks, training, design, and entertainment.

Standard hotels, Kings of Entertainment

The American hotel chain, Standards, has an extreme entertainment policy. The hotel hosts unique events, such as the "Sleep-in" movie theater at The Standard High Line: guests can camp on mattresses throughout the Halloween weekend and watch movies while eating snacks and drinking. Another unique event took place in 2018 after the Presidential elections, an Art Basel Speak Up pop-up and diner, the pop-up aimed to support the ACLU in Miami and Ring Your Rep, which encouraged guests to contact their local representatives.

"

Customisation

Making guests feel like having a bespoke experience is at the heart of hospitality, and it still has a long way to go. From choosing a room's decoration to changing the ambient music and using connected mirrors, customisation enhances the overall customer experience in hotels.

Sleep on-demand in Berlin

Sleeping well is the first demand of travellers; Mövenpick Hotel in Berlin, Germany, takes this very seriously emphasising a group of rooms where sleeping is king and personalisation rules. In these rooms, the beds are customisable and guests can adjust the firmness of the mattress according to their preferences, the spring system adapts to the individual's body shape, weight and sleeping position. Blackout blinds ensure darkness and total silence. There is special attention paid to pillows, blankets, herbal teas and infusions, earplugs and lavender in the room to complete the experience.

Pay for your experience

SCP recently opened its first hotel in Colorado Springs. They offer many environmentally friendly services, as well as being committed to charging "fair prices." If the price initially displayed does not match the quality of the customer experience, guests can negotiate a lower price. The price that guests pay should be based on the experience they had. A new and rare initiative!

Choose your room according to your mood

Some hotels or tour operators use virtual reality to help with booking by allowing the customer to choose their room remotely and book it, others rely on personalisation to encourage booking by letting customers choose the atmosphere of the room, including the colour to match their state of mind. Angad Arts in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, is a brand-new hotel where guests can choose a room based on their mood. Believing that colours can influence their emotions, customers can choose from four room colours: yellow to stimulate happiness, blue to inspire tranquility, red to ignite passion and green to encourage rejuvenation. All accessories are available in the chosen colour to complete the experience.

A mirror that meets all desires

Marriotts Sinclair hotel in Fort Worth, Texas, USA, has introduced smart mirrors to personalise guests room service. The connected mirrors act as a virtual concierge, allowing guests to order room service , change the temperature of the room, check the weather, watch the news, make special requests, search for local maps or to find recommendations for activities.

A room that meets all senses

The Peninsula in Tokyo offers its guests rooms where technology favours a personalised service: controls are integrated into wall panels where lighting, temperature and the curtains are managed and controlled. The bathroom is equipped with the same system, and guests can get dressed while listening to music of their choice.

Photo Credit: Laurent Zabulon
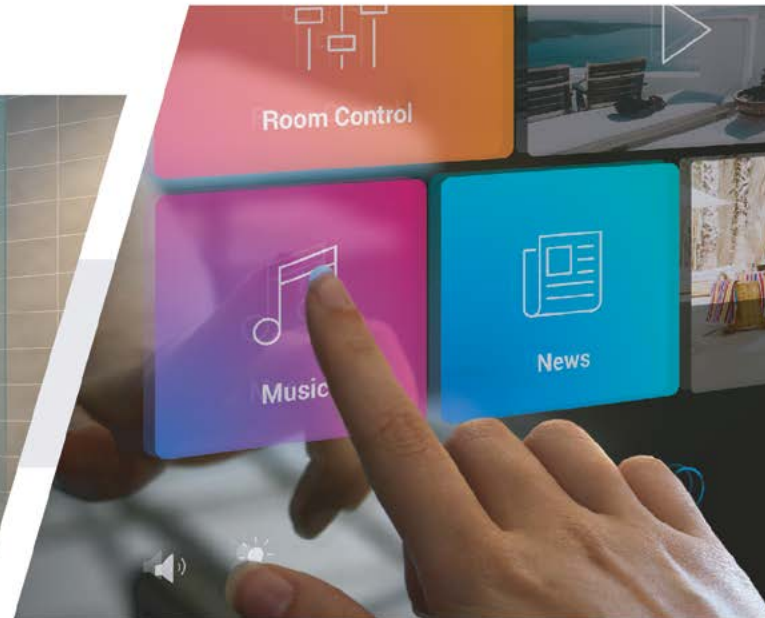
Customise your cruise stay

Princess Cruises has introduced personalisation to its journeys through a new device "The Ocean Medallion". This device, allows travelers to easily board and access their cabins as well as paying for all transactions and ordering drinks to their specific location. The Ocean Medallion is also a GPS device tracking each passengers movements allowing for real-time personalisation for all those on board; bar staff know who's ordering, housekeeping know when to clean people's rooms and it can also help passengers get to locations on the ship if they're lost.

"

Convenience

At hotels, customers want and expect an easy, quick and simple experience. Technology now enables hotels to streamline their behind the scene processes that lets guests feel like they are in control of their experience. Hotels have started to rely mainly on technology that customers already know such as mobile phones and connected speakers.

Check-In Any Time

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Save on the Best Hotels Now

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Amazing booking experience.

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CHOOSE LOCATION

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CHECK IN ANY TIME

CHECK IN
TODAY, 7AM

CHECK OUT
TOMORROW, 4PM

FIND HOTELS

Hotel on-demand, flexible booking

The mobile phone application "As You Stay" allows customers to overcome the traditional check-in/ check-out hotel systems in two ways. Firstly, the app allows room bookings in large chain hotels for a variable duration, which can be just for a few hours. The price varies according to the duration of the stay, and not the usual arrival or departure time slot set by the hotel. Secondly, the app allows for last-minute bookings. "As You Stay" is a flexible solution for hotels that embrace the new customers' needs; the app can be used in many hotels such as Hilton, Carlson and Intercontinental Hotels Group.
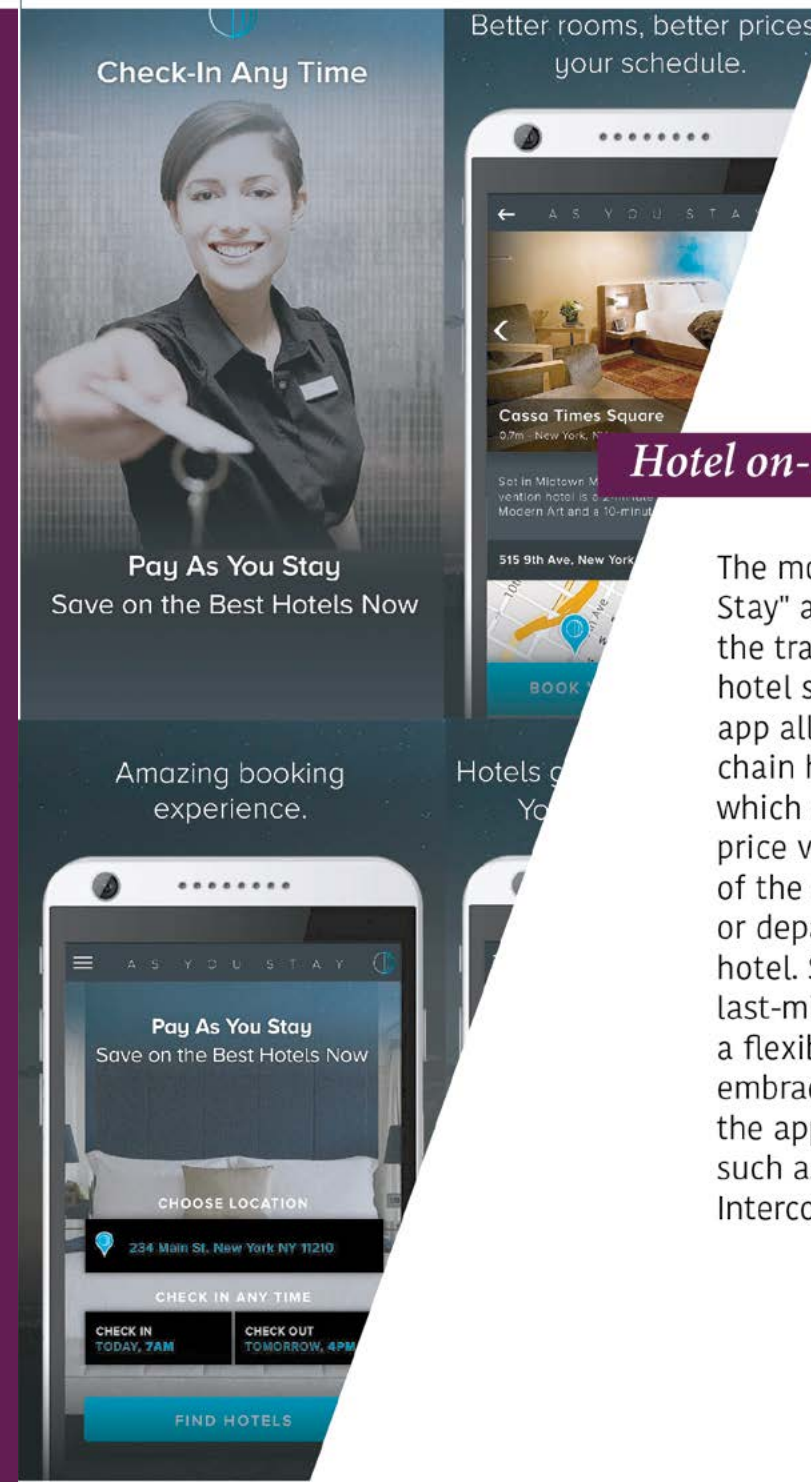
FlyZoo, the future of the Alibaba hotel business

At FlyZoo, Alibaba, the Chinese e-commerce brand removed all bookings constraints with their mobile phone app. The hotel app now allows customers to reserve and select the room they would like to stay in, as well as allowing them to check-in and out. Chinese customers can register online and access their rooms without going through reception; instead of key cards, room access is verified via facial recognition. All rooms are equipped with voice assist, which allows customers to adjust the room's temperature, turn on the lights or TV or open the curtains. Customers can also order room service within minutes, and a robot delivers them at their door.



FlyZoo

Robots as concierge

At the Henn Na Ginza, Tokyo, there are a mixture of humans and robots who greet guests and run the hotel. Originally, a team exclusively made up of robots opened the hotel in 2015 however due to a few technical and customer service errors the hotel now has a mix of staff and robots. Staff now take on most customer service roles, and robots work mainly behind the scenes.
All the rooms have a sleek design and a high-tech wardrobe that irons clothes in just an hour.

Phones replace room keys at Hilton

Hilton hotels now offer customers an immersive experience through distinct sounds throughout the hotel. Smartphones are used to help deliver the experience to customers by connecting each hotel room to an app. Customers can use a digital key via their smartphones to lock and unlock their rooms in more than 2,500 hotels. Loyal "Hilton Honors" members can also select their specific room and order room service from their phones. Hilton has also created a "quiet" room, where the room is completely silent, as well as implementing an interactive framework with a real-time translation device.

Photo by Kodem Kei

Photo by Kodem Kei

We've even built room controls into the TV

HEDNA
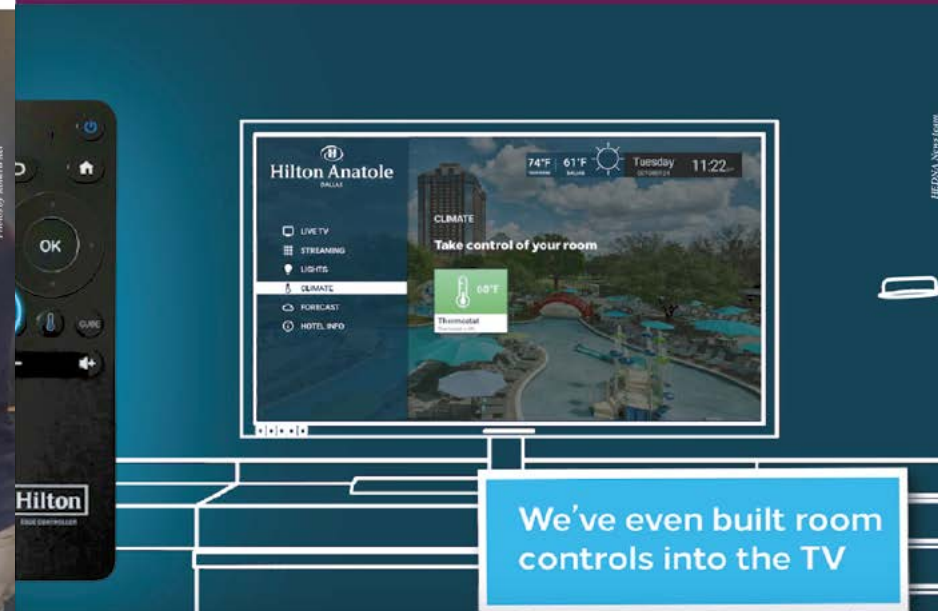
The connected speakers in rooms at Marriott

Alibaba is not the only online player to bring hospitality services into physical spaces. Since mid-2018, Marriott Hotels have been using Amazon Echo loudspeakers to give a better guest experience in their hotel rooms. Speakers can answer customer questions about bookings, pool or spa schedules, local amenities, order room service or housekeeping. If they want to further personalise their experience, they will soon be able to connect to the device through their Amazon account.

No need for wallets at Center Parcs

Center Parcs hotels have developed a new solution that allows guests to enjoy a cash-free experience that is similar to ones used at music festivals. Customers can use a bracelet, adapted to each family member as well as simplifying booking local activities. The bracelet works as a prepaid wallet for adults and children alike, empowering them with access to bespoke activities without needing further staff assistance.

" Restaurants

Restaurants, hustled by the competition of home delivery services need to reinvent customer experiences even more as consumers need to have a good reason to eat in the restaurant. Restaurants now have a technological advantage through using the power of social media, customers wanting to eat at the restaurant LaFourchette can book a table through Instagram. Here is a global overview of the four major restaurant trends.

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Immersion

The immersion trend in restaurants starts in the kitchen with the food, and then makes its way to other areas of a restaurant through all our other senses.

Stimulating our senses

Zhen Wei Fang, an Asian restaurant in New York offers a festival for all senses. Guests are welcomed by a robot, there are colorful lights all around as well as cascading flower arrangements and orchids at every turn. Virtual reality kiosks and tables are also available for those who want a more casual experience. To complete the experience, there are two intimate rooms equipped with karaoke; a unique experience.

Inamo, tables to entertain yourself

In London, restaurant Inamo has no paper menus; the table is a large tablet that serves as a menu and from this, customers can order dishes. It also makes it possible to see the chefs preparing the meal as well as finding out information on the food's origin. The projection system is also customisable, which allows the restaurant to change the mood depending on the events.

Ultraviolet, immersing all five senses

Paul Pairet's restaurant Ultraviolet, Shanghai, is based around the five senses. The restaurant invites diners to use their senses whilst eating. The intimate 10-seat dining room is surrounded by video screens and speakers that provide an audiovisual experience associated with each dish, as well as lighting and scent to enhance the experience. The menus are carefully crafted, with audio and visual content, to offer a complete and immersive dining experience.

Immersing your senses through surprise

Restaurant Maguey, Paris, uses the element of surprise to create an amazing dining experience. In the restaurant customers order using two adjectives to describe what they'd like to eat, as opposed to a traditional restaurant menu. Other restaurants play on surprise, restaurant Incubateur de chef welcome customers as if they were the chefs.

La Boutique, immersing nature

A unique place for immersing guests in the heart of nature, La Boutique, part of the Bonduelle Group, Saint-Priest, France recently opened a unique place to immerse guests. Imagined as a place to live, this 200 m² space offers consumers a culinary experience that promotes well-being.

The store appeals to all senses with specific sounds and smells such as basil infusing a store to transport customers into a garden setting. Customers can also taste, buy and learn about products, their brands, and ingredients used through their in-store sensory experience.

"La Boutique" also offers services to help customers vary their diet and introduced a restaurant.

Art and Virtual Reality

Tree by Naked Yoyogi Park in Japan is an immersive restaurant concept that uses virtual reality and art to invite guests into an exceptional atmosphere with the help of artist Ryotaro Muramatsu. In the basement, up to 16 people sit around a table showing projections that retrace moments from a living creature's life cycle and the 4 seasons. The waiter then narrates each moment of the evening. Each dish tells a specific story, helped by an array of sounds, lights, and scents. Using adapted headphones, guests experience an interactive experience with their plate such as "planting" seeds in a pile of "dirt", which is of course, edible. Originally, immersive experiences were designed for high end, luxury brands, these days it's emerging everywhere, in all industries around the world.

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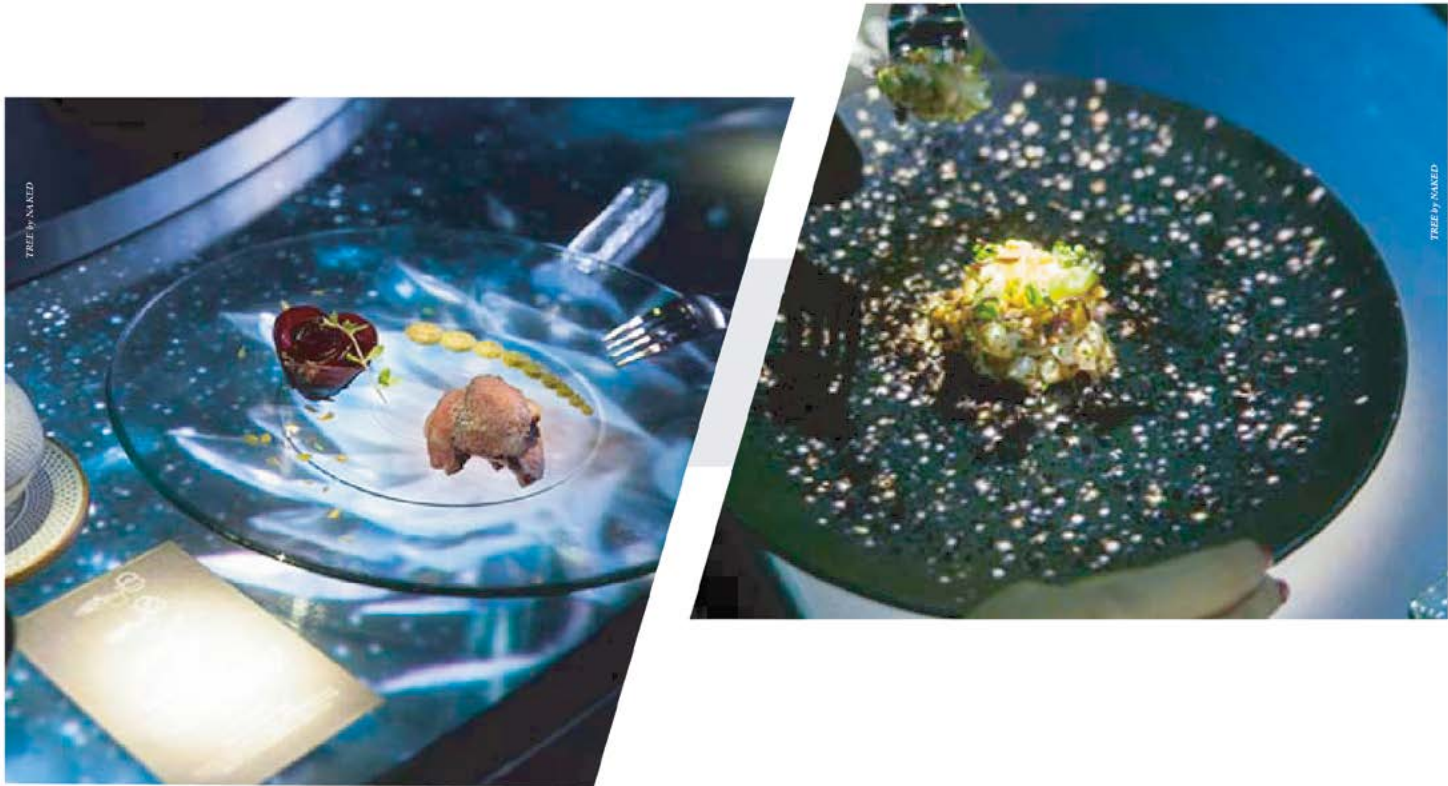
Community

A restaurant is, in essence, a community place. Because of this, the retail industry has invested in the restoration of many stores to respond to this trend.
Although the community trend is only just beginning, they are already starting to impress as they show a brand's commitment to their customers as well as brand transparency.

Behind the scenes restaurant access

Restaurant Resy and credit card Capital One have partnered together to give customers access to six gourmet Resy restaurants America (New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington, Austin, and Chicago). Attendees of these events try exclusive taster dishes that may end up on a restaurant menu. The members of Capital One, have priority to these taster evenings, making this unique experience an exclusive concept.


Robots help the differently-abled

Restaurants are becoming a place of integration and inclusion; temporary pop-up café, Dawn ver.β opened in Japan, whereby the staff are all paralysed. Staff at the café controlled robots through remote controls using a simplified screen and keyboard. Ten people were hired to control the robots to move, serve coffees and interact with customers; staff could also communicate with customers through voice control. Staff received 1,000 yen per hour (around 7.50£) for an hour's work. By 2020 Dawn ver.β is hoping to become a permanent café.

Integrating blockchain to steakhouse
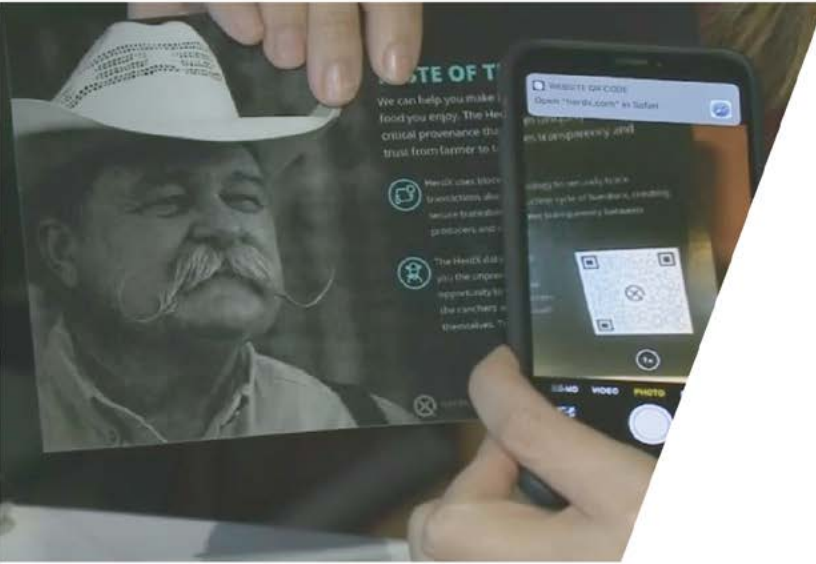
Global Brazilian steakhouse, Fogo de Chão, will integrate blockchain into its supply chain to allow customers to track the beef it serves. The meat will be traced from the farm to the table; this transparency helps build trust for customers.

A place for the community

The English home delivery startup, Deliveroo, has taken the plunge to become more present in its community and Deliveroo opened a restaurant in Hong Kong featuring cuisines from all over the world.

McDonald's environmental commitment

A brand's environmental impact is facing increased pressure from consumers. Brands who are more transparent with their environmental commitment are more likely to succeed. Another example of a company that is highlighting it's environmental commitment is Chicago's flagship McDonald's restaurant opening a store with a simple design that made consumers feel connected to nature. Like all other McDonald's restaurants, there are integrated touch terminals, table service and drive through. Reinforcing their environmental commitment, 70 trees were planted as well as fitting solar panels. McDonald's has also banned plastic straws in a pledge to be more green.

Pizza Hut, mobilising football fans

In America, Pizza Hut set a large-scale plan to entertain its community of football fans during the US championship. Fans were able to bet on the championship draft via social networks, and those who participated received a discount on pizzas; some received free pizza for a year. For the 2019 NFL draft in Nashville, Pizza Hut will be offering fans inspired experiences such as dancing alongside JuJu Smith-Schuster via an augmented reality experience.

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Customisation

Technology allows restaurants to customise their menus to create unique dishes tailored to an individual's taste and dietary requirements. Customisation is a trend that's only just beginning in restaurants.

Automatic meal adaptations in Morocco

Food On Demand (FOD), a restaurant recently opened in Marrakech, Morocco, is the first fully connected restaurant adapting dishes via technology. Customers use a tablet and not waiters to search the menu and to order food. The tablet can also be used as a jukebox remote controller. A human server is only there to bring the orders and clean the tables. This digitisation allows restaurants to adapt and change their menu by highlighting the most consumed dishes according to the days and hours.

Customised menus

When ordering in Vita Mojo restaurants, via an app customers can choose their ingredients, specify the quantities, make payments on the app, and then choose their tailor-made dishes to arrive at the time that suits them best. Based on this data collected, over time, the restaurant will adapt its menu with very detailed nutritional values.
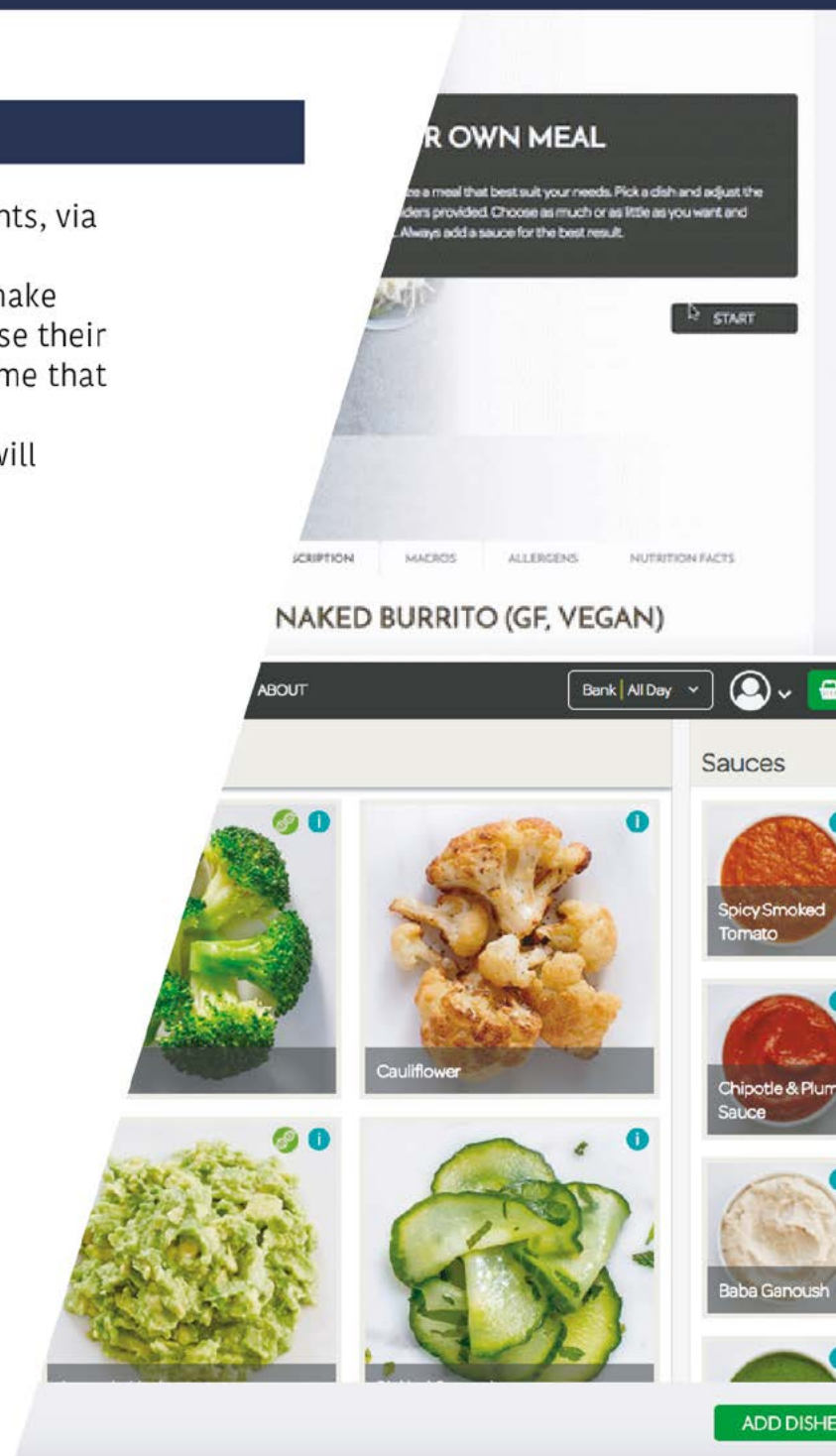
Personalised, voice-activated menus

Sonic Drive-In, an American fast-food chain, has announced the launch of terminal ordering in restaurants via the first AI-assisted voice assistant and a personalised menu. The menu is adapted to customer profiles, as well as external factors such as weather, time, season and location. Voice support uses this customisation in its interactions with customers; when the weather is sunny, voice support can use this customisation when communicating with customers by recommending ice cream because it's hot. This technology will be introduced throughout the year to offer a more intuitive customer experience.
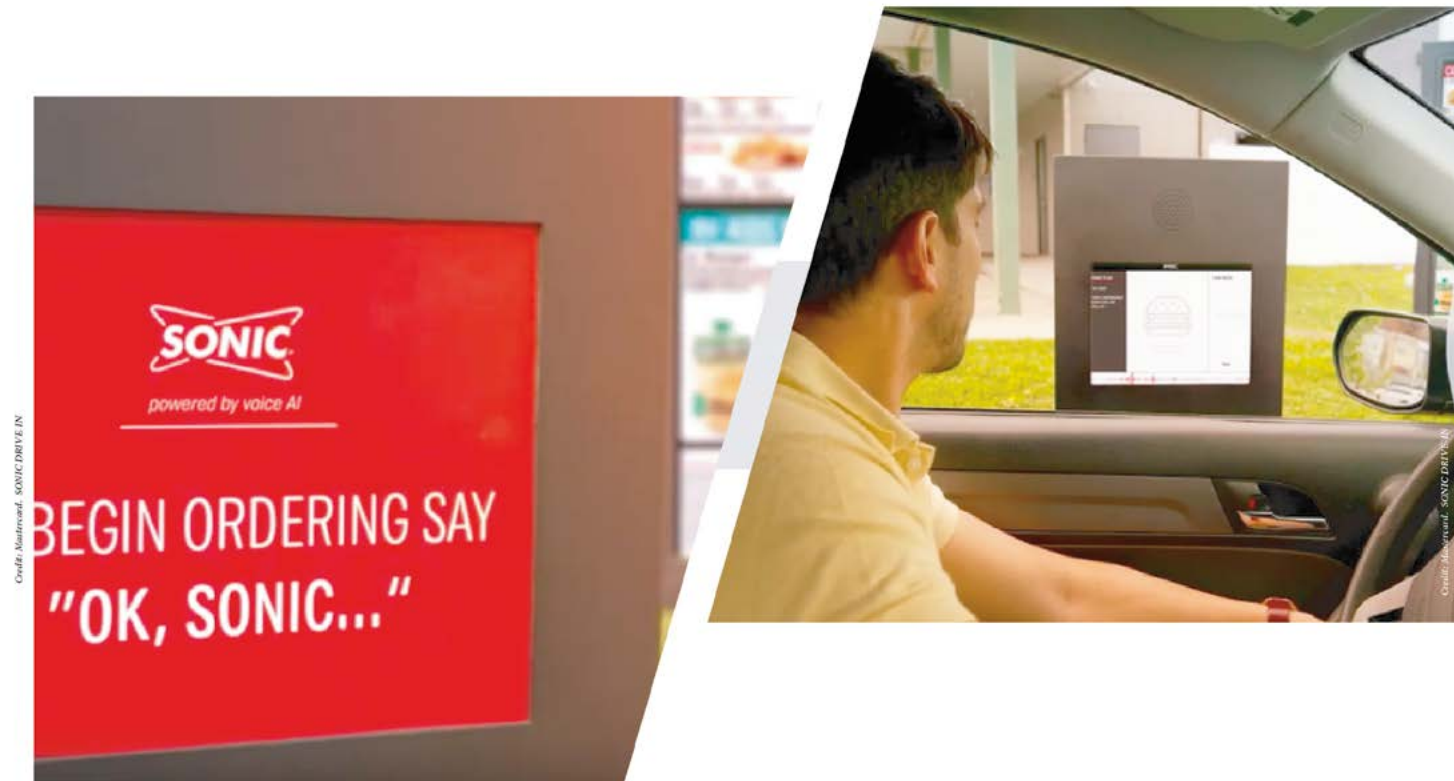
3D food printing

Australian restaurant, D'Arenberg Cube, offers a new version of the classic lemon meringue pie. It is the first restaurant in the country to use 3D printers in their kitchens. This is the only cake printed in 3D on the menu because of the slow process. Prepared 24 hours before dinner service, all items come directly from the printer.

Singularity Sushi, is due to open in Tokyo; printing maki rolls in 3D tailored to the health needs of visitors, based on their saliva sample, or even urine. Customers will be able to create their sushi and make any changes to their meals; they can also share pictures of their meals on social media.

by Nicole Wedding

Preview your burger in 3D before ordering

Bareburger, New York, is a hamburger chain that is rolling out a new 3D augmented reality menu, soon to replace all printed menus. Customers can now see their hamburger in 3D in full-scale before ordering. Customers can also share their virtual reality cooking experience with their friends and family via the social media platform, Snapchat.
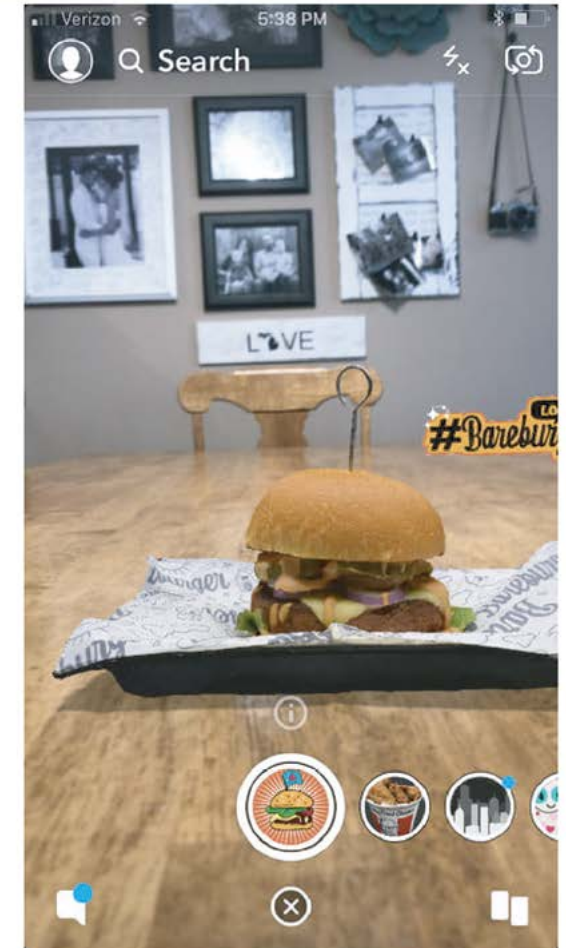
Radiantly Alive Cafe

The RA Café is a restaurant within the famous yoga center in Ubud, Bali, that attracts the yogi community from around the world. Yogi's can take part in yoga courses and workshops as well as meditation, roll & release. All the meals are 100% vegetarian or vegan, organic and local, enriched with love and cultivated to nourish the body and the spirit. They also offer meals adapted to the programme and the training time of the client.

Their promise: "As we say "Come for yoga, stay for the family" maybe now you will "come for yoga ... and stay for food !""

"

Convenience

Restaurants have started to automate the services they provide. Many restaurants have integrated robots and tablets into their everyday service.

The XCafe by JD.com

The XCafe opened in November 2018 in Tianjin, China, and the restaurant is fully robotic. The XCafe is equipped with sensors, cameras, and GPS tags. Because of this, robots move between tables serving hundreds of customers, while others are busy playing music. 1,000 more restaurants are planned in China by 2020! Alibaba should also embark on the adventure.

Spyce Robot in Boston; responsible robots

Another restaurant that has taken to automation is Robot Spyce, Boston, the restaurant is fully automated. Orders are made via kiosks, and the cooking is done by robots but humans are there to answer questions and to serve customers. Behind an open kitchen, seven turbines prepare healthy and appetising meals in less than three minutes; a three-star French chef has helped to develop the recipes. All the ingredients are organic and the menu features vegan options too. Other restaurants like Robo Sushi in Toronto rely on robots to serve, and the Nepalese robot Ginger relies on humour. Before robots were competing with a waiters humour and personality, now robots are competing with server drones.
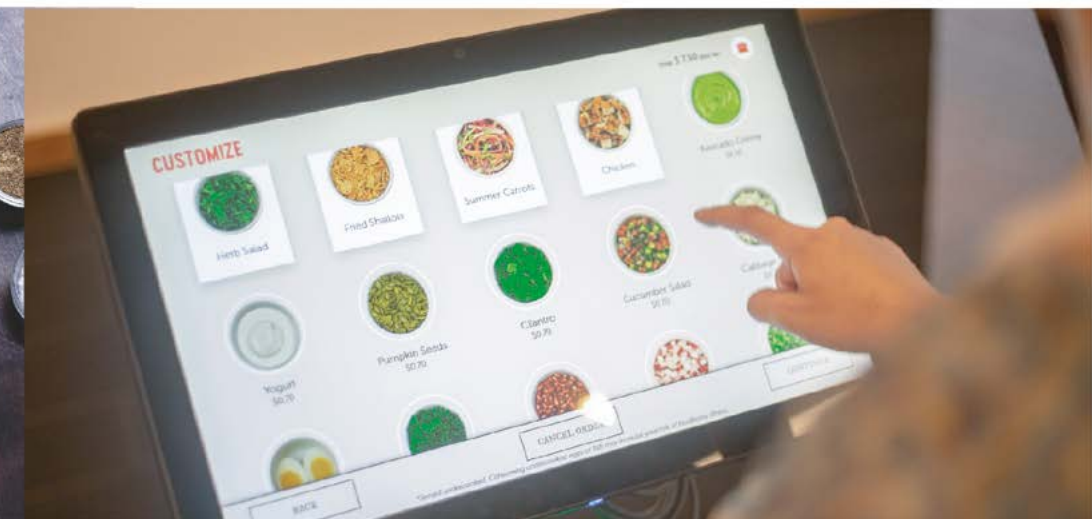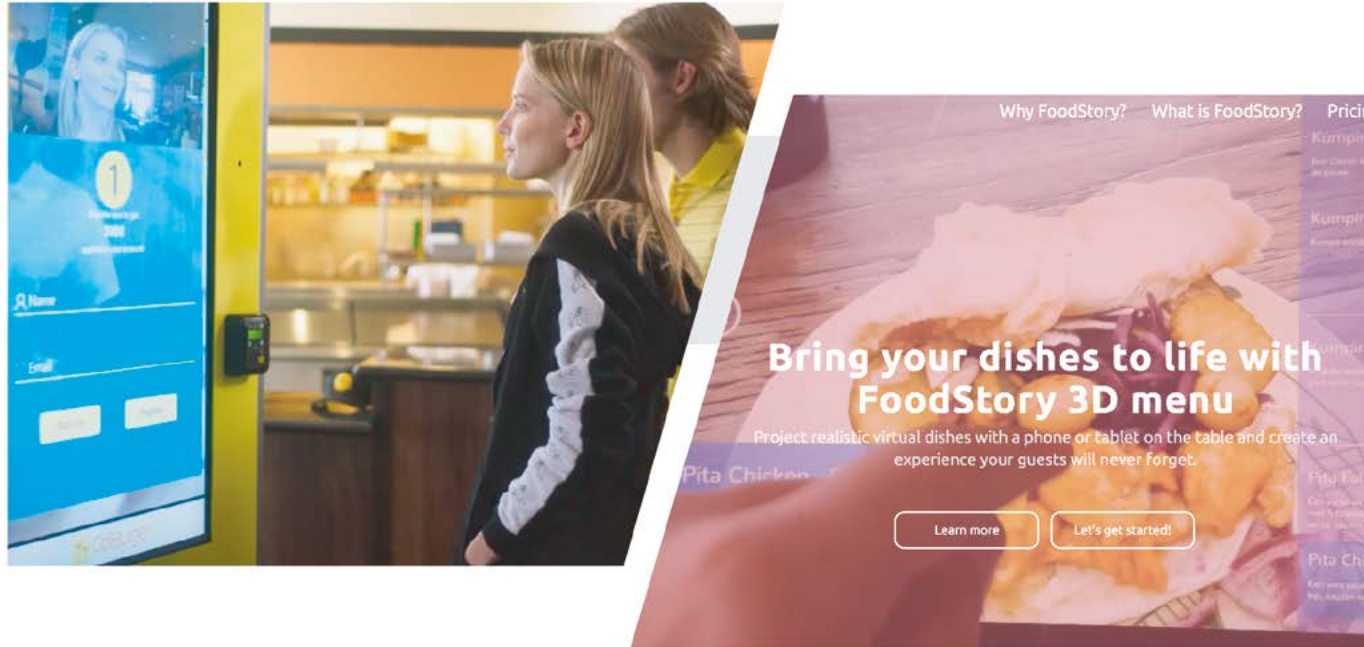
Voice commands

Good Times Burgers were one of the first restaurants to use a chatbot in their drive-through restaurants. Customers place their orders in their car but instead of talking to a human, they talk to an AI-enabled chatbot. This system is designed to handle conversations that typically take place in a walk-in restaurant and it automatically sends commands to the kitchen based on those conversations; a revolution for restaurateurs. The chatbot was developed with Google's launch of Google Duplex; Google Duplex uses a life like sounding robot to call restaurants to make reservations for customers

Order via facial recognition

Previously trialled in China, CaliBurger, Pasadena, USA, launched facial recognition to their restaurant which allows their customers to connect their loyalty accounts from large scale touch kiosks. The kiosks allow customers to order and pay, all through a customer's face. Following this launch, other sites are now being rolled out globally.

Bring your dishes to life with FoodStory 3D menu

Project realistic virtual dishes with a phone or tablet on the table and create an experience your guests will never forget.

Augmented reality menus

At the Amsterdam startup, FoodStory, menus are a thing of the past. With an app, customers can see dishes from menus projected onto the table in realistic 3D holograms with your smartphone or tablet.

OTG: Adapt to airport time restrictions

OTG is a restaurant that operates more than 350 restaurants in 10 airports in North America. In association with United Airlines to reorganise Newark International's restaurants, the brand has modernised its customer experience. Customers place and pay for their orders on iPads at the counter or their table. Customers can also scan their boarding pass on the iPad and it will retrieve their flight information as well as providing them with access to other information.

MOOD:

Mood Media is the global leader in in-store customer experience solutions. With more than 500,000 points of sale worldwide, Mood transports customers into a unique experience through the interactive use of mobile, and visual, audiovisual, musical and olfactory devices. Mood Media collaborates with companies of all sizes and in different sectors around the world, including the most important players in the retail, fashion, hospitality, restaurant, banking and thousands of independent traders.

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