



# 2019 GLOBAL CONSUMER TRENDS IN HOSPITALITY

Created in partnership with TrendWatching



# TRENDS

- 1 | AVOID HUMANS AT ALL COST**
- 2 | VIRTUAL COMPANIONS**
- 3 | ASSISTED DEVELOPMENT**
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## **TREND ONE**

# AVOID HUMANS AT ALL COST

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In 2019, some travelers will seek out totally automated hospitality services that involve absolutely no human contact whatsoever.



# Why now?

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## **AUTOMATION NATIONS**

Your guests are becoming accustomed to automated, staffless retail across the globe. Now, they'll expect the same during their stay.

## **TIME SAVIORS**

Mass affluence, urbanization and fragmented lifestyles – combined with ever-expanding consumer choice – mean consumers are more pressed for time than ever. This is driving consumers to demand convenient solutions. One of the impediments to convenience? Other humans.

## **MORE FOR LESS**

Previously, removing humans would result in lower quality service. That's no longer the case. New automation technologies mean that hoteliers can achieve lower prices and a better, novelty-filled customer experience at the same time.



## Latin America



What better way to AVOID HUMANS than visit a store without any? Consumers are embracing automated convenience stores all over the world, from Amazon Go in the US to Moby marts in China to Zaitt in Brazil.

Announced in February 2018, Zaitt is a fully automated and staff-less supermarket based in Brazil. Customers must download an app to enter the 24/7 store, and scan items' barcodes while inside. When they finish checking out, shoppers are billed automatically.

[Learn more >](#)

# ZAITT

*24/7 automated supermarket  
functions without staff*



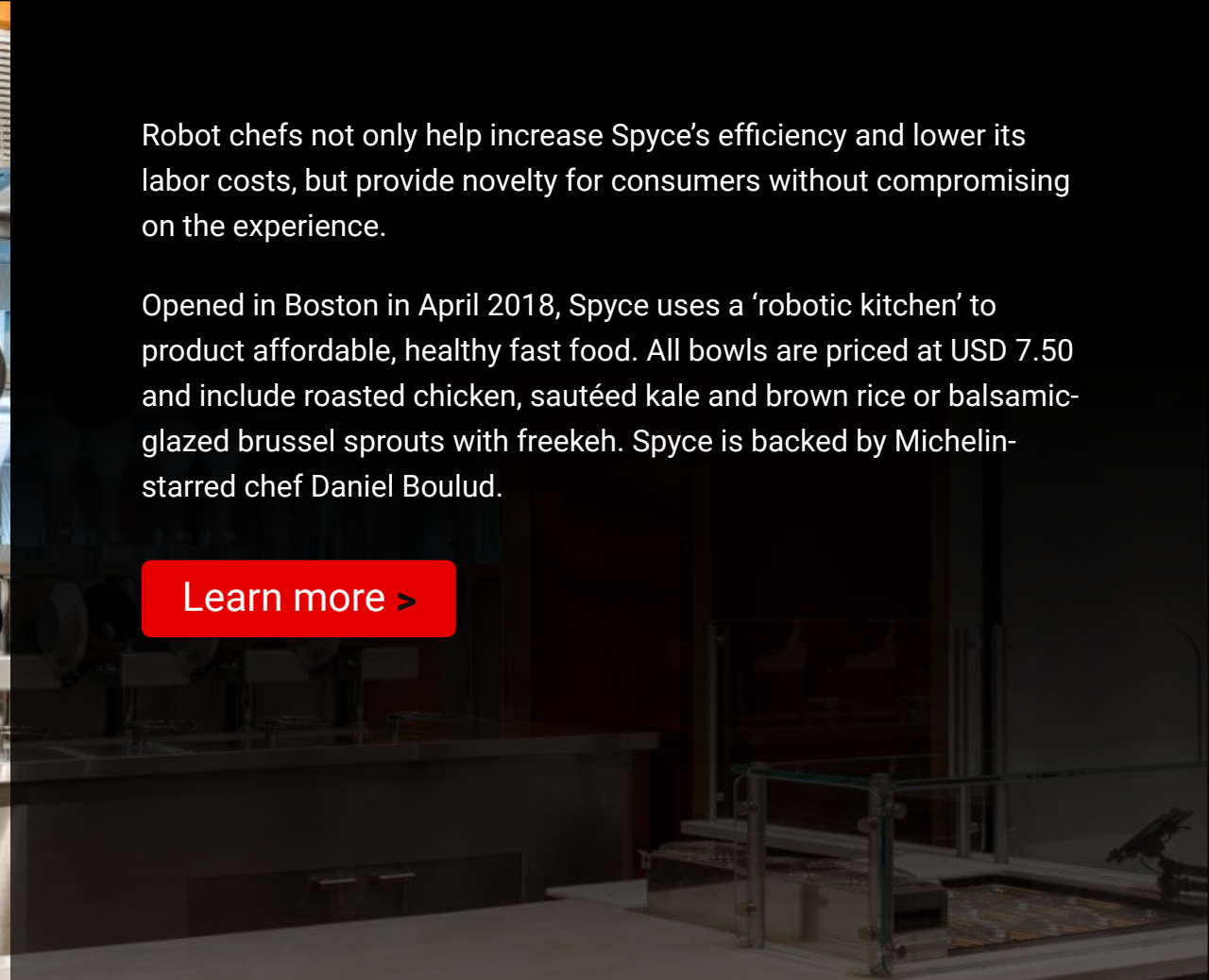
## North America



Robot chefs not only help increase Spyce's efficiency and lower its labor costs, but provide novelty for consumers without compromising on the experience.

Opened in Boston in April 2018, Spyce uses a 'robotic kitchen' to product affordable, healthy fast food. All bowls are priced at USD 7.50 and include roasted chicken, sautéed kale and brown rice or balsamic-glazed brussel sprouts with freekeh. Spyce is backed by Michelin-starred chef Daniel Boulud.

[Learn more >](#)



# SPYCE

*Robot chefs cook affordable,  
healthy fast food*





## Asia Pacific

WeChat is so ubiquitous in China that, as of June 2018, the app is collaborating with the Chinese government to create a WeChat travel ID for easy entry into Macau and Hong Kong. And this integration with Costa Cruises allows Chinese cruise guests to access all the services they need without having to deal with a human or leave the platform they're most comfortable in.

September 2017 saw Costa Cruises expand its WeChat Mini Program for guests on-board its ships in China. The cruise line's program enables guests to book entertainment on the ship, make duty-free purchases, reserve tables at on-board restaurants, and pay for experiences via WeChat. Guests receive complimentary onboard wifi, enabling them to participate in the program.

[Learn more >](#)

# COSTA CRUISES

*Cruise line integrates guest services with WeChat*



# \$10 bil

*In 2017, the global facial recognition market was valued at around USD 4 billion; its valuation is projected to be USD 10 billion by 2030.*

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**Research and Markets,  
April 2018**



## Asia Pacific



According to Marriott, check-in via a human took three minutes on average. Here, an already short process is being made even shorter. Now, it will take approximately one minute.

In July 2018, Marriott partnered with Alibaba to streamline the check-in process for their hotels in China. The pilot is part of a joint venture with Alibaba's travel arm, Fliggy, and lets guests check in using facial recognition technology. Guests scan their IDs and take a photo at a check-in kiosk that then dispenses their keycard. The service debuted in two of Marriott's properties in China.

[Learn more >](#)

# MARRIOTT & ALIBABA

*Partnership shortens check-in  
times with facial recognition kiosks*



## Asia Pacific



In July 2018, InterContinental unveiled AI-powered rooms at its Beijing hotel. The luxury hotelier's guests can use the platform to discover travel times and services available at the hotel, order room service, lower the room's temperature, control the lights, and draw the curtains. The rooms have been created via a partnership with Baidu and smart home assistant Raven H.

[Learn more >](#)

# INTER- CONTINENTAL

*AI-powered hotel suites  
open up across China*



## Asia Pacific



Smart LYZ isn't just automating a few guest experiences, or only within the room – they're thinking about how their guest can AVOID HUMANS at every point during their stay.

Smart LYZ, based in Shenzhen, opened China's first fully automated hotel in January 2018. The entire customer experience is executed without humans: guests book their stay through WeChat, check in via facial recognition technology, open their door through an app, and check out through the app as well. A robot also escorts guests to their rooms. Smart LYZ plans to construct 50 more automated hotels throughout 2018.

[Learn more >](#)

# SMART LYZ

*First fully automated, AI hotel opens in China*



A man is lying in a hotel bed, looking at a tablet. In the foreground, a tablet is placed on a wooden table, displaying a colorful interface with various icons and text. The background shows a hotel room with a desk and chair.

## Asia Pacific

### KT followed in Smart LYZ's footsteps.

July 2018 saw South Korean telecom company KT open the first AI hotel, the Novotel Ambassador Hotel and Residence, in Seoul. The hotel uses voice-recognition AI platform Giga Genie to enable guests to do everything from controlling the lighting settings in their room, to adjusting the temperature and ordering room service all via voice commands or touch display. KT also offers guests a temporary smartphone during their stay which lets them make international and domestic calls, with the ability to purchase data. KT states that their AI system is capable of recognizing English and plans to add Japanese and Chinese voice recognition in November 2018.

[Learn more >](#)

# KT

*Telco opens South Korea's first AI hotel*



## North America



Players in the hospitality industry pioneered using robots to make the guest experience more efficient. Yotel's luggage toting robot debuted way back in 2011, while robots (like Aura at the M Social Hotel) are already delivering room service in Singapore. Now, we see these expectations transferring to other sectors – including transport.

In August 2018, Netherlands-based airline KLM is set to pilot Care-E, its automated airport assistant at New York's JFK and San Francisco's International (SFO) Airports. Passengers scan their boarding pass with Care-E, which then carries their luggage (up to 85 lbs) and cruises alongside them as it guides them to their gate. Using AI, the self-driving robot will have access to real-time data and can redirect passengers if their gate changes.

[Learn more >](#)

# KLM

*Airline's baggage robot carries luggage to gate*



# Your response?

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## FACE TO (INTER)FACE

Think about how automated systems can make your customers feel more comfortable accessing your services. Multi-lingual devices, for example, can help your foreign guests avoid language barriers. Is there a platform your guest feels the most comfortable using – be it WeChat, Facebook Messenger, Whatsapp – that you can use to communicate with them?

Marriott's chatbot integration with Slack lets traveling colleagues book trips together.

## DO NOT DISTURB

Your hotel doesn't need to harness the latest tech to help guests avoid humans. NYC-based restaurant Ichiran has set up solo dining booths – and forbidden guests from communicating at all - at its newest location. What simple, non-digitized measures can you enact to help guests get alone time they crave at new points in their journey (in the lobby, on the beach) where they're currently not receiving it?

## CONTEXTUAL AVOIDANCE

People have conflicting desires. While many will increasingly AVOID HUMANS, those same travelers will desire a personal connection at other times. For example, a chatty concierge is probably the last thing a guest wants to encounter at their 2 AM check-in. But a traveler in need of a restaurant recommendation would probably rather turn to your staff than an algorithm. Can you re-evaluate your guest's journey to make some of their experiences human-free, and put your people front-and-center for others?



# 72%

We touched upon robots and chat functionalities in the last trend. But consumers want these virtual entities to provide more than just convenience. So brands are stepping up and infusing them with personality.

*of regular voice technology users say:  
‘I think brands should have unique voices  
and personalities for their apps/skills and  
not just use the assistant on my phone’.*

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JWT,  
April 2017



## TREND TWO

# VIRTUAL COMPANIONS

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Travelers deeply accustomed to digital assistants, chatbots and more will look to the next evolution of artificial intelligence. They will seek out virtual personalities that have the power to entertain, educate and befriend.

And as we acknowledged before: While time-pressed travelers may wish to avoid other people during their stay, others will welcome companionship.



# Why now?

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## **VIRTUOUS VIRTUAL CYCLE**

After Siri's debut in 2011, the penetration of virtual digital assistants grew incrementally. Now, they're everywhere – and hotel rooms are no exception. June 2018 saw Marriott equip its US rooms with Alexa, while InterContinental has teamed up with Baidu in China. The more the assistants are used, the better they get. The better they get, the more they are used.

## **HUMAN AT SCALE**

Yes, we're still banging on about chatbots. They could save businesses USD 8 billion by 2020 (Juniper Research, July 2017). But think beyond service – will they help you unlock entirely new business models?

## **SIRI, WHO AM I?**

There's growing awareness that social media can increase feelings of social isolation (AJPM, January 2017). No wonder Apple is hiring Siri engineers with a 'peer counseling or psychology background'.



# Asia Pacific



IDEA OSCAR



INSTA OSCAR



PARTY OSCAR

Basic assistant chatbots are receiving infusions of personality, and the ability to entertain. Air New Zealand describes Oscar as 'a little cheeky', and he can even tell 'dad jokes'.

In April 2018, Air New Zealand's AI chatbot, Oscar, became available in North America. The chatbot, which is accessible to customers through the airline's website and app, uses artificial intelligence to answer customers' questions and offer personalized responses. Oscar has went from answering 7% of questions to 75%. Oscar's artificial intelligence capabilities mean that the more customers interact with the chatbot, the more accurate and conversational it becomes. Oscar can even sing and tell jokes.

[Learn more >](#)

# OSCAR

*Airline's AI chatbot assistant entertains users*



## Asia Pacific



While the Henn-na hotel has been around for some time, the robots running the establishment were primarily functional. Now, its newest location is dinosaur-themed, and staffed by joke-telling velociraptors that deliver on entertainment value as well.

The Henn-na robot hotel opened its second branch in Japan in March 2018. The latest location includes two velociraptors, which crack jokes while performing front-desk duties. The rest of the establishment has a dinosaur theme, including an in-room robot butler painted to resemble a dinosaur egg. The bedside robot can sing guests to sleep, control lights in the room, and inform guests of the weather. Ten more Henn-na robot hotels are slated to open by the end of 2018.

[Learn more >](#)

# HENN-NA

*Robot hotel's second branch  
staffed by velociraptor concierge*



## Europe/Mideast/Africa

KLM has taken the VIRTUAL COMPANION concept further by completing a more meaningful task – delivering advice and recommendations – as well as by featuring the insights and voices of real KLM crew members.

KLM has introduced the KLM Care Tag: a wearable audio device providing tourists with tips on navigating Amsterdam. The GPS-enabled tag works without an internet connection to deliver relevant tips, depending on where the user is located. KLM crew members provide Amsterdam-specific insights and recommendations on topics including the location of busy intersections, restaurants, and how to lock a bicycle, for example. Travelers to Amsterdam could order the KLM Care Tag for free during September 2017 only.

[Learn more >](#)

# KLM

*Airline's wearable gives tourists advice*



## Europe/Mideast/Africa



Emotional interaction was a key focus in developing this travel robot. As creator Frank Berk Güler explained, “What is important for us and what we use as a base here are human beings. Every communication element Nely uses was developed in collaboration with sociologists.”

It was announced in August 2018 that Nely, a social robot, will be deployed to assist travelers at Turkey’s Istanbul New Airport. Nely is equipped with AI, facial recognition, emotional analysis, voice capabilities, a bar code reader, and the ability to greet passengers. The robot can also make bookings on travelers’ behalf, relay information, and provide weather updates. Nely changes its emotions and tone depending on the expressions, ages, and genders of passengers. It can remember the passengers it has interacted with before, as well as make small talk.

[Learn more >](#)

# NELY

*Social robot assists  
airport’s visitors*



## Asia Pacific



Alibaba's VIRTUAL COMPANION also does what a real-life companion to a child would do. Is there an in-room, digital friend you can introduce for your younger guests?

In March 2018, Alibaba announced that the brand's Tmall Genie smart speaker had been updated to include visual recognition capabilities. The update allows the smart speaker (which is only available in China) to recognize the covers of selected children's books and then read the stories aloud. The device can also use the same technology to recognize over 40,000 different kinds of medicine packaging and flashcards, to help Chinese-language learners read Chinese characters. Genie owners can activate the features after purchasing an XHolder (a cellphone holder) and enabling Genie FireEye: a new function in the Tmall Genie mobile app.

[Learn more >](#)

# ALIBABA

*Smart speaker can read  
bedtime stories*



# Asia Pacific

Through introspective life advice, this AI plant provides a deeper form of companionship.

Q1 2018 saw Japanese electronics firm TDK announce the creation of BonsAI: a bonsai plant equipped with artificial intelligence. The plant can talk to its owners and provide life advice, find sunlight on its own, and can request water from people when its soil is too dry. BonsAI's pot is also embedded with LED lights, which are activated to convey emotions. TDK is developing BonsAI as part of its Attracting Tomorrow program, which aims to develop future-focused technology.

[Learn more >](#)

# BONSAI

*Artificially intelligent bonsai  
plant provides life advice*



## Asia Pacific



The RoBoHon aims to forge an emotional connection with users, while providing them with travel guidance.

RoBoHon, a robot developed by electronics company Sharp, is designed to act as a travel companion for visitors to Japan. The internet-connected RoBoHon is equipped with a GPS and camera. Based on users' location, it provides noteworthy facts about where they are, give activity suggestions, and advise users on ideal locations nearby for taking a photo. The robot can also chat, dance, and take pictures. As of May 2018, RoBoHon is available for rent at Haneda Airport (for USD 12 per day) and can be purchased for USD 1,230 (as of October 2017). The robot has also been marketed as a non-travel companion, with smartphone capabilities.

[Learn more >](#)

# ROBOHON

*Travel companion robot  
can be rented at airport*



# North America



Hi, I am your **introspective Replika**.  
What is my name?

Enter your Replika's name

Replika, in its efforts to become a user's best friend, is a textbook example of this trend.

Replika is an artificial intelligence chatbot that learns to imitate users' behavior. The bot, which runs through a free mobile app, learns about users through questions (about their values, current moods, aspirations, tastes and more) and conversation to become their 'best friend' and develop a similar personality. Replika was created by US-based technology firm Luka in Q1 2017.

[Learn more >](#)

# REPLIKA

*Chatbot uses AI to befriend  
and support users*



# Your response?

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## MIRROR MIRROR

Travel provides opportunities for exploration, both physical and spiritual. Could you use AI companions (like Bonsai AI!) to offer meaningful insight into guests' inner selves? Black Mirror vibes aside, we all seek truthful friends. But in 2019 and beyond, they may not be flesh and blood.

## PERFORMANCE + PERSONALITY

Your hotel's VIRTUAL COMPANION doesn't need to be a full-blown best friend. Take a cue from Oscar and KLM: can you surprise your guest by embedding a practical tool – perhaps a check-in kiosk, an in-room phone – with a small dose of your brand's personality?

## THE HOME FORT

Consider the needs of the solo travelers that may feel homesick. Could you install a personality like **Fribo** in rooms that can connect them, in a unique way, to their friends and family back home?



# 15%

One group in need of a companion or helping hand? Young adults, who are struggling to hit traditional markers of adulthood more than previous generations.

*As of 2016, 15% of 25-35 year-olds in the US were living in their parents' home. In 2000, it was 10%.*

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**Pew,  
May 2017**



# 20%

An increase of two thirds  
in just over a decade!

*of 28-37 year-old men in Shanghai are unmarried.  
In 2005 it was 12%.*

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**Fudan University,  
June 2017**



# 55%

This is a global phenomenon.

*of Brits (18-24) don't know how to set up utility bills  
upon moving to a new place.*

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**YouGov,  
October 2017**



## **TREND THREE**

# ASSISTED DEVELOPMENT

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Young travelers with complex lifestyles will look to brands to teach them useful life skills, let them outsource daily tasks, or help them realize personal life goals.



# Why now?

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## **LATE CAPITALISM**

Soaring asset prices. Stagnant wages. For millions, economic pressures have put the traditional staging posts of adulthood out of reach until their 30s and beyond. Now, they're crafting new narratives.

## **CAN'T ADULT, WON'T ADULT**

Changing social norms mean many markers of adulthood – marriage, house, children – are redundant, if not absurd, for millions. But those consumers still want to power through tasks and live rich, meaningful lives.

## **EMPATHY BRANDS**

Amid heated debates about the extravagant spending habits of millennials (an Australian millionaire suggested young people struggle to buy property because they spent too much on avocado toast) many young consumers are looking for brands to provide practical support in an uncertain world.



## Asia Pacific



As we saw with the previous trend, digital entities can provide companionship. But there are benefits of being woken up by a real, live human. Could you encourage your concierge to deliver wake-up calls with a more personal, caring touch?

Japanese telecommunications operator au has unveiled Morning Call: a service offering free wake-up calls. Live from March 2018 - when Japanese college graduates generally start working - the service is staffed by Japanese mothers. The operator offers a five-day wake-up program to help people wake up more easily. Users can select their preferred mother to wake them up, based on the tone of voice they'd like.

[Watch the video >](#)

# AU

*Mom team deployed to  
wake up graduates*



# 9%

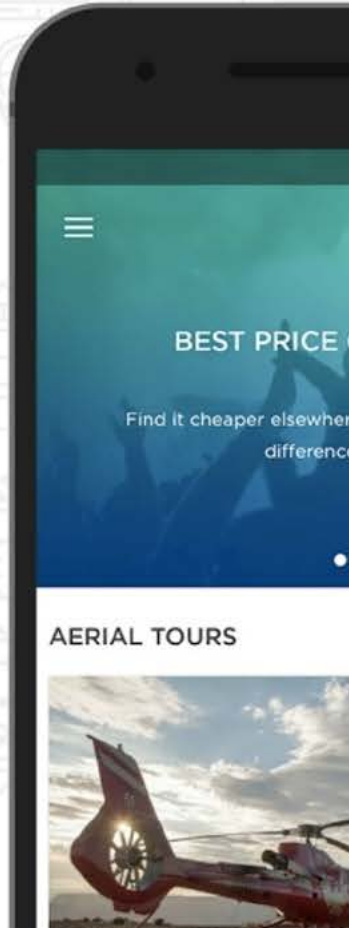
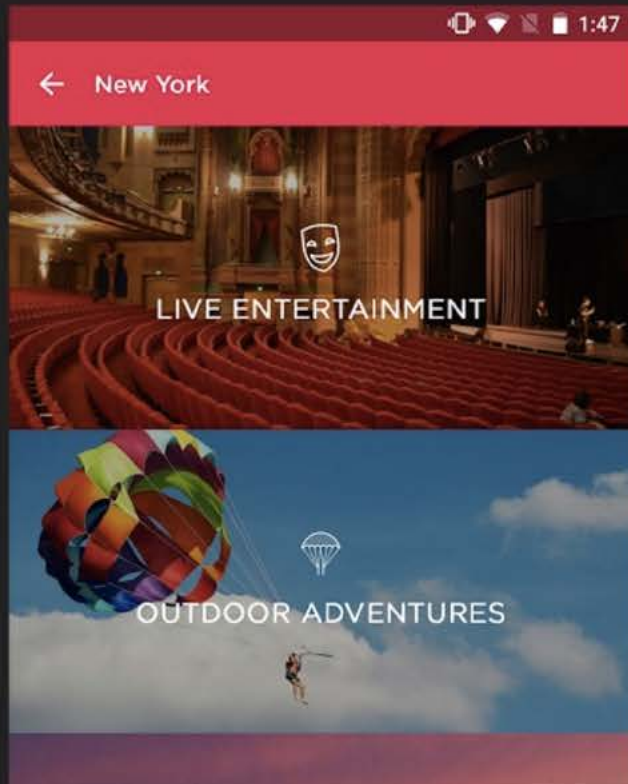
*Only 9% of US travelers 'always' know which brand they want to book with before conducting research.*

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Google,  
January 2018



# North America



Services like Headout, which cater to travelers who are indecisive (or simply less skilled at planning trips), are gaining traction.

In July 2018, New York-based travel platform Headout raised USD 10 million. Headout lets travelers book last-minute activities in 15 major cities around the world. Travelers can use the platform to find spontaneous local shows, museum tickets, and other attractions in their destination.

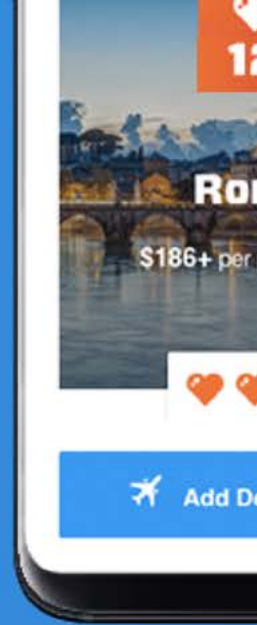
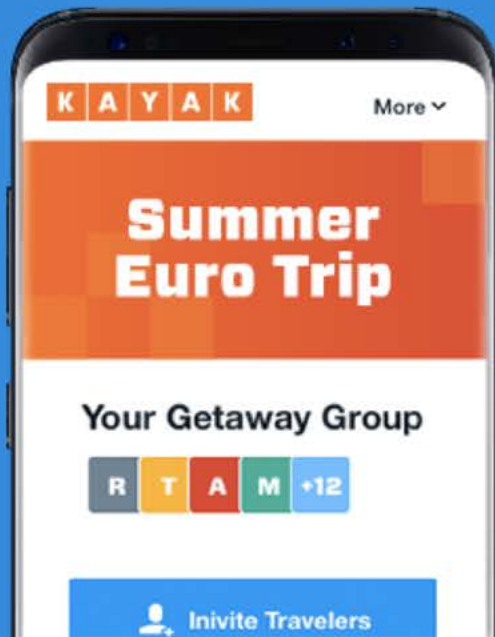
[Learn more >](#)

# HEADOUT

*App helps travelers book last-minute activities*



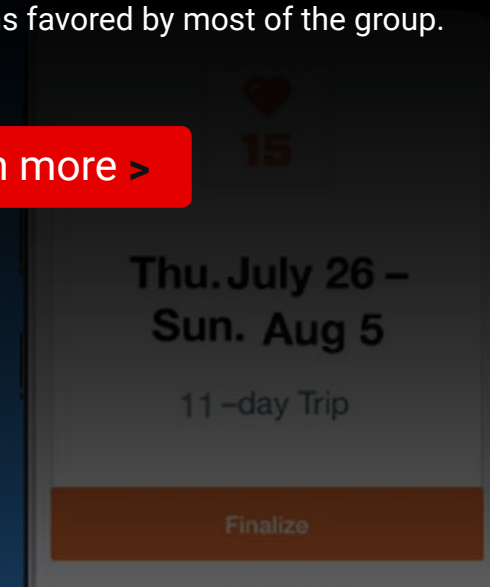
## North America



Trip Huddle also simplifies the logistics of travel planning.

May 2018 saw travel planning site KAYAK launch Trip Huddle, its new group travel planning tool. Trip Huddle enables prospective travel buddies to create an invitation-based group to decide on destination, trip dates, and hotels. Group members can vote on multiple options using a rating scale of one to three hearts. The tool then determines the options favored by most of the group.

[Learn more >](#)



# TRIP HUDDLE

*App simplifies group trip planning*



# 87%

*of young adults 18-22 in the US prefer to book all of their travel arrangements for a trip in one place.*

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**Expedia,  
January 2018**



## Asia Pacific



By 2020, travelers will only need to enter their budget – no other preferences – to see a one-page list of package options.

June 2017 saw the launch of South Korea-based Tripbtoz, which uses AI to curate custom travel packages for young travelers in Korea (and in other Asian countries) traveling abroad, based on their budget. After travelers enter their budget range and preferences, Tripbtoz finds discounted travel and lodging packages. The booking system features a price drop refund policy that fully refunds customers in loyalty points, which can be used towards future accommodations, if their hotel's price drops after booking.

[Learn more >](#)

# TRIPBTOZ

*Platform finds travel packages  
for the budget-conscious*



# 50%

*Over 50% of young Americans don't have a passport.*

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Contiki,  
January 2018



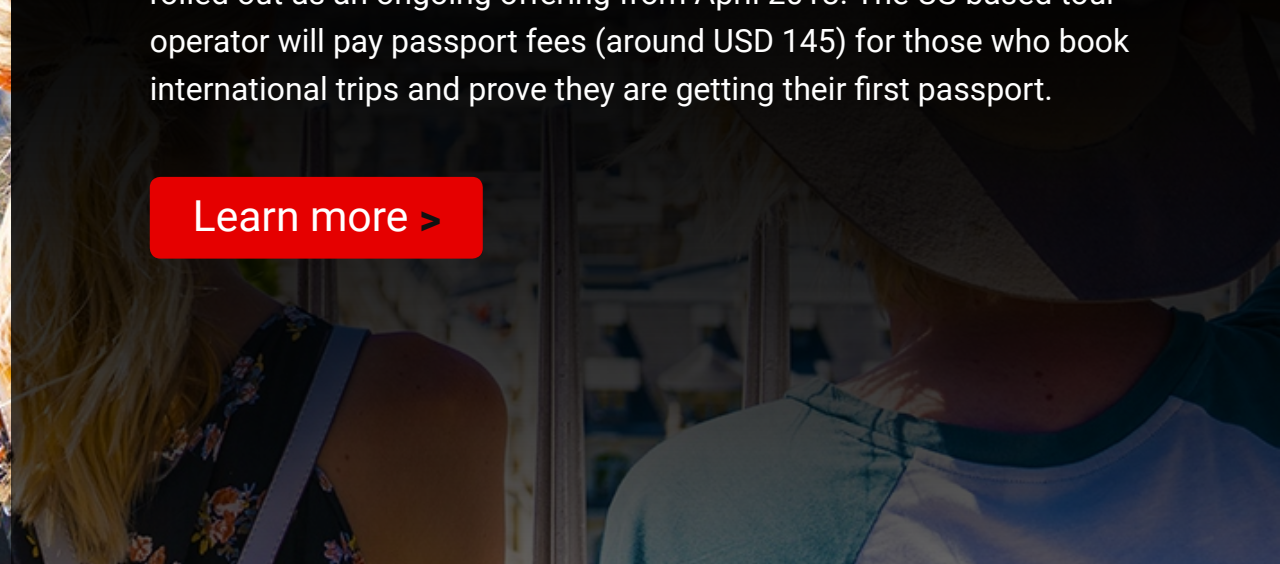
## North America



Through this relatively small measure – paying the price of a passport – Contiki is helping first-time travelers reach a significant milestone and expand their minds.

Contiki has unveiled a promotion offering young American citizens a free passport. Any American first-time international travelers aged 18-35 can take part in the deal, which was trialed in January and then rolled out as an ongoing offering from April 2018. The US-based tour operator will pay passport fees (around USD 145) for those who book international trips and prove they are getting their first passport.

[Learn more >](#)



# CONTIKI

*Tour company pays for millennial travelers' first passports*



# 50%

*of travelers would rather not feel like a tourist while traveling.*

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**Skift,  
October 2017**





## Europe/Mideast/Africa

This blockchain initiative connects travelers to trustworthy 'cool cousins' that can assist them not only through practical advice, but also in their goal to live like a local – and, in doing so, impress their friends at home.

In Q2 2018, UK-founded travel company Cool Cousin launched CUZ, its cryptocurrency designed to facilitate transactions between its ecosystem partners. Cool Cousin links travelers with 'Cousins': locals ready to give travelers advice on things like where to stay, current events and where to eat. The blockchain initiative aims to provide a trustworthy, affordable and custom service driven by an autonomous community.

[Learn more >](#)

# COOLCOUSIN

*App connects travelers  
to like-minded locals*



# 63%

*of travelers don't believe they are making the most out of their travel opportunities.*

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**Booking.com,  
May 2018**



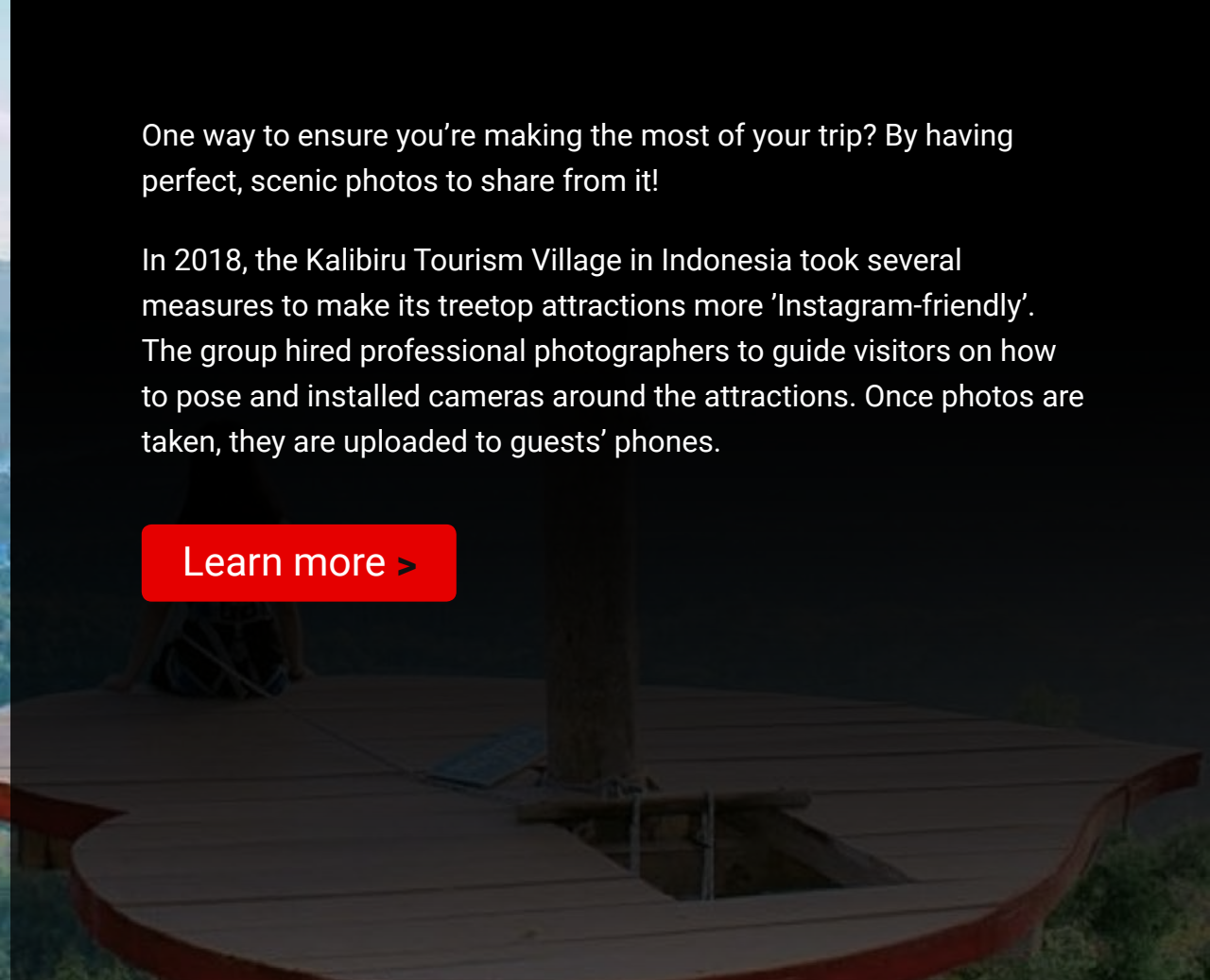
## Asia Pacific



One way to ensure you're making the most of your trip? By having perfect, scenic photos to share from it!

In 2018, the Kalibiru Tourism Village in Indonesia took several measures to make its treetop attractions more 'Instagram-friendly'. The group hired professional photographers to guide visitors on how to pose and installed cameras around the attractions. Once photos are taken, they are uploaded to guests' phones.

[Learn more >](#)



# KALIBIRU

*Park's professional photographers help visitors get*





## Asia Pacific

This partnership shows young travelers one way they can maximize their trips around Asia.

Airline AirAsia and media outlet Vice partnered to debut Hot Heads, a video series showcasing hot and spicy foods in destinations around Asia. Premiering in July 2018, the millennial-gear series educates young viewers about different hot cuisines. Each episode challenges host Karina Utomo of metal band High Tension to try each food, while encouraging travelers to follow suit and expand their own horizons.

[Learn more >](#)

# AIRASIA & VICE

*Series educates travelers  
about world's spiciest foods*



# Your response?

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## ASK ME ANYTHING

Take inspiration from Contiki's passport scheme and think about something that may be holding your guest back. Perhaps they're unsure of how to book their flights, or nervous about traveling to your location. Can you gain a customer's trust by giving them a friendly liaison to text questions to – even if those inquiries aren't directly related to your hotel?

## SPUR OF THE MOMENT

Travelers are taking a relaxed approach to their trips: 52% surveyed enjoy spontaneously discovering their destination and getting lost. And services like Headout are catering to last-minute planners. If your guest hasn't already made plans, can you surprise them with a menu of excursions when they arrive at your property?

## PRACTICAL SOUVENIR

You're the expert in hospitality. How can you share your knowledge with your guest, so they can apply it at home? Can you help them take a normal adulting skill (mixing a cocktail, setting up a centerpiece) to an ultra-luxe level, and impress their peers?



## **TREND FOUR**

# BREAKING BRICKS

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Traditional brick and mortar retailers are expanding into hospitality and providing an entirely new breed of competition for traditional players, while delighting loyal fans.



# Why now?

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## GIANT FOOTSTEPS

As of April 2018, Amazon Prime has over 100 million members. In 2017, the brand spent over USD 22 billion on research and development – up 41% on 2016's figure. And did we mention Alibaba's USD 25.3 billion in sales during 2017's Single's Day, an event that 140,000 brands participated in? It's becoming impossible for brick-and-mortar brands to beat the giants on price and convenience – smart ones are embracing the travel experience as a new playing field.

## ATTENTION ECONOMY

Our social feeds have become saturated with picture-perfect travel snapshots; your Northern Lights photo, no matter how majestic, just doesn't have the attention-seizing power it once did. As a result, consumers have ever-higher standards when it comes to their experiences.

## BUDDYING UP

It's hard to stand out to consumers who are weary of experiences, having seen it all on social. One way brands are reaching overstimulated customers? By launching partnerships that are unexpected enough to cut through the noise. The fashion industry is ripe with examples of this. Iced tea brand Arizona, for instance, partnered with Nike to enter the streetwear space and launch an immersive pop-up store.



## Asia Pacific



Muji's hotel lets its fans fully immerse themselves in the brand ethos.

January 2018 saw Muji open the Muji Hotel, representing the homewares and apparel brand's first foray into hospitality, in China. The hotel embodies the Japanese brand's minimalist aesthetic, and features Muji furnishings and products for guests to use (such as toothbrushes). The hotel also features a library and diner, serving dishes inspired by home cooking from around the world.

[Learn more >](#)



# MUJI

*Homewares retailer  
opens its first hotel*



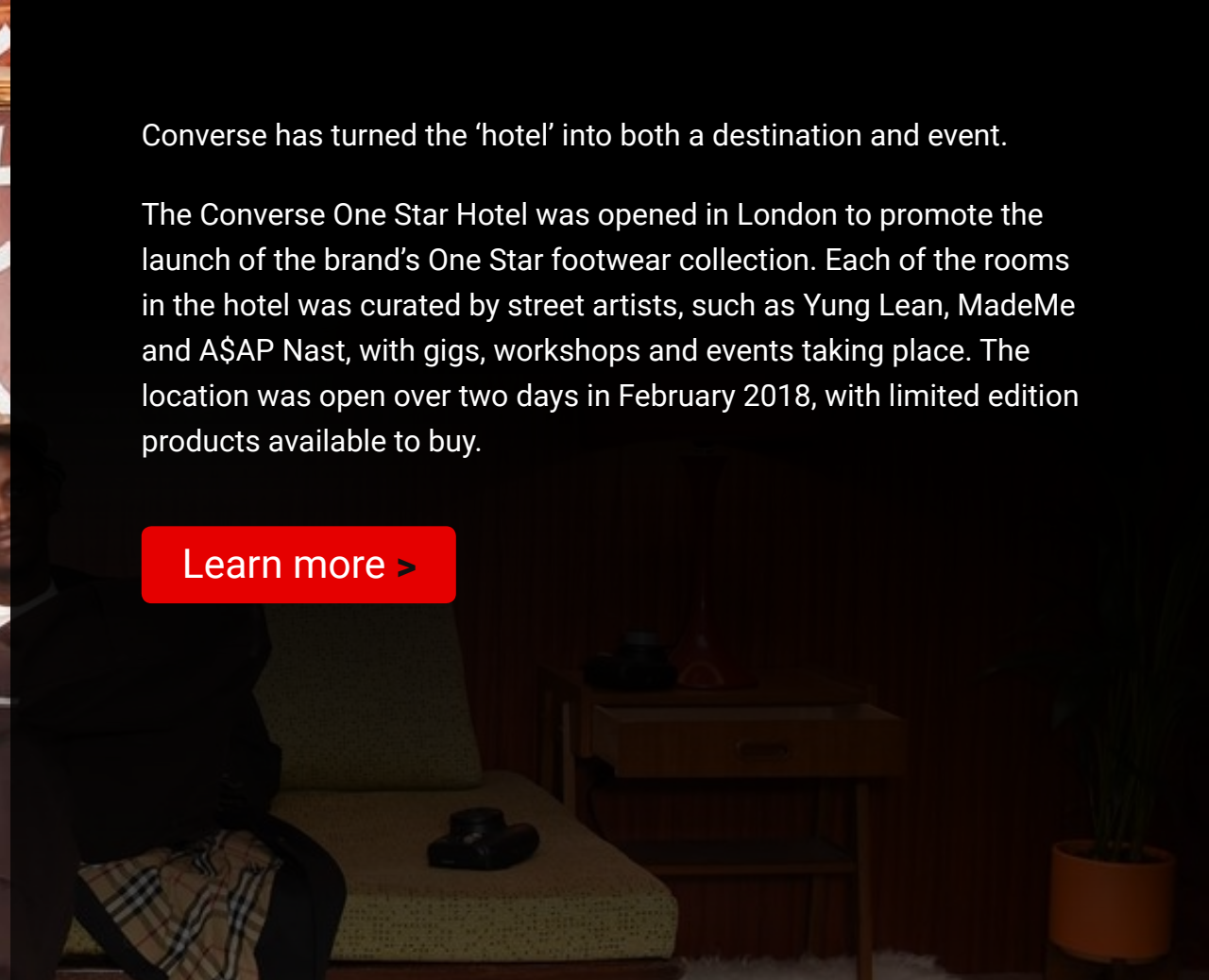
## Europe/Mideast/Africa



Converse has turned the 'hotel' into both a destination and event.

The Converse One Star Hotel was opened in London to promote the launch of the brand's One Star footwear collection. Each of the rooms in the hotel was curated by street artists, such as Yung Lean, MadeMe and A\$AP Nast, with gigs, workshops and events taking place. The location was open over two days in February 2018, with limited edition products available to buy.

[Learn more >](#)



# CONVERSE

*Pop-up hotel promotes new footwear collection*



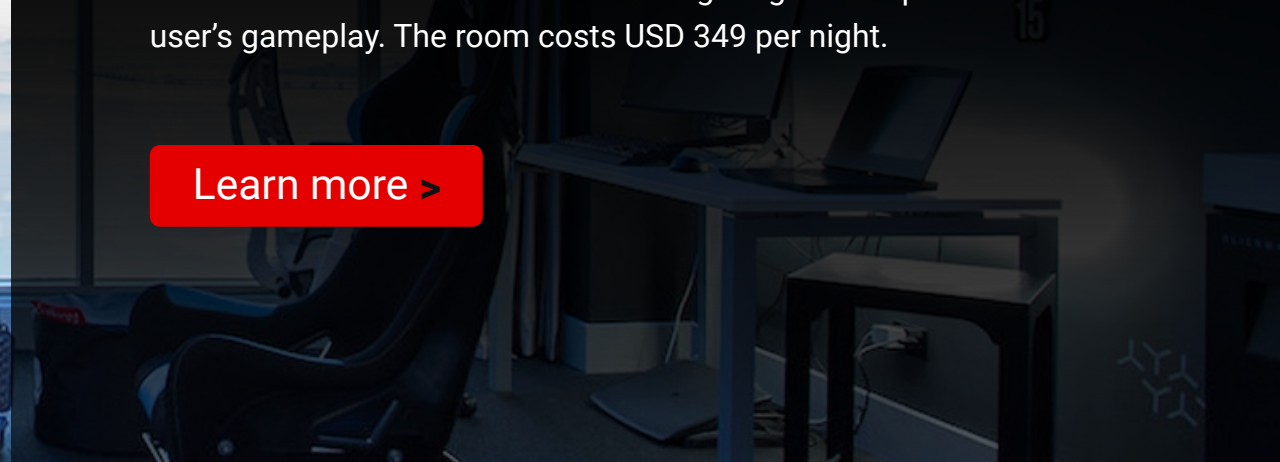
# Latin America



Hilton isn't just catering to fans of a brand – they're catering to consumers according to their passion (gaming). So here, they've created the dream room for gamers.

In April 2018, Alienware and Hilton Hotel Panama teamed up to create a hotel room specially designed for gamers. In addition to prominent Alienware branding and the latest gaming hardware (including from Alienware, Xbox and Oculus Rift), the room features a racing simulator chair with upholstery developed by Nasa, a 65-inch 4K TV with surround sound and immersive room lighting that responds to the user's gameplay. The room costs USD 349 per night.

[Learn more >](#)



# HILTON

*Hilton creates high-tech hotel room for gamers*



A photograph of a Shinola store interior. The background is a wall of wooden shelves, many of which are filled with small, neatly arranged boxes and items. In the foreground, a black bicycle with a large front wheel and a smaller rear wheel is displayed. A black leather bag is hanging from the handlebars. The lighting is warm and focused on the products.

## North America

# SHINOLA DETROIT

Shinola is using its hotel to showcase its pride in its Detroit roots, and shine a spotlight on the city.

Luxury watch and bicycle maker Shinola is geared to open a hotel in its home city, Detroit. Set in a renovated eight-story downtown building, the hotel is expected to open in late 2018. The hotel will feature interiors based on the brand's identity with furniture and woodwork sourced from local manufacturers, yet will incorporate no retail space. The 130-room boutique hotel aims to become "Detroit's living room."

[Learn more >](#)

# SHINOLA

*Watch and bicycle maker  
builds hotel in home city*





## Europe/Mideast/Africa

Here, we see a hotel partnering with a brand very relevant to its own business, and we see Away using the hotel as a testing ground.

US luggage brand Away took over the Amastan Hotel in Paris during September 2017. A partnership with French vodka brand Grey Goose, 'Chez Away' offers guests in-house manicurists, piercing and tattoo artists, with complimentary in-room beauty products supplied by Glossier, Diptyque and Dr. Jart. The pop-up hotel is a test-run for the brand, which hopes to venture into further travel experiences.

[Learn more >](#)

# AWAY

*Luggage brand launches  
travel experiences*



## Asia Pacific



Designer brands are applying their luxury know-how and brand to the hotel space.

June 2018 saw Italian jewelry brand Bulgari partner with Marriott to open a hotel in Shanghai. Bulgari and Marriott have opened five locations previously, and plan to introduce three more (in Tokyo, Paris and Moscow) between 2020-2022. The Italian-style location features Bulgari branding, has used its ballroom for Bulgari-sponsored events, and includes a boutique with the brand's merchandise. Rates start at around USD 747.

[Learn more >](#)



# BULGARI

*Luxury jeweler expands  
branded hotel line*





## Asia Pacific

Opening in 2019, the Grand Lisboa Palace resort complex will feature two hotels with luxury fashion roots: The Karl Lagerfeld Hotel and Palazzo Versace. The Karl Lagerfeld Hotel will be designed by the Fendi and Chanel designer, feature his iconic silhouette on room keys, and include a large sculpture of his cat, Choupette. Palazzo Versace at Grand Lisboa, the third hotel to be opened by Versace, will include interiors designed by the brand.

[Learn more >](#)

# GRAND LISBOA PALACE

*Resort complex to feature Karl Lagerfeld and Versace hotels*



# Your response?

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## **A HAND TO BRANDS**

Consider the business opportunities that can spring from collaborating with brands that you (and your guest!) are a fan of. Can you help these companies execute their vision in a new place? In return, your partner's brand cachet – their aesthetic, their influence – should enhance your property's appeal.

## **POP-UPPING**

The Converse pop-up shows BREAKING BRICKS initiatives don't need to last forever. Can your hotel create a catch-it-or-you'll-miss-it event, and turn itself into the destination du jour for a brand's fans?

## **OUT-OF-LOBBY**

Find opportunities for guests to experience your partnership even when they step off your property. Could you set up interactive, branded outposts at different locations around your community – perhaps at a café, a public square, or an arcade?



## **TREND FIVE**

# MAGIC POINT OF SALE

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Using their devices to summon a MAGIC POINT OF SALE allows travelers to engage with establishments, browse products, test and purchase in innovative new ways.



# Why now?

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## CHANGING THE CHANNEL

Smart brands aren't limiting themselves to traditional retail, advertising and distribution channels. They're using emerging tech to gain richer data on consumers' preferences and habits. And then, they're playing with innovative new channels to reach customers in the right place, at the right time. .

## THE AR & VR EXPLOSION

Iconic technologist Kevin Kelly says that the maturing of VR and AR technologies mean a fundamental shift: from an internet in which information is the basic unit of currency, to one in which experiences are. Also, ARKit and ARCore put augmented reality into the pockets of consumers around the world. We're just at the beginning of a long phase of innovation that will revolutionize how and where consumers shop and engage with brands.

## OFF = ON

Trendwatchers (us included!) have been talking about the blurring of online and offline for years. But now – thanks to several tech developments – it's finally becoming a reality. Bolt-on visual search capability – see Amazon Rekognition from AWS – is available to brands large and small, the promise of a totally shoppable physical world is finally being realized. Want a hotel in Madrid? Just point your phone at a billboard for purchase options to shop and engage with brands.



# \$1.1 bil

Augmented reality, tying consumers' digital and physical lives, is booming.

*Globally, the AR market in retail hit USD 1.1 billion in 2018, and is expected to reach USD 7.9 billion by 2023.*

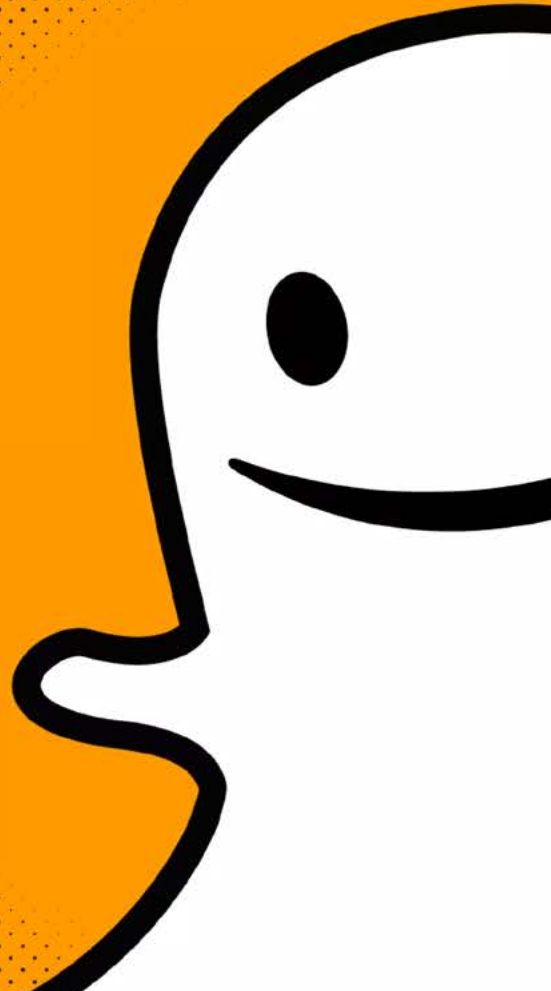
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Research and Markets,  
July 2018



## North America

amazon.com



Both Facebook and Snapchat are turning consumers' physical environments into a POS.

In July 2018, it was revealed that Snapchat was building a visual product search feature that will direct users to Amazon listings. When Snapchat users point their camera at an object or scan a barcode they will be given the option to 'See all results at Amazon'. This has the potential to open up new revenue streams for Snapchat and affiliated retailers and also makes the Snapchat camera a way to see the world, rather than just being a tool to share selfies. The service builds on a Shazam integration, launched in 2016, that allows users to use the app to identify a song playing nearby, and then send it to friends or follow the artist.

[Learn more >](#)

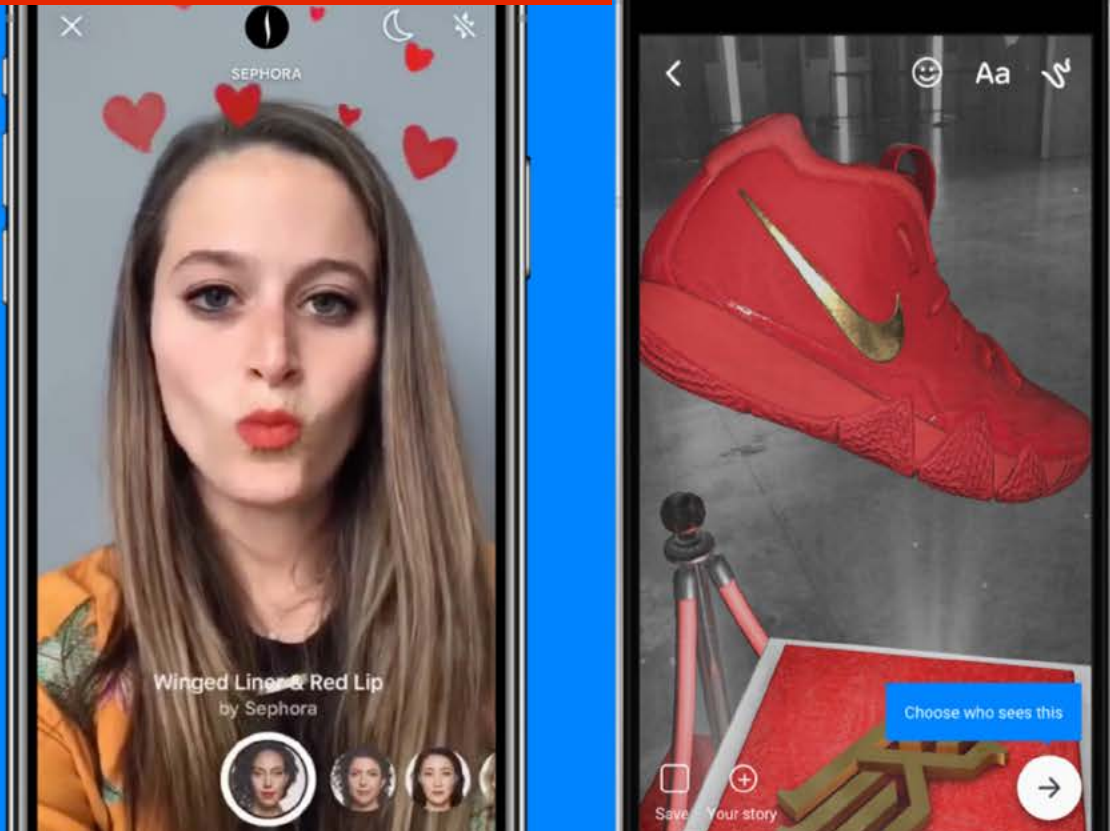
amazon

# SNAPCHAT

*Snapchat and Amazon create in-app shopping function*



## North America



In May 2018, Facebook announced that new AR tools would be integrated into Messenger for business accounts. The tools will allow business to serve AR ads within the platform and create brand activations that are tagged to physical locations: 'just point your phone at this wall to see exclusive content!'. When a user interacts with a business within Messenger, brands can prompt them to open the camera, which is pre-populated with filters and AR effects that are specific to the brand. Users will be able to share images and videos to their story or in conversations. Brands including ASUS, Kia, Nike and Sephora were some of the first to leverage the AR tools.

[Learn more >](#)

# FACEBOOK

*Facebook brings AR shopping to Messenger*



## North America



This initiative lets consumers 'try before they travel' for both destinations and hotels.

June 2018 saw travel search engine KAYAK announce KAYAK VR, a virtual reality app that lets users navigate and explore a city and its hotels before visiting. Compatible with Google's Daydream VR headset, the platform features audio tours and sounds recorded from the selected city. As of June 2018, KAYAK VR is available for two cities: Venice, Italy and Kathmandu, Nepal.

[Learn more >](#)

# KAYAK & GOOGLE

*VR platform lets travelers preview destinations and hotels*



## North America



Rizort not only enables 'try before travel', but also utilizes AI to help plan the itinerary.

Rizort, a US-based travel company and marketplace, uses VR to let travelers explore luxury experiences and hotel rooms at vacation destinations, primarily in Southeast Asia. Based on the types of experiences travelers examine, Rizort then deploys AI to provide relevant and personalized recommendations for activities travelers can book in that location. Rizort, which partners with resorts to obtain VR content, raised USD 2.9 million in seed funding in May 2018.

[Learn more >](#)

# RIZORT

*Company leverages VR and AI to make itinerary recommendations*



## Asia Pacific



The location-specific offers Handy delivers, along with future VR experiences, make these smartphones a MAGIC POINT OF SALE.

Handy's specially-equipped smartphone is available to guests, for free, in 700,000 hotel rooms around the world (as of August 2018). The phone lets guests make calls for free, access and purchase hotel services (spa treatments, room service, etc.), book travel experiences, and control internet-enabled devices in the room. The Handy device is additionally capable of sending location-specific push messages to customers, to help hotels promote services in certain destinations and see content that is relevant to where they are. In Japan, Handy received investment from conglomerate (and Pepper robot creator) SoftBank in August 2018. Through the partnership, Handy plans to install VR headsets in rooms to let guests virtually tour hotel rooms and watch entertainment.

[Learn more >](#)

# HANDY

*Free hotel smartphone offers  
all-in-one guest experience*



## Asia Pacific



In its decision to install them in the women's restroom at the mall, Alibaba has extensively considered the context of the customer that encounters these mirrors.

February 2018 saw Alibaba partner with Chinese shopping malls InTime to launch an augmented reality restroom mirror. Via the mirror, women using the facilities can virtually test make-up looks and, if they like the products, can make purchases at an adjacent vending machine using a QR code link on their cellphone. The vending machine includes cosmetics brands such as Benefit, Lancôme and Shu Uemura.

[Watch the video >](#)

# ALIBABA

*AR restroom mirror sells beauty products*



## Europe/Mideast/Africa



This initiative considers customers' present context (when they are in their seats on the plane) and the needs they will have in the near future.

As of October 2017, Germany-based Lufthansa is piloting an in-flight grocery shopping service in partnership with supermarket REWE. Available on select long-haul routes, passengers can connect to on-board wifi to order groceries and choose a convenient time for their order to be delivered to their home address. Following the three-month pilot the service may be rolled out to other routes.

[Learn more >](#)

# LUFTHANSA

*Airline trials in-flight grocery delivery services*



## Latin America



These subway doors analyze different data points to cater to consumers individually.

April 2018 saw interactive platform doors installed on Line 4 of the São Paulo subway. The doors feature a sensor that can detect the number of passengers in front of them as well as detecting facial expressions to estimate a commuter's age, gender, and mood. Using this information, targeted personalized advertisements can be played to commuters. The doors are also used for public service announcements. Line 4 is privately operated by ViaQuatro, and the interactive doors were initially installed at Luz, Paulista, and Pinheiros stations.

[Learn more >](#)

# VIAQUATRO

*Interactive platform doors  
installed on subway system*



## Latin America



FAMILY FUN  
FOR ALL AGES

At the moment, this campaign feels more like a gimmick. But consumers are aware that companies are collecting a plethora of data on them. As a result, they'll increasingly expect brands to use even the tiniest instances of their behavior (like their eye movements) to accurately deduce who they are and their tastes.

April 2018 saw the launch of a video quiz to match site visitors to their ideal vacation property and location. Created by Mexican luxury resort brand Palace Resorts, Never Lift a Finger uses facial-recognition technology to track eye movements between two parallel on-screen videos. Users can also select their preferred videos manually.

[Learn more >](#)

## PALACE RESORTS

*Campaign uses eye-tracking to reveal perfect vacation destinations*



# Your response?

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## SEAMLESS SALES

Letting guests preview a hotel room in VR is certainly a memorable experience. So if you adopt immersive technologies, a la Kayak and Google, how can you ensure that the path to purchase is seamless? After all, there's no point in 'trying before you travel' if it makes booking a getaway more complicated.

## TRUE SELF

New technologies and new data – eye tracking, emotional recognition – mean you can deduce more about who your guests are and serve them accordingly. Can letting your guests book rooms this way provide them with an extra benefit (one they wouldn't receive by, say, booking through an app)? How about including a detailed, hyper-personalized itinerary?

## BE THE MAGICIAN

You've seen how brands are embracing non-traditional channels – ranging from subway doors to restroom mirrors – to reach customers. Try thinking beyond these examples. Put yourself in the shoes of your guest, and ask where they're most likely to be struck with a need that you can meet. Can you find a new MAGIC POINT OF SALE and get there before your competitors?



## **TREND SIX**

# NEW LABOR

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The proliferation of on-demand services, the cross-demographic appeal of the wantrepreneur lifestyle, and coworking are transforming expectations around work and travel.



# Why now?

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## UNTETHERED ECONOMY

The explosion in gig economy and freelancing platforms – UpWork, Uber, Fiverr – indicate that consumers are embracing modes of work that don't tie them down to a specific company, location, or even day-to-day schedule. Consumers are crafting their own narratives.

## ENTREPRENEURIA

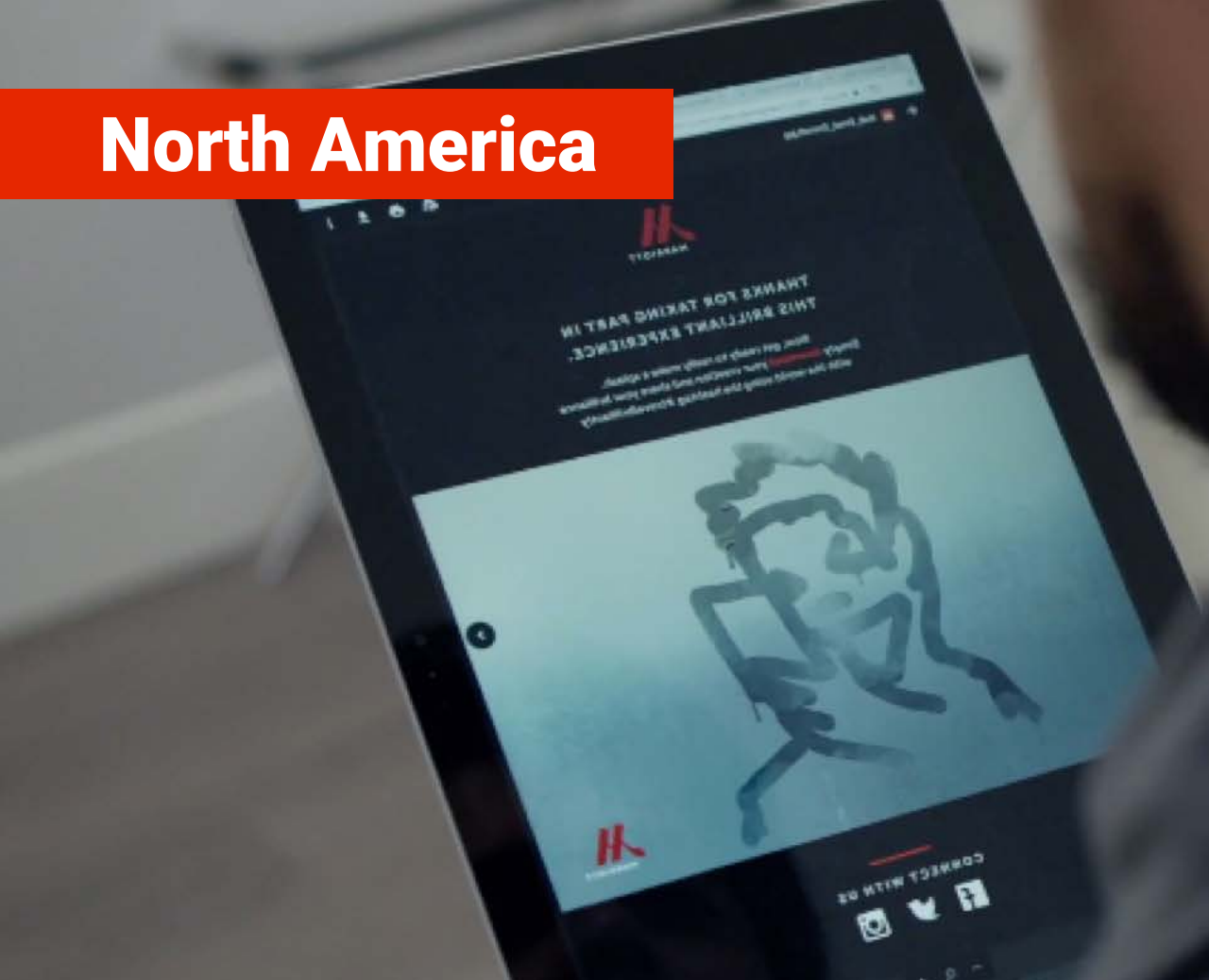
The global startup culture was primarily about ambitious digital innovators. Now, expectations created by this culture – self-dependence, blurred work/life boundaries – have spread far beyond that silo. Hence the explosion not only in coworking spaces, but locations that combine 'coworking' with 'coliving'.

## WORK + WANDERLUST

In June 2018, Hilton found that 53% of the workers they surveyed “love” to travel for their jobs, and actively seek opportunities to do so. But a growing cohort of professionals aren't just putting 'travel' on their wish lists. They're making it their main priority by becoming digital nomads. Case in point: Estonia just launched a visa specifically for digital nomads this year, which helps foreign workers easily gain temporary residency in Estonia and other European countries.



## North America



Marriott's concept not only helps boost business travelers' productivity, but simultaneously provides them with a one-of-a-kind experience.

In November 2017, Marriott Hotels offered guests shower doors which allowed their drawings on the glass surface to be emailed to them. Touch-sensitive technology built into the shower door captured guests' drawings, doodles or ideas traced in the steam. The experience was available for two months at Marriott Hotels Irvine, California, and was launched after brand research revealed that 51% of business travelers feel that their best ideas come while showering.

[Learn more >](#)

# MARRIOTT

*Shower door doodles  
emailed to hotel guests*



# 3x

*Freelance work is growing at triple the rate of the growth of the total workforce in the US.*

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**Kleiner Perkins,  
2018**



# 5.1 mil

*There are projected to be 5.1 million members of coworking spaces globally by 2022 (up from 1.74 million in 2017). China and India are expected to be the largest coworking markets by 2022.*

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GCUC,  
December 2017



## North America



In 2017, there were 4 million Airbnb listings – more rooms than the top five hotel chains, combined. WeWork, on the other hand, just received a USD 20 billion valuation. The fact that these two powerhouses have joined is a strong signal that travel and work are increasingly melding together.

In October 2017, Airbnb announced a collaboration with global shared work space company, WeWork. During the pilot, corporate customers renting a room via Airbnb could access the nearest WeWork office where they could enjoy desk space, wifi, printers and meeting rooms. The pilot ran in six global cities.

[Learn more >](#)

# AIRBNB & WEWORK

*Partnership provides business travelers with workspaces*



## Europe/Mideast/Africa



The demand for coworking spaces has only grown stronger. Now, consumers outside of urban centers expect access to them, too.

English coworking business MyCRO ('My Company's Rural Office') opened in May 2018, specializing in providing rural locations in the country with local co-working spaces. The company aims to cut commuting times and expenditure for local workers by providing a nearby working space, while also helping to tackle rural isolation and preserving employment space from growing residential development. Local retailers and services can also benefit from additional income that would otherwise be lost to neighboring towns that workers would normally commute to.

[Learn more >](#)

# MYCRO

*Coworking spaces launch  
in rural locations*





## Asia Pacific

The coworking/living spaces popping up demonstrate that, globally, the relationship between 'work' and 'life' has become more fluid.

January 2018 saw the launch of The Stay: co-living accommodation for young professionals and students. Offered by Indonesian co-working office space specialists, Freeware Spaces, The Stay is the first of three different co-living spaces to be offered by the company through 2018. The residences offer keyless access, and smart devices control bedrooms and kitchens, with prices starting from IDR 4 million (USD 300) per month.

[Learn more >](#)

# FREEWARE SPACES

*Office-space specialists launch  
shared living accommodation*



## Asia Pacific



Even an automaker has jumped into the NEW LABOR fray, while integrating their core offering – vehicles – into the complex.

As of December 2017, automaker MINI is constructing MINI Living: China's first 'co-living' complex, in an abandoned paint factory. Citing the brand's legacy of 'maximizing the experience available within a very small footprint', the complex will offer apartments, co-working offices and other leisure facilities. Residents will also be able to digitally access an array of other services including one-touch food delivery, shared vehicle access, and cleaning appointments.

[Learn more >](#)

# MINI

*Automaker develops co-living complex*



## Asia Pacific



Some insights from Morris Sim, head of Kafnu, about the development of this location: “We started by thinking about each 24-hour cycle of a person’s life, and we try to provide services for as much of that 24 hours as possible. We built this space to help our guests accelerate their ability to contribute something new, to innovate, to build a business.”

February 2018 saw entrepreneur and creative community Kafnu open its second location in Taipei. While Kafnu’s first coworking space was inside of a hotel it, it has now created a 12-story co-living/ co-working space. The capsule hotel-style Taipei location includes meeting rooms, a recording studio, a photo studio, and a green screen room. Memberships start at around USD 163 per month, and accommodation is also available for travelers.

[Learn more >](#)

# KAFNU

*Entrepreneur community  
opens co-living village/hotel*



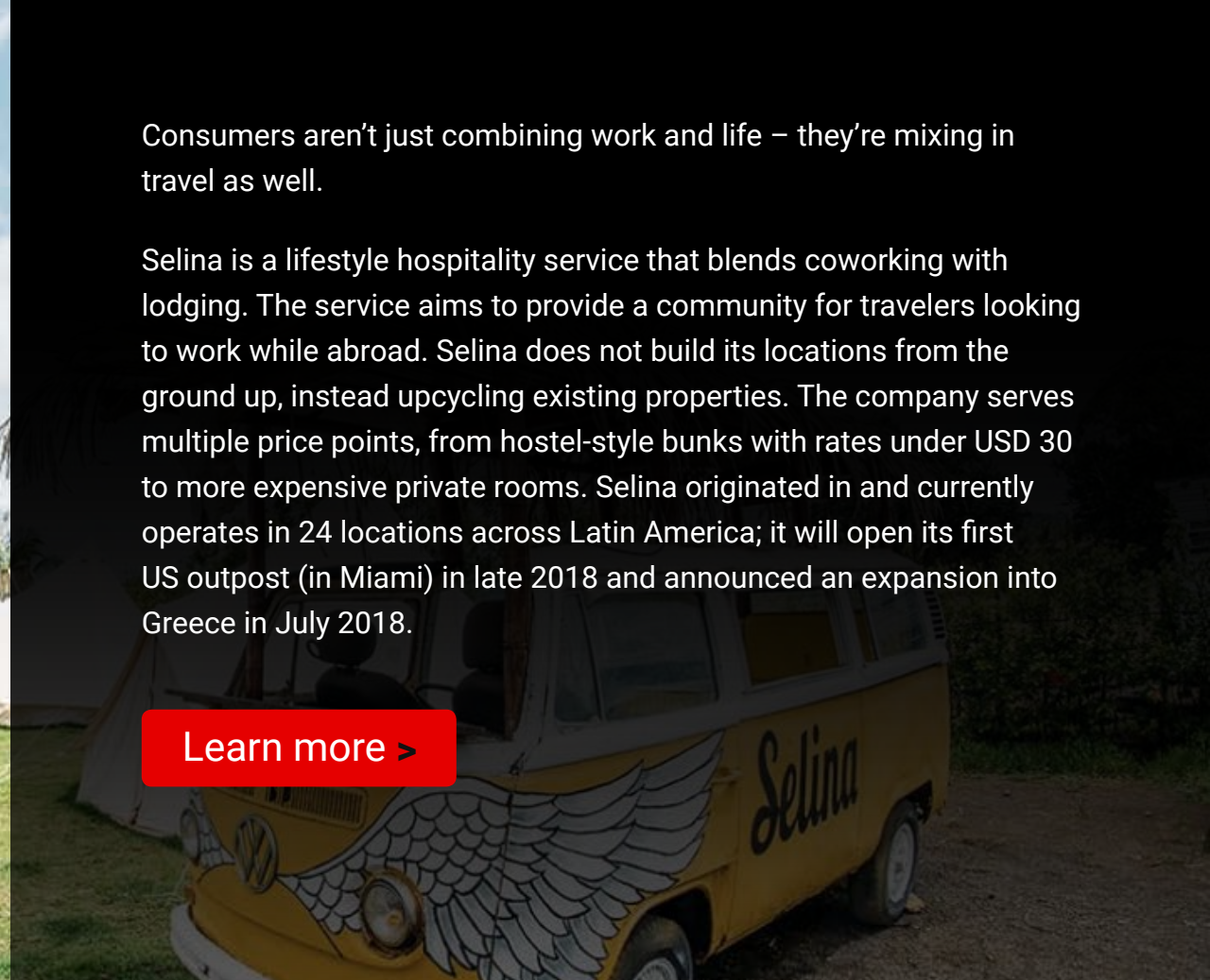
# Latin America



Consumers aren't just combining work and life – they're mixing in travel as well.

Selina is a lifestyle hospitality service that blends coworking with lodging. The service aims to provide a community for travelers looking to work while abroad. Selina does not build its locations from the ground up, instead upcycling existing properties. The company serves multiple price points, from hostel-style bunks with rates under USD 30 to more expensive private rooms. Selina originated in and currently operates in 24 locations across Latin America; it will open its first US outpost (in Miami) in late 2018 and announced an expansion into Greece in July 2018.

[Learn more >](#)



# SELINA

*Coworking/lodging community expands internationally*



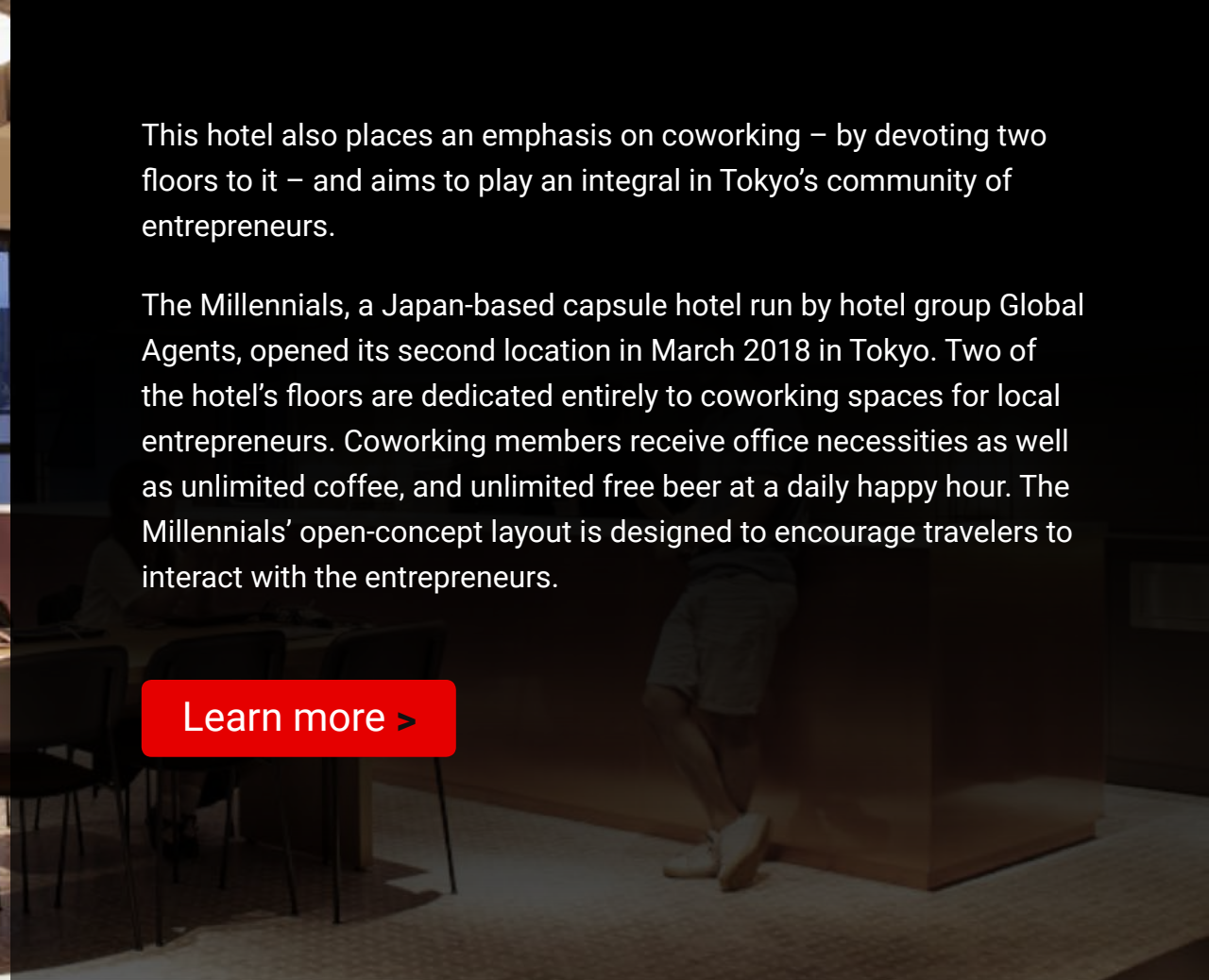
## Asia Pacific



This hotel also places an emphasis on coworking – by devoting two floors to it – and aims to play an integral in Tokyo’s community of entrepreneurs.

The Millennials, a Japan-based capsule hotel run by hotel group Global Agents, opened its second location in March 2018 in Tokyo. Two of the hotel’s floors are dedicated entirely to coworking spaces for local entrepreneurs. Coworking members receive office necessities as well as unlimited coffee, and unlimited free beer at a daily happy hour. The Millennials’ open-concept layout is designed to encourage travelers to interact with the entrepreneurs.

[Learn more >](#)



# THE MILLENNIALS

*Capsule hotel fosters  
community of entrepreneurs*



# 71%

*of female millennials surveyed in 70 countries said they would want to work abroad.*

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PwC,  
March 2016





## North America

An increasing number of consumers are willing to take the plunge to become full-fledged digital nomads, and adopt a remote lifestyle.

In Q1 2018, Behere launched its women-only rental platform tailored for employees seeking to work remotely while traveling. The membership service provides women with access to fully furnished apartments, co-working spaces, gym memberships, and local community managers who speak English. As of July 2018, Behere operates in cities across Europe and Asia. A one-time membership fee for Behere costs USD 990 and rents start at USD 1,400.

[Learn more >](#)

# BEHERE

*Full-service platform caters to female digital nomads*



# Your response?

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## CURATED COMMUNITIES

Take inspiration from how Behere targets female digital nomads. Can you build a community of another, perhaps more specific, group of digital nomads? How about, say, hosting groups of female advertising creatives, or software developers with a passion for social justice?

## TEAM BONDING

Dell, for one, stated that it aims to have half of all employees working remote by 2020. They're doing this not just to save money, but also to satisfy their employees' yearning for travel and flexibility. Can your hotel partner with a company that has similar goals? And while groups of employees are at your property, can you work with your partner to schedule special team events and outings for them – so they can still feel a part of the company's culture, even if they're thousands of miles away from the office?

## LOGISTICAL DREAM

Perhaps a full dive into the coworking/living movement isn't in the cards for your hotel at the moment. Is there something simpler you can offer to long-term foreign business travelers, to help them manage the many (often-complicated) logistics of their stay? **Take a look at how Zoku's rooms double as meeting spaces.** And consider the many basic, but highly necessary, services your guests may have trouble accessing when they're away from home. Could you have a mobile service like Lydian\* – a dental clinic in an RV – make a stop at your property?



# You've seen the trends. So now what?

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## Get in touch with us

Sabre Hospitality Solutions can help you cater to the evolving needs of guests and generate a more personalized experience. Below are a few of the solutions we offer to address the trends in this report.

### SynXis Booking Engine

AVOID HUMANS

VIRTUAL COMPANIONS

ASSISTED DEVELOPMENT

NEW LABOR

### SynXis Digital Experience

VIRTUAL COMPANIONS

ASSISTED DEVELOPMENT

MAGIC POINT OF SALE

### SynXis Guest Experience

AVOID HUMANS

VIRTUAL COMPANIONS

BREAKING BRICKS

NEW LABOR

### SynXis Property Hub

AVOID HUMANS



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