

Communications Business Solutions

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Adapting to the Needs of "Working Everywhere"

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There is also a demographic shift happening as Millennials enter businesses. In this respect, it is significant to note that this demographic group will represent 75% of the global workforce by 2025.

Page 2



Direct Marketing in Hotels You Have to Create Value!

Hotels love to do marketing in their rooms. It's not really to customers' taste. But for the hotel, a customer in a room is a "captive" audience. So they are then bombarded with promotional messages.

However, when we ask hotel managers, most of them believe that the future is clearly to be found on the digital side. This is mainly because flyers and other cards and promotional folders are bulky, expensive, not environmentally friendly and, ultimately, ineffective.

This type of new, digital marketing is proving to be less costly in the long run, once the initial cost of equipment has been covered. But the real question is to know whether customers want digital marketing... so to ask whether it will be more effective...

Page 9



You Have to Be Rich Not to Update Your Meeting Room!

A well-launched meeting that is well underway can suddenly be transformed into an unproductive meeting... just because the technology is slack or not up to scratch!

Page 4



Managing Workspaces... It Can Pay Off Big!

Given the current requirement for collaborative work, office appearances have changed to reflect this. However, meeting rooms are lagging behind.

Page 2



Choosing the Right Luggage Is Not So Straightforward

Page 12



New Challenges for Successful Meetings and Conventions

When a business decides to arrange a meeting or convention event, it has to take several crucial points into account, including of course the budget, quality control, audiovisual technique, data security and compliance with food requirements.

Page 8



Digital Signage and Its Usefulness in Hotels

Page 14



When digital signage replaces email

Page 15

Adapting to the Needs of “Working Everywhere”

The workforce is becoming more and more mobile. In Britain alone, two-thirds of employees work from home at least once a month.

There is also a demographic shift happening as Millennials enter businesses. In this respect, it is significant to note that this demographic group will represent 75% of the global workforce by 2025.

Flexibility leads to better productivity

This new generation of workers expects greater flexibility in the workplace, and this leads to significant cultural and technological challenges both for CEOs and for HR staff, for board members and for IT services. Branch offices and international representatives have never had such opportunities to work collaboratively and as such employers have to reassess their current way of working in order to facilitate the latest developments and increase employee productivity.

Research shows that young employees see their work as flexible and consider their way of working as a way to be more productive.

And it is true that technology makes it possible to work from anywhere. This has led to changes in the structure of workplaces with a rise in the number of huddle rooms, small dedicated spaces for impromptu meetings where staff

collaborates using audio and video conferencing to virtually meet their colleagues from anywhere in the world.

Less “straight-laced” and more multitasking

Studies targeting Millennials show that they feel particularly comfortable when they do audio or video conferencing from home. They are

highly adaptable and can easily participate in conferences outside the office.

Undoubtedly a question of habit, they are also much more at ease “multitasking” than their elders, which makes them naturally more productive.

In fact, they want to work effectively and are ready to do it less formally.

Another result is that although it is well known that there are cultural differences, there do not seem to be any major distinctions about the place of work – workplace flexibility is a “hot” topic throughout Europe.

In view of this, companies need to proactively develop their strategies in order to “stick” as close as possible to reality.

There are many benefits. Examples include increased productivity, improved staff satisfaction and reduced overhead costs.



Managing Workspaces... It Can Pay Off Big!

Given the current requirement for collaborative work, office appearances have changed to reflect this. However, meeting rooms are lagging behind.

In a sign that the very concept of work has changed, there are today very few “isolated” employees in companies. It’s the time of “collaborative clusters”.

“Smart” solutions

In the process, it is clear that fewer and fewer people have an office that can hold small meetings.

The “clusters” in question start by wandering to find a suitable room. As soon as they find one, they get ejected by the group that had already booked the room and arrived late.

The result of these contests is lost money and more waste. A study by the University of Minnesota reports that executives spend up to 50% of their time in meetings AND that 50% of this time is unproductive.

In addition, there is growing frustration – we learn that 88% of participants are hampered by technological problems that happen in the meeting rooms. In total, nearly three working days is wasted per year for each employee.

Eliminating this waste is therefore a priority. The workflow must be streamlined. So companies are starting to set up integrated systems to settle the problem of room management, with touch screen tablets. An interactive display panel lets employees book the room instantly.

These “up to date” solutions include the possibility of cancelling a reservation if no one shows up within 15 minutes after the stated meeting start time, to free up the room and allow a new reservation.

If technical problems are encountered, maintenance call buttons are available.

Using space more effectively

Improved meeting rooms must support the growing “virtualisation” of personal offices. They must become more interactive and reflect the way we work today. The use of technology to use meeting space more effectively is an essential part of the efforts to create rooms or renovations. Ultimately, efficiency is at stake... and therefore the company’s financial results.

There is also a need to make more efficient use of the available space for meetings. Thus, one of the world’s largest professional services companies has implemented a digital meeting system and carried out analyses to optimise the use of its offices worldwide. The question



was to find out how often the rooms were empty and how often staff worked in each office. The study found that the company was leasing more office space than necessary, which allowed it to adopt a more efficient system for management of space.

For example, in the company’s building at Times Square, the company was able to sublet three floors, which allowed it to save millions of dollars in rent each year.

Trends and Developments in the Workplace

The world of work is changing, since the economic, social and cultural factors are also changing. Here are several fields where specialists expect to find major changes.

Work spaces that facilitate interpersonal relations must continue to be promoted. For example, IBM, Apple and Google have found that when employees physically meet in spaces there is increased creativity.

Seeking increased interaction between colleagues

One study has even revealed increased productivity of 20% when employees converse together, and another emphasised that if an employee has a real friend at work, their job satisfaction is strengthened.

Research has found that Generation Z and the millennials prefer face-to-face conversations to the use of technology and company offices rather than remote working.

Although technology can make us more efficient and give the impression of being highly connected to each other, it will never replace face-to-face encounters.

In fact, business leaders who encourage personal relationships have employees who are more engaged, more satisfied and more productive.

Did you know that one “face-to-face” conversation is equivalent to 34 emails?

A strong trend emerges from these remarks – we are moving towards a decline in remote working and towards an increase in the use of telephone calls, video-conferencing and “face-to-face” meetings.

Training

It must be acknowledged that today’s skills lose relevance over time with the development of techniques and practices, and that nearly half of the daily tasks for which staff are paid are at high risk of being automated.

Companies will be investing in training and continuing education programs to overcome this phenomena. For example, IBM has calculated that 84% of employees in the most successful companies

receive the training they need, while only 16% of workers benefit in the least performing companies. Good training equates to a 10% increase in productivity.

The necessity to use new technologies is also insisted upon, obviously including audiovisual, to make training more effective.

Artificial intelligence

At the moment, this is only a bab-



bling that is sometimes incomprehensible to outsiders, but the subject seems to arouse excitement and fear at the same time.

It is said that in the near future nearly every new device or service will contain AI.

And it’s true that Google, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft, Apple and others are concentrating on creating more intelligent products using AI.

One study has even pointed out the Millennials consider that the next major technological trend will be in AI. We currently are already seeing “chatbots”, these “automatic responding robots”.

They should make it possible for companies to save a great deal on salary costs.

They are used as personal assistants, for customer support on demand, to streamline business pro-

cesses, to collect information on products and to answer questions from employees.

One example is Intel, who uses a chatbot to answer questions on salaries and employee benefits.

Personnel management

Today, “Big Data” permits quantifying the relationship between how companies treat job applications and consumer purchases.



According to a CareerBuilder study, 58% of people are less likely to purchase products from a company to which they have submitted an application, if they have not received an answer to their application.

It is also easily demonstrated that if a company fails to invest in training and upgrading programs, it will lose its best talents, which will lead to a loss of money and productivity.

Stress and training are also on the agenda for young workers who will find it harder to climb the ladder in their company, since the active population continues to age and increasingly retire later.

In the United States less than half of people reaching 65 years of age are retiring.

This situation also leads to higher costs for companies.



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You Have to Be Rich Not to Update Your Meeting Room!

A well-launched meeting that is well underway can suddenly be transformed into an unproductive meeting... just because the technology is slack or not up to scratch!

The situation is sometimes comical, like this: the presenter doesn't find the right cord to connect his laptop computer and has to call the IT service to resolve the problem, which loses everyone's attention...

The "Holy Grail" of the conference room

Sometimes, collaborators don't manage to connect with their own devices and in desperation fight over a tablet that they circulate to "share" the screen...

While everything could be as simple as this: the team arrives at the conference room, its different members connect their devices wirelessly, and everyone in the group goes to work without further ado, without worrying about cables, inputs and outputs and other unfathomable technical terms that are only used to explain the problems encountered. In addition to everything, imagine if the presenter could move freely in the room, then transfer control of the main screen to an assistant, with a single gesture! Finally, to press the point home, imagine if the remote participants were displayed in high resolution, giving the impression of being actually present in the room!

How much time do you want to lose?

All this is to ask the following question: how much time does a company have available to lose before investing in modern and efficient room technology?

Being aware that the investment required to achieve it is really affordable only adds to this strange situation.

Upgrading rooms still comes up against the fear of costs and the fears of having to deal with complicated procedures that disrupt the workflow. Don't forget that a conference room is the best place where the company's visitors, customers and strategic partners make their first impression of your company.

By creating a cleaner, more relaxing, more user-friendly and more flexible working environment, you will be better able to demonstrate who you are and the goals you are pursuing as a business. And that's even before beginning to amaze them with the ensuing professional and neat presentation.

When your heart is in your mouth...

Internally, many studies have proved that outdated technology causes



stress and has a real impact on the company's morale. The time taken for meetings is costly, and there is therefore lots of pressure for them to take place well within the allotted time.

So waiting for a maintenance technician in the middle of a presentation can make your heart rate skyrocket.

Then again, two-thirds of employees admit to using their own time outside work hours to look after the meeting room technology (especially relating to screen sharing and finding cables).

Losing time by fighting with obsolete technology, or preparing documents to be distributed or performing repetitive technical jobs

means losses of productivity.

This is especially true since it has been proven that productivity, creativity and collaboration are correlated with the presence of flexible environments that have plenty of natural light. "Happy" employees are spontaneously more creative, more productive and more inclined to collaborate.

You don't have to "tear down the walls"!

Another consideration must also guide you – old technology costs more and more as the years pass!

The more you indefinitely postpone the investment in better conference room technology, the more costly it becomes to keep older technology in good working order.

You have to buy new cables, increase memory and maybe even buy additional software that will still have to be integrated into the older conferencing material – and all this while this old technology is becoming less and less accessible from other devices!

In short, if you add up everything that you have to spend to keep an obsolete system running, adding the hours of lost productivity, you quickly realize that you could easily acquire a new presentation system with a good return on investment.

This is especially true since today, with the current technology, it is easier than ever to update a conference room, without spending a fortune, without having to tear down the walls, without having to set up complex networks and without losing weeks of work by your IT department.



User Experience in Videoconferencing Rooms

User experience? This is (or should be) the main focus of our concerns, in any field whatsoever.

Of course, user experience must also be the best possible in videoconferencing applications!

In huddle rooms

In huddle rooms – small rooms scattered throughout the company where impromptu meetings can be held with four to six people – there is obviously a need for communication tools. The technology must be as simple and intuitive as possible – you have to be able to sit down, connect your laptop and have the screen ready right away.

Most commonly a wireless connection will be required, to avoid the obvious problems of wires and to allow smartphones and tablets to function.

A wide-angle camera will be chosen, which can view all the participants at the same time. In huddle rooms, the basics are aimed for, and a more

sophisticated camera with zoom is not really necessary.

As for the layout, which is most often overlooked, it must be designed very pragmatically and take into account the need to have workspaces for the devices that will be used, and



also be strong, since it will undergo intensive use.

In conference rooms

For conference rooms, the flagships of businesses, it is important to ensure that they create an impression of importance to underline, first of all, that they host meetings comprised of top-level people.

The space will be occupied by furniture chosen for its visual impact and functionality where the integration of the audiovisual equipment must be perfect.

While the huddle room must be functional, simple and utilitarian, the conference room will be built to impress, even if only by its large format screens and excellent sound installation.

Simplicity of use is often not taken into consideration, given that a dedicated technical team is available at all times.

The main idea here is to achieve a seamless integration, which integrates perfectly with no hassle affecting the mechanics, something really possible when the audiovisual is designed as an

integral part of the room and not as an extra add-on.

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Videoconferencing Adapted to Huddle Rooms

There are practical solutions today for videoconferencing in the form of economical kits that include cameras and audio peripherals specially designed for small Huddle Room type meeting rooms.

The time for expensive videoconferencing is really past! In the old days, many videoconferencing players made a lot of easy money on a market that was captive at the time.

Complete solution or separate elements

All the recent analyses highlight a significant acceleration in favor of videoconferencing equipment in huddle rooms.

Suppliers, by creating new product lines specially designed for huddle rooms, are adapting to this new offer which guarantees them less profit per room but is compensated for by a much higher number of installations.

For the equipment, the usual trilogy needs to be tabled, being the camera, the screen and an audio system.

Some manufacturers offer complete solutions in the form of “all-in-one” sets, while others have separate elements.

Of course, it is usually a question of customization, since the rooms do not all have the same configuration and teams do not all have the same needs. Where requirements are “strict”, combinations (consisting of different equipment) allows sticking as close as possible to the specification.

Especially no webcams!

Don't panic, however. You should be aware that cameras are becoming more affordable and at the same time increasingly “smart”. They are distinguished by their ease of installation and use (USB “plug and play” technology, which has developed rapidly in recent years), and by their excellent quality. Finally, they are more re-



liable. In ten years, their price has been divided by ten, on average, and it is even possible to find an ultra HD high quality camera, which works with practically any collaboration platform, for around 1000 euros.

Note that it is really advisable not to turn to using webcams. These are mainly dedicated to desktops to video one or two persons and are not designed to properly cover a room.

Basically, it is not always necessary to remotely control the cameras, unless the meetings are very “dynamic” and there is a need to follow up. In any case, the movements can be programmed and a presetting decided on for the main speaker, another to view the notice board and a third for the overall view of the attendees. It's

only necessary to press a button to change the angle of view.

Audio is not the “spare wheel”!

It is nonetheless possible to go further with facial (and voice) recognition functions that allow some cameras to focus on the person with no other action required.

In total, the “camera experience” has become very user-friendly and significantly less intimidating than in the past.

Let us not forget that the goal sought is to achieve a situation where collaborators behave as naturally as possible, so we need to try at all costs to prevent them from feeling ill at ease.



For its part, audio must not become the “spare wheel”! Its choice must be integrated with that of the videoconferencing equipment. It must be reliable and of high quality, otherwise it will exhaust and frustrate the participants.

Sound bars are highly appreciated, especially because they allow the sound to be emitted at the same place as the image.

Regarding videoconferencing software, a powerful computer is not at all required.

Any laptop is sufficient for the task, but without using its tiny loudspeaker nor its integral camera, for the quality reasons raised above.

Personalizing Huddle Rooms

For a long time now, the huddle room concept has been very successful in companies that measure the interest in providing employees with small working rooms that allow quick working meetings.

As a result, suppliers of technical solutions have been driven to create specific products and services for huddle rooms. The question remains of what the ad hoc equipment needs to be.

Unfortunately, no magic catch-all “universal kit”!

But it would not be hard to imagine that there could be a sort of “universal kit” that would suit all huddle rooms! This is for a simple reason – a perfect huddle room must meet the specific needs of the teams that use it.

This is the opposite position to that for traditional meeting rooms. There, we “build” the room and then “train” the collaborators so they can use it, while for huddle rooms it’s the “work flow” that matters and for which from the beginning a space to host and assist is built.

Thus, if impromptu stand-up meetings take place, it will be quite different than if the collaborators work at a “round table”. Likewise, if the team needs to connect with remote persons and they have to work in a “virtual” space,

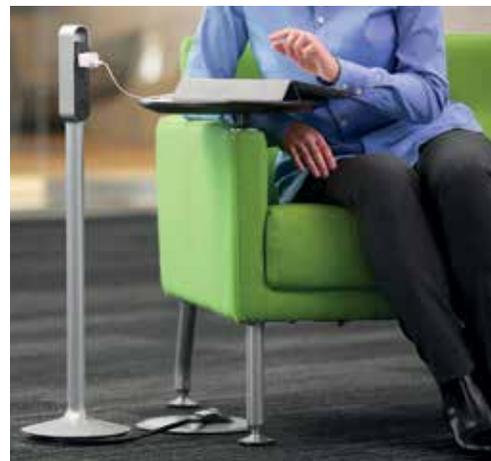
the ideal configuration will change compared to another team where all the participants are always physically present.

Of course, huddle rooms have common elements, but the value of each element present will depend on the team.

Aiming for the greatest user-friendliness possible!

Among the elements in common are chairs (comfortable!), Wi-Fi and electrical outlets for charging personal devices. While this is not always essential, remote collaboration must be planned for, with the necessity to allow “engaged” and “productive” communications, which means a videoconferencing system and, obviously, remote access for all the collaboration tools present in the room.

Don’t forget that users are placing more and more of their work files in the cloud and need fast internet as well as the possibility of instantaneously displaying their content on the screen so the whole team can work. All this means real ease of use, because the



technology present is often neglected or unused since it is too complicated or intimidating. The era has ended when it was necessary to have a technician to use the audiovisual “facilities”!

Thus it must be possible to start video meetings by pressing a single button and care should be taken to ensure that there is not a plethora of remote controls (ideally touch screens control everything).

The Digital Whiteboard in Business and its Challenges

Most whiteboards sold these days are interactive and have a number of unified communications and collaboration functions. Videoconferencing, screen sharing, digital annotations and wireless presentations are all part of the program.

It should be noted that there are very many of the old dry-erase whiteboards still existing in companies.

A question of psychological perception

However, a digital whiteboard allows for annotations both by participants and remote workers, and the work done is easily saved in the cloud. The meeting experience is far superior for both groups (those physically present and those remote).

Adoption of digital whiteboards is up slightly, according to a global study, rising from 17.6% last year to 19.6% this year. At the same time, more and more companies are planning to use digital whiteboards.

They are expected to see the highest increase between 2018 and 2019. Nevertheless, companies seem to be underusing the remote collaboration functions. Yet it is a real plus to offer remote participants video calls, viewing the content and allowing them to write annotations.

In the end, it’s a question of psychological perception, companies still imagining that

meetings are done in a physical location where the collaborators meet to collaborate. It’s time for this ancient concept to evolve along with the mentalities.

Do not “forage” among suppliers

When we analyze the typology of users, we note that medium-sized companies are those that mostly adopt digital whiteboards. 55% of

companies employing 250 to 2500 people are already using digital whiteboards. Mainly it is companies in publishing, media, health care, education, services and defense who use digital whiteboards the most.

As for an acceptable price, most companies are ready to pay between 500 and 1,000 euros for a digital whiteboard.

Another concern for business is that since all their meeting rooms do not (generally) have the same “management”, there can be inconsistencies, in that purchases are made by different people, on a case-by-case basis, so the type of whiteboard (characteristics and brands) varies from one meeting room to another.

Under these conditions, an employee can find it difficult to use a whiteboard that is different from the one he is accustomed to.

It is therefore recommended to only use a single supplier for the company, to ensure consistency in use.



New Challenges for Successful Meetings and Conventions

When a business decides to arrange a meeting or convention event, it has to take several crucial points into account, including of course the budget, quality control, audiovisual technique, data security and compliance with food requirements.

Some requirements, expectations and grievances...

Wi-Fi, audiovisual and electrical power supply under pressure

The presence of high speed Wi-Fi is critical in today's meetings.

There are smartphones, tablets, laptops that consume mega quantities like never-satisfied hungry gluttons.

Under these conditions, the Wi-Fi is under pressure and therefore... costs have to be controlled, which have a tendency to rocket away, provided the technical specifications are respected and everyone can have their data ration.

Another "hot" area is audiovisual reliability, which can be compromised by interference (they can reduce bandwidth to 25%!) when running wirelessly.

You must always know how to put yourself in the place of the participants... With a large number of communicating devices, they are

looking for power sources. The situation sometimes becomes pathetic, as the needs increase and the existing outlets are unable to accommodate the number of devices needing them. And these outlets flourish everywhere – not only in the rooms and meeting spaces, but also in the entrance lobbies, dining rooms, bars, lounges and even in the fitness rooms.

Food, service quality and data safety

As for the food, concerns are multiplying, faced with growing demand for "special" or even "exotic" dishes.

In addition to the needs for kosher, vegetarian or anti-cholesterol dishes, there are requests to eat "gluten-free", "lactose-free", halal and "all fish, no meat" dishes. This phenomenon, initially surprising, is related to the larger ethnic diversification of participants.

Another troublesome concern is when booking the same type of meeting, at the same hotel chain, but in two different cities, there are (sometimes) significant differences in the field

in the quality of the facilities, costs, services, and competence of the staff.

Data security is becoming a growing problem. It ranges from theft of mobile devices to cyber attacks.

It should be noted that the former case is more frequent than the latter, especially when participants, once put in confidence, begin to "take



their ease".

Hotel establishments and structures hosting conventions and conferences must face these challenges, and the organizers also have to take them into account before choosing a host structure. Indeed, these questions will be asked more and more pointedly.

A nice "Palace of Light" in Languages

The Palacio de Congressos is currently celebrating its 20th anniversary

The Palacio de Congressos is a state-of-the-art conference and exhibition center in the heart of Valencia, Spain. Also known as the Palace of Light, due to its glass-fronted façade and distinctive roof design, the Palacio regularly accommodates large-scale international conferences organized by multinationals, trade associations and government organizations. Most events gravitate around the main auditorium with room for up to 1,481 participants, as well as smaller auditoria with capacities for 467 and 270 people. If needed, an IP-based video and audio network can connect up to 2,250 participants across these separate conference rooms.



Given the international character of most of the conferences it hosts, simultaneous interpretation is essential at the Palacio. The building management sought a solution that would take this into account, along with the facility's existing architecture and infrastructure. Two of its three auditoria are equipped with fixed interpreter booths. Although the smallest auditorium and the conference center's ten smaller

meeting rooms do not include interpreter booths, simultaneous interpretation is also often required in these spaces. It was also important that the new conferencing system would not require any additional investment for wiring or cable connections. The DICENTIS Conference System from Bosch provided the perfect solution. Because the system is IP-based and Ethernet compatible, the existing IT infrastructure of the Palacio de Congressos could be used. The OMNEO* Interface allows transportation of the language channels via the IT network from the auditoria with fixed interpreter booths to the meeting areas that don't have these facilities. DICENTIS streams the language channels from the interpreter desks to the DICENTIS Conference devices in the main auditoria, and also to all the active conference devices in the Palacio's smaller meeting areas. The floor languages of the active conference devices, regardless of their location, are streamed back to the interpreter desks.



To serve the smaller meeting areas, the DICENTIS central equipment is installed in a small mobile rack for easy transportation and setup. Additionally, the DICENTIS Conference devices with channel selector can be transported from one room to another in specially made, high-quality, lightweight and sturdy cases for protection during transit. The mobile rack simply connects to the room's IT network plug to connect to the equipment in the various meeting rooms.

This smart, mobile DICENTIS solution meets the requirements of all the meetings held in the Palacio de Congressos. The capacity for simultaneous interpretation in all the meeting areas means 2,250 participants can be connected across all conference areas big and small.

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Direct Marketing in Hotels – You Have to Create Value!

Hotels love to do marketing in their rooms. It's not really to customers' taste. But for the hotel, a customer in a room is a "captive" audience. So they are then bombarded with promotional messages.

However, when we ask hotel managers, most of them believe that the future is clearly to be found on the digital side. This is mainly because flyers and other cards and promotional folders are bulky, expensive, not environmentally friendly and, ultimately, ineffective.

iPads that are never turned on!

This type of new, digital marketing is proving to be less costly in the long run, once the initial cost of equipment has been covered. But the real question is to know whether customers want digital marketing... so to ask whether it will be more effective...

It's important to only target people who have already given their approval! In fact, they are the real potential customers – they want to learn more.

It's really very easy to understand... Just because Mr. X is sleeping in a room in your hotel doesn't mean that he wants to learn about the dinner promotions in the establishment. This can be for various reasons – he may have already been in the restaurant and didn't like it, maybe he wants vegetatarian dishes and there aren't any, he could also eat out each night with friends and colleagues.

So it would be completely useless to overload this Mr. X with "spam"! There is currently a rampant fashion – in the rooms there are iPads that contain all the information and promotions that the establishment offers. But in this, one thing is often forgotten...

Many customers never turn them on, because they have their own devices loaded with their own apps. In reality, these customers know very well where to go to find the content that interests them.

You just have to... Create Value!

So you might be thinking that it's all over for marketing in the rooms. Actually, the answer is simple: you have to create value.

Sleeping and taking a bath (or shower) are the main reasons for staying at a hotel. Let's begin with this undeniable observation and, for hotels with a spa, we will imprint the name of the spa on soap, shampoo, shower gel and other items.



We know that some hotels prefer to put a well-known skin care brand for these commodities in the rooms, thinking that it will help create a perception of luxury. But this way of doing

things does nothing to promote your spa.

One step further is to offer a "spa bath kit" that could pay off, something nice and that values the customer.



In the process, by replacing a few products in the kit you could easily create another "good night kit". Teas, pillow spray, eye fresheners, etc.

This is another idea that can add value... and which can subtly promote your spa if it carries its name. The same principle applies for labelling water bottles provided in the room.

The future of Marketing in the hotel room is not simply a question of going digital. It's rather a question first of adding real value. Promotion is a secondary consideration which must be agreed to by the customer.



An IFA Trade Show... That Will Be Disconnected from Consumer Desires?

The IFA 2018, which will take place from August 31 to September 5 in Berlin, will unveil a veritable wave of connected devices, from 4k, 8k, OLED, QLED televisions to household products and other “well-being” products.

We attended the international press conference (from April 22 to 25) which was held in Rome and unveiled the strong points.

Christian Göke, the CEO of Messe Berlin, among others, said: “Major technological trends are the engine of innovation, with ever smaller components and being increasingly powerful, which in turn feed emerging technologies such as voice control and artificial intelligence.”

He hit the nail on the head!

But it was the presentation by Jürgen Boyny, world director of consumer electronics of GfK Retail and Technology, that we took special notice of, as it seemed to us to “speak the truth” and really “hit the nail on the head”.

Indeed, the ultimate soundbite was this: “it’s the consumer that counts, industry innovates to meet its needs. As soon as people can see and understand the value of an innovation in their lives, they are willing to pay for it.”

It is important to emphasize that new technologies are not purchased “for their own sake” or “because they exist on the market”.

We think the time is long past when consumers would buy a new TV (or a new SLR camera or a new fridge, etc.) just because a new model has just come out.

In our replacement market (where malfunctioning appliances are replaced), we only loosen our purse strings when a new product appeals to us and this appeal is through the PRACTICAL interest of the proposed features.

The “vein” is exploited rather than really innovating

We are far from innovation, rather in the extension of goods acquired. Take the field of television. It is busily going through all the stages that cameras have gone through, namely that they want to sell us more and more pixels... HD, UHD, OLED, QLED, 4K, 8K, it’s the K race, just like it was for megapixels. We have “found the vein” and offer a range...

However, the vast majority of consumers are quite satisfied with their HD images. To get the epitome of a 4K image it is necessary to use giant screens, but it is illusory to want to get into consumers’ living rooms with limited dimensions.

In addition, there are no 4K TV programs – you



Christian Göke



Jürgen Boyny

have to go through external suppliers or download movies in the correct format.

However, 4K can be justified for professional uses in meeting rooms with large screens and using images or films specially shot in this format.

Note that the statistics will soon be reporting on the so-called “breakthrough” of 4K TV sales... But this will only be normal, given that there will be no more alternatives and that, de facto, all TVs purchased will necessarily be 4K. This will in no way reflect consumers’ REAL choice.

The important thing is USEFULNESS

Real innovation goes with the “WOW effect”. This is the launch pad for all successful products: the VCR (at the time), audio player (ditto), compact disk, laptop, smartphone, iPhone, tablet, iPad – all these products meant a real revolution for consumers – they literally changed their lives... and they rushed to get them. Just like the flat-screen concept at the time, which pushed most consumers to leave behind their large and heavy tube TV.

It is rightly said that the important thing in a

communication is the content. Here, in the field of consumer electronics, it’s the utility of the “new” product.

More power, more or fewer settings, more pixels, “blacker black than black” – these hollow slogans no longer fly!

Today we are bombarded about artificial intelligence which, as promising as it is, is only in its



infancy...

Please, let’s wait until it bears its first real fruit!

The consumer is not as gullible as you might think.

Present but poorly presented!

Another “oddity” that arises and which, however, is costly to the shops and irritates the consumer is the absurd spread of accessories.

Very often the consumer is searching for a cable, adapter or extension and leaves empty-handed and dissatisfied...

Yet these items are there, but ... poorly presented, far from the area where the device they belong to are found.

The result? Not seen, not picked up, not sold...

It would be quite easy to group a product’s accessories under the product... Both for printers and TVs as well as for tablets and other smartphones!

Why make it easy when it can be made complex in some way!



The three Cs communication, creativity and collaboration at IMEX

Creativity and experiences in the meetings and events sector took a great step forward at IMEX in Frankfurt taking place 15-17 May 2018

From new events at EduMonday to the spectacular and sensational Learning Labs and Live Zone there were major new initiatives and experiences throughout the show, extending the borders of the industry into new areas. In addition, new activities around legacy focused minds on the impact of the industry on the future.

The result was what IMEX Group Chairman Ray Bloom described as “the most creative and spectac-

ular IMEX yet, generating vitality and energy throughout the show.”



with Best of Events, memo-media and Zeus. The Zeus Co-Working Campus, in cooperation with Design Offices, created a meeting and lecture area with a packed programme of sessions on digital trends and developments in the MICE industry, the workplace needs of generation Y and Z, current and future technology challenges in the areas of technology and diversity and gender equality.

Innovation and creativity were the

ular IMEX yet, generating vitality and energy throughout the show.”

“The imagination and vibrancy of the stand designs are highly impressive, so too the thought and effort that has gone into them.

They represent substantial investment that gives a strong indication of the industry’s confidence and resilience.”

Eye-catching and sensational innovations

The eye-catching and sensational innovations in Hall 9 including the SkyLab - the chance to experience a meeting in mid-air - and In the Dark Lab made a tremendous impact on visitors. The Labs were brought to the show by the IMEX Group’s new partner, a Canadian Company leading business events specialists.

The Live Zone which showcased live entertainment acts and activities, and the new Co-working Campus by Zeus Event Tech are also the results of new partnerships

focus of many education sessions taking place in the Inspiration Hub. The three Cs – communication, creativity and collaboration – were explored by experiential music agency, Song Division.

Applying creative thinking to creating a legacy was explored in “Re-defining leadership success with an innovation mindset”.

Visitors learnt from practical group exercises how to channel a positive and open mindset and put the focus on collaboration not competition – “ we need to value team effort not just the individual” explained the speaker Aurélie Ferron from Sustained Impact “ Innovation doesn’t mean starting from scratch” and urged visitors to gather the views of others and build on existing ideas.

Carine Bauer, CEO of the Imex Group, explained: “We know that fresh ideas rarely appear from thin air – the right conditions needs to be created for inspiration to strike. Whether it’s being elevated into mid-air, plunged into darkness or



playing a giant piano, we hope that visitors will come away with creative tools to apply to their own events at the same time as having a little fun”.

The new initiatives started on EduMonday with three successful new events - Rising Talent for young professionals, She Means Business and the Agency Directors Forum. Along with the PCMA



Business School, Exclusively Corporate and Association Day, these events provided more tailored content for more specific groups than ever.

Google, LinkedIn and EY among keynote speakers

At Exclusively Corporate, over 100 senior corporate from companies such as Siemens, PwC, IKEA, L’Oreal, Hyundai and Bayer came together to hear keynote speakers from Google, LinkedIn, EY and C2 and to exchange insights with their peers.

Ray Bloom summed up saying; “The creative and experiential element of the show has gone so much further than we would have imagined a year ago.

“The new ideas, creativity, new experiences and events combined with all the business that has been done have made this a remarkable week for IMEX and this industry.”



Choosing the Right Luggage Is Not So Straightforward

Business travel, vacations, conferences and conventions abroad have one thing in common – they require the use of luggage!

And... all luggage is not created equal – the right luggage will help you travel more easily and without stress...

Beware of overloading and clutter

The wrong type of luggage can be a source of many problems.

There are myriads of luggage on the market and the temptation is high to make a quick choice that “seems” to suit. But be careful – the right luggage must match the length of the journey and therefore the pieces of clothing and items to be taken. If the luggage is too small it risks being quickly overloaded, while if it is too large it is too cumbersome for the circumstances.

Hence the interest in having several types of luggage that you can choose from when the time comes. If you do not have any luggage, it’s a simple matter of basing it on the type of trip you do most often.

Any luggage purchased should have a guarantee covering a reasonable period of time to allow for a repair to be covered, if necessary. Read the reviews of customers about the luggage you are considering. There are websites where you can easily read the experiences of other users (such as Amazon). But also be aware of the facts – reviews (both positive and negative) are often made by “extremist” users.

Really useful luggage should be lightweight

The location where the luggage was manufactured often gives some interesting indications. It is known that certain countries manufacture quality products “flawlessly”, while others are best known for their ability to make copies at low prices... and therefore often with lower strength.

The presence or absence of little details can



also raise red flags. You have to search and dig a little and here you are the sole judge! Really useful luggage should be lightweight. If the empty weight is higher, you will have to carry fewer items and clothes, given the weight

restrictions in force by airlines. This is where you can appreciate the benefits of travel bags, which are intelligently replacing suitcases, when conditions allow (traveling with the minimum).

Once the airline’s maximum weight is reached, the luggage has to move easily and therefore have sturdy handles and wheels, to be moved without effort.

Flexible or hard shell?

The size of the luggage also needs to be taken into account, since it is essential to comply with the airline’s instructions (to be checked). It is recommended to have reduced size luggage which can be comfortably enlarged.

Regarding flexible luggage... Leather is flexible, not very heavy and can last for many years. Its handicap is... its price... and also that it is prone to scrapes and scratches as well as stains.

Nylon is tough and sturdy and also rarely tears. For “hard shell” luggage, the choice is usually made between metal and hard plastic. Plastic is more economical, but it can crack. Metal, meanwhile, is preferred for transport of expensive equipment (photography equipment, computers).

Luggage quality can be gaged very well by analyzing its seams. Give preference to luggage with doubled or reinforced seams.

Zippers should be examined. They must be flat and easy to open and close. The same applies to locks and other closures.

Luggage should allow personalization – don’t hesitate if your tastes let you choose original colors, which stand out from the general mass. You will then be able to recognize your suitcases at a glance.

Finally comes the question of price, although



many people see it, wrongly, as their first criteria.

The price can be justified largely on the useful life and the style of the luggage.

A cheap suitcase will appear cheaper at the initial purchase, but it will have to be replaced frequently and in the end this choice will become more expensive than buying quality at the first purchase.



Don't forget that the price often reflects the quality.

High-tech marvels

And then we could not resist the pleasure of extracting some original creations, useful and sometimes high-tech.

There is on the market, a backpack for hikers, whose originality is in including a fold-up seat and an aluminum frame to support the back. It is preferably intended for hikers and will work wonders on a beach or in the forest.

Another invention that is more "business" oriented this time is a trolley that includes a small hidden box in which documents can be easily stored.

And then there is also the suitcase connected to a smartphone, which instantly sends a notification if the baggage moves away from you. If

someone tries to open it, the same thing happens, the phone will warn you.

Hyper high-tech as well, there is a wheeled suitcase that... will follow you as you walk! It avoids obstacles with its "embedded intelligence". It can "hurry along" at about 8 km/h and its sensor finds the best route to closely follow its "master"!

The application lets you lock, unlock, switch to "flight" mode, check the battery condition, the weather and the GPS location. A laptop can be housed in a special pocket, as well as small electronic devices.



And then, taken good note of as well, we find the "weighing handle" that instantly shows the total weight.

The system works up to 25 kg. It adapts to any suitcase and its purpose, obviously, is to stay within the rules set by airlines and avoid having to pay extra for excess weight.



Hyped Advertising Has Less and Less of an Impact!

A study has recently shown that prospective purchasers of SLR cameras (and the same is true for buyers of all kinds of home electronics and appliances) research the independent media about the experience of users of the desired equipment and not about the features and other descriptions issued by the brand.

The question that comes immediately to mind is this: was it really necessary to conduct a study to find out?

We are redefining and reinventing everything!

And this way of working spreads not only just in the field of photography but also to the buyers of all home electronics and appliances.

The value of experience in "real life" brings much more valuable content than marketing speeches!

TV vendors redefine the colors and black with each new model. Photo sellers reinvent the photograph when any new device is released. In the washing machine corner we wash whiter than white and the new "smart" ovens thaw fish while preserving the surrounding ice.

This sales pitch is perceived... for what it is, namely as a very hyped-up speech, even outrageous,

which as a result is sorely lacking in credibility. So it's not surprising that the consumer goes back to the real testimonials and tests in situations that he ultimately can believe.

The moon presented as green cheese

We saw, a long time ago, the same scenario in the hi-fi field, which was then in full swing.

A new amp was released with several additional buttons, "to set the rendering to the most ac-

curate".

The next year, the same device appeared with a smooth face, with no potentiometer except the volume control, "to enjoy a truly pure sound, free from any adjustments that could corrupt the rendering".

They want to sell us images with 20 or even 50 megapixels (but for what purpose, other than to bloat the hard disks), they want to sell us 4K, and soon 8K (although no 4K broadcast currently exists on TV), and they forget that the unthawed ice still needs to turn into water so we can remove it!

These moons that are presented to us as green cheese thankfully don't last long - the consumer is not the idiot imagined by advertising campaigns.

And that's where social media wisely finds its place - circulating information and tracking what is properly called "fake news".

Fortunately, these exaggerated gesticulations are having less and less of a grip on us!



Digital Signage and Its Usefulness in Hotels

Wherever we go in our daily lives, most of the messages we encounter are transmitted by digital signage, which is therefore having an increasingly significant role.

The same goes for the hotel industry, where dynamic signage is increasingly an integral part of the hotel experience. The basic idea is to “converse” with customers through all kinds of digital signage systems.

From the entrance lobby

Thus, right from the entrance lobby digital signage can accomplish a variety of tasks. This is the area where visitors stay the longest. This means longer video content or TV programs interspersed with local information. Video walls deployed there can generate a “Wow effect” and impress customers by creating a high-tech atmosphere.

They can obviously be used to inform customers about the various offers the hotel has and to promote local restaurants and shops. The various means of traveling and navigating in the hotel and city can also be displayed.

Visitors can see all this information without depending on hotel staff who are therefore freed from this type of repetitive task and can tend to other occupations.

For businessmen

Of course, when the visitors are businessmen attending a convention, their main concern is to know where to find the conference center. Digital signage can easily provide this information,

the prerogative of the latest generation of devices (among others, dissemination of specialized information in the customer’s own language), which makes it possible not to have to change the “TV inventory”.

TV functionality naturally includes TV programs, movies and a connection with visitors’ mobile devices.

They can serve as a portal to order room services, find information on the hotel’s services and on points of interest in the area. They also provide a way to pay the bill and arrange transport to the airport or train station.

Integrated fitness rooms

Many hotels have a sports room to meet the desire of an increasingly health conscious clientele.

Fitness centers now include high-end equipment, complemented by video walls (or by televisions) that broadcast entertainment and information.

Audio headsets let customers listen to their



to the form (which must always be excellent and high level) and will only pay attention to information that seems relevant to them... and achievable.

When creating content fundamental questions must be asked such as “who watches the screens”, “how long do they watch for” and “where are the screens located”.

The answers provide information on how to design and create the information.

Additional income

Social media is now an integral part of our lives and their integration into digital signage systems is considered a simple matter of logic.

Thus, establishments that host conferences can display the Twitter feed of the conference in question. Of course, the content has to go through filters to ensure that only appropriate content will be displayed.

Young people and the “technophile generations” attach great importance to social media. Digital signage can also bring revenue to hotels by opening its screens to messages issued by external announcers who want to reach hotel customers to promote their products and services.

This is an excellent opportunity for local restaurants and merchants to make themselves known. It is even possible to broadcast QR codes that customers can scan to take advantage of a mobile coupon providing a discount or to receive additional information on the smartphone.



which is critical in large areas or when it is necessary to follow a route that requires detailed explanations. During conferences, the room numbers or event names can change several times a day, and digital signage will instantly and reliably report them. The visual aspect and colors can be played with to differentiate events.

This type of information can even be “personalized” and then be transmitted to each convention participant on his mobile phone or iPad.

Smart TVs in the rooms

In the room... First of all, 98% of a hotel’s customers watch television (averaging three hours a day). The TVs there are ultramodern and enable communicating with the customers. For somewhat older models, there are decoders that add functionalities that are otherwise only

favorite content without disturbing others and “solo” areas are created here and there, letting you train for a few minutes rather than attending 30 or 45 minute long courses.

With digital signage, success ALWAYS depends on the content. Customers only attach superficial importance



When digital signage replaces email

As you well know, we sometimes inadvertently filter out some important emails. A US study found that an “average” employee (American, yet!) sends and receives some 120 emails every day.

In such a dense batch, it is no wonder that some emails go unnoticed. A quite practical solution is to use Digital Signage. Digital communication can, in effect, stimulate the exchange of data by offering convenience, interactivity and culture.

We put the system... in the cafeteria?

Digital signage, if it is well designed, can deliver clear and concise messages. For example, a company can post its display in the cafeteria, in view of everyone who frequents it.

This Digital Signage then disseminates information including, for example, a reminder of the rules or regulations that are to be respected in the workplace.

We are far from the situation of emails that get overlooked – here the staff is open and available, and if the messages are designed intelligently, they will be perceived and often appropriated.

Interactivity and bidirectional communication are also part of the game.

The main message may be a call for suggestions (to increase productivity or to improve procedures, for example), and these could be displayed on the Digital Signage system, once they have been received and processed.

Leaving behind “one-way communications”!

It is extremely important to open Digital Sig-

nage to interactivity, since it leads to motivating staff to take an interest in the messages broadcast, since they know that they will understand the reactions that will back up from the base. So we are a long way from “one-way communication” that drones in its corner and is quickly considered uninteresting as the “voice of the boss”.

Digital Signage is also a vector for integration of the company’s culture. This observation is ultimately based on the preceding considerations – once the message is “enriched” by feedback from the grassroots, it becomes a “common part” and therefore is an important aspect of the corporate culture.

Thus any rule or law can be illustrated by specific cases, which can be amusing or relaxing and, ultimately, much better appropriated since connected to real-life situations.

The result is that staff can be engaged more deeply than by a simple statement of the rules to be respected.



Digital Signage Takes Off in Airports!

Airports are always seeking to improve travelers’ experience. It’s a question of delivering effective messages and information in real time, and also offering personalized services.

The “digital revolution” today enables them to have many improvements compared to the past.

Entertainment is the order of the day

Between queues for checking in, luggage, customs and boarding, travelers spend most of their time waiting.

Under these conditions, thanks to digital displays, the perceived waiting time can be reduced by continuous broadcasting of news, sports and weather bulletins that entertain and distract.

Digital Signage is also used to create real “digital frescoes”, real “works of art” that create pleasing environments.

These are giant screens that are integrated together and project picturesque scenes, animations or other fluid geometric shapes. Their dimensions can reach 70 meters by 5 meters! Imagine the impact!

Information... and security

Of course, information is not left out! The route we follow at the airport will be designed to be the least stressful and the least frustrating.

Digital signage can provide clear information that makes it easy to find the desired destinations, including the boarding gate number or... the best cup of coffee or the toilets. Signage is a priority in traffic management and lets the airport gain efficiency.

It emphasizes the interest of interactive kiosks that, for example, support the distribution of

information aimed at more easily reaching the desired destinations and that release employees from this type of routine task.

Digital Signage is also involved in dissemination of security messages. In the event of an emergency, the centralized system can send critical messages to all digital screens at once, making the entire airport more responsive to any unforeseen situation and reassuring travelers by the immediacy of their display.

A boon for promoting products and services

Let’s add, of course, that digital displays can also be put to use for promoting brands and products for which the airport is also a great advertising opportunity!

Don’t forget that passenger traffic is intense, that there is a lot of waiting time (and hence exposure to messages) and that this situation leads to high availability of travelers to make impulse purchases.

Using Digital Signage in this way can increase the revenue of duty-free shops, restaurants and bars, simply by providing information about current promotional offers.



Making “machines” communicate intelligently

We often hear about “dynamic creation”. Ultimately, it corresponds to “personalized content”.

Here, the content of an advertisement is adapted to the active audience. Today it is possible, through the increase of data sources and software developments, to deliver the right message to the right audience, at the right time and via the best media.

Personalization of content

Initially, content personalization was used for dynamic signage advertising.

Local data was used in real time, such as the time and day, the weather and news clips, to build, optimize and broadcast advertisements that take into account the environment, the audience, etc.

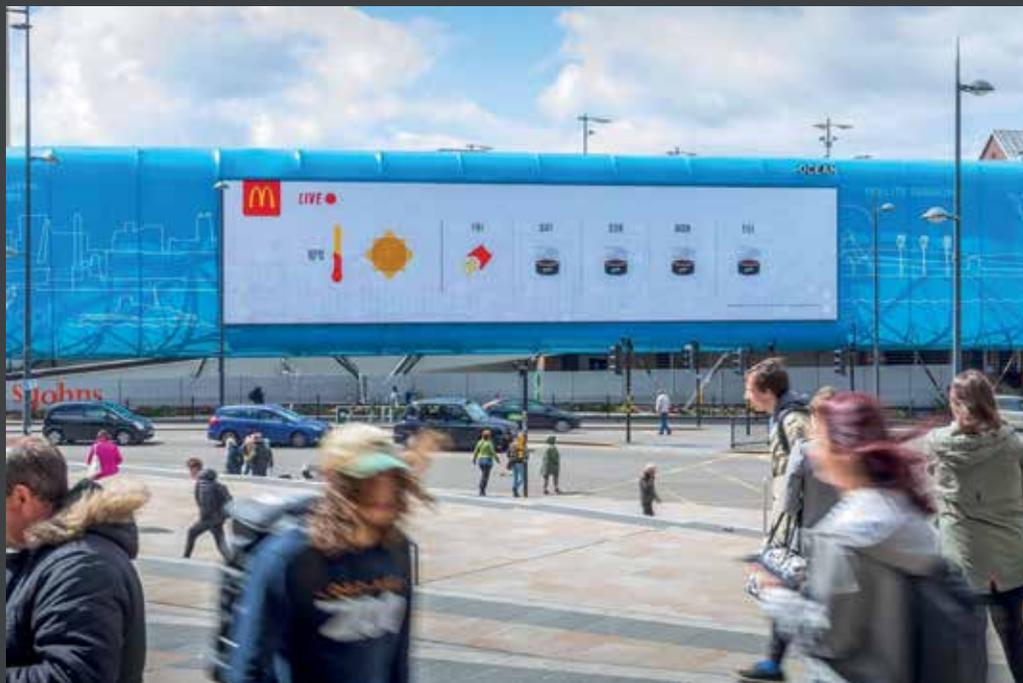
Consumers are in any case used to receiving personalized advertisements online and increasingly expect that digital signage will also be connected, smart and responsive.

Digital signage here is in the field of “one to many” and not in the world of “one to one”, which avoids the pitfalls of personalization that is too “invasive”.

Whether in relation to a specific place, about a recent arrival in an airport or regarding recent weather changes, dynamic creation can deliver live content that is really relevant to viewers, even achieving the “Wow effect”.

Helping machines to learn more

To “help the machines” learn more (one of the principles of artificial intelligence), advertisers must know which version of the advertisement has been broadcast, when and where, so that



future campaigns are as effective as possible. A situation is reached where everything can be summed up as, “data-driven, human-created, machine-delivered”.

Agencies and clients must be determined and somewhat courageous to spearhead this new way of working.

But with the huge quantities of data now available it is possible to eliminate the hesitations in decision-making and adopt a more confirmed approach to advertising content.

There are well-known pioneers. McDonald's

has therefore refined its messages, promoting iced coffees when the sun is shining, and enticing commuters stuck in traffic jams to head to their nearest restaurant.

On the other hand, the eBay online auction site also promotes products and offers based on hyper-local real-time weather conditions.

Becoming relevant and convincing

As for Audi, it has led a campaign on the road to promote its smart technology.

Using data on traffic, time and weather conditions, it emphasizes its technological characteristics that are the most suitable for the “live” conditions, such as the “Pre-Sense” safety function in heavy traffic or all-wheel drive technology during adverse weather conditions.

Digital signage campaigns are becoming relevant, convincing and aligned with the mindsets of consumers by exploiting the context effect.

But we are only just beginning the adventure, and brands and agencies will collaborate and make sure to amplify and improve the phenomenon. New work teams will be launched, the use of data flows will improve more to give the impression that the “machines” are becoming more and more “smart”.

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