

Communications Business Solutions

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But what is a "good office"?

We know the tune: we meet in an office or in a conference room and... spend the first fifteen minutes sorting out the technology to make sure it is working properly.
"Good office, good business" ... certainly, but what exactly is a "good office"?

Page 2



Noise overload in offices

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Yet it feels like you can get used to it more, which makes these nuisances all the more pernicious.

The consequences are always the same: headache, inattention, difficulty concentrating, tinnitus, disturbed and disturbing work.

It is clear, as a corollary, that efficiency and creativity are reduced, which is also a handicap for the company.



"How dry erase paint changes the way people think and work"

In a rapid changing working environment employees not only need to have the space, but also the tools to give room to ideas. The rise of the digital era we live in, offers us many ways to translate ideas and make them visual in a way, but they do not automatically give room to ideas.

Page 7



Meetings, Conferences: It is all about preparing Spaces for Efficiency

Everyone is talking about how work concepts are changing and how the efficient offices of the future will have to be flexible and diverse. When we talk about flexibility concerning future offices we are not only talking about flexible working hours and mobile workspaces!

Page 8



Hotels: digital displays and kiosks... intelligence is working!

Page 16



Let's create collaboration!

Knowing how to foster collaboration is not an innate skill for managers. Yet that's what promotes new ideas and ultimately profit for companies.

Is unleashing creativity and making teamwork productive and cheerful an illusion? In fact, it's an essential ingredient for today's companies that want to move ahead.

Page 3



E-commerce and bricks-and-mortar stores have the same fight... technology!

Page 14



Powerful tools to build customer loyalty

Page 15

But what is a "good office"?

We know the tune: we meet in an office or in a conference room and... spend the first fifteen minutes sorting out the technology to make sure it is working properly.

Good office, good business ... certainly, but what exactly is a "good office"? Orgatec 2018 has made it possible to see a little more clearly, among others in its "Inspired Collaborations" space.

"Transparent" and user-friendly technology

For the team that is behind this space, it is clear that a good office should foster dialog, a good atmosphere and that it needs technology that is suited to the world of work, becoming more flexible.

Communication and creativity must prevail and, in this perspective, an excess of devices, cables and remotes disrupts – in technology, we can really say that "less is more". Technology should be seen as a simple tool, a tool that needs to be intuitive, that has to be discreetly integrated into the overall concept and that helps, of course, to communicate in ordinary and everyday tasks, as well as for audio-videoconferences and presenta-

tions.

You have to reach the stage where nobody has to deal with the technical details.

Finding the best room for a type of activity

Moreover, today's technologies can assess how often rooms are used, how many people are there and how they are used.



Millennials at the helm!

The Millennial generation is more and more frequently taking control: 35% of employees are in this age group; they are the majority in the American workforce.

Millennials are busy transforming the work culture as baby boomers retire. It's time for companies to get organized.

An important asset for well-being

Depending on your personal experience and the perception you have of this generation, this situation may be of some concern. But this generation, known for its idealism, is perhaps an important asset for the "well-being" of employees.

Millennials are boosters for the company – they push it to evolve. They have a greater cultural awareness and have helped to advance the concept of the ideal working environment.

Let's take a look at what they want...

Millennials want a flexible schedule and the ability to work remotely, from anywhere, and for the company to respect the balance between work and their personal lives. The good news here is that flexibility is proven to reduce work stress, improve mental well-being and encourage productivity.

They also aspire to integrate into the community where they work and the sense of belonging is of great value to them. Another item of good news is that the lack of social ties is more dam-

aging to health than... obesity, smoking and high blood pressure! That's heavy stuff!

They want a corporate culture that drives them to improve themselves: in fact, 80% of them believe that personal growth is the most important concept in corporate culture. Psychology is of this opinion: "It is a basic need, to acquire confidence and a sense of self-sufficiency. In addition, it's a means of communication with others" (Vanessa King, expert in positive psychology).

Avenues for communicating with Millennials

So how do you communicate with the Millennials? It is sure that they are seeking different proposals than those of preceding generations. Before, we concentrated on the salary, while today the Millennials examine the whole remuneration and take into account their personal feeling with respect to the company and its culture.

They seek flexible work formulas and options for continuing education and personal development. They want to know the values of a company and whether or not they agree with them.



Some avenues to get in touch...

Create an environment that welcomes and takes into account employees' ideas, rather than telling them how to do things. Help to establish social links, encourage the use of space for collaboration, well-being and social activities.

Offer opportunities for learning and development, including training managers on the important role they play in an employee's well-being and experience.

Last but not least, insist on the importance of expressing gratitude to colleagues.

Let's create collaboration!

Knowing how to foster collaboration is not an innate skill for managers. Yet that's what promotes new ideas and ultimately profit for companies.

s unleashing creativity and making teamwork productive and cheerful an illusion? In fact, it's an essential ingredient for today's companies that want to move ahead.

Is information shared between departments?

There is some advice that can be drawn from it... To be used or ignored, of course.

First of all, it involves analyzing the operation of the company's different departments. Are they inclined to share information with each other, or do they jealously guard it? If they have a retention policy, there is a (very) good chance that your company experiences power struggles and a lack of productivity. Retention of information is also synonymous with a low level of productive company culture.

Collaboration, in fact, generally implies a change of attitudes and behaviors, and "openness" that is quite seldom achieved. It is ineffective to imagine that the most ingenious idea can, by itself, transform a company, department or team, without the people who make it up collaborating and being engaged. And this applies whether it is creating new products, new processes or new services. The involvement of all players is indispensable.

Long live multidisciplinarity!

Several experiments show, which might seem surprising at first glance, that competent and very homogeneous teams

obtain results in resolving difficult problems that are not as good as more "disparate" groups where the members have different skills. Diversity is synonymous with a wealth of thought, while teams consisting of collaborators with "similar" knowledge are more likely to get bogged down, skate around the issue and lack in creativity to get out of the rut. More heterogeneous groups explore from other perspectives.

Hence the (proven) interest of "multidisciplinary" groups whose ideas can flow in many more directions.

However, caution is needed - it is unprofitable to bring this type of team together "in a hurry" and tell it to immediately set to work. The



first get to know each other better and assess themselves (strong points and other individual characteristics). It is very important that they come to trust each other. Let's

at your watch, consulting your messages on your smartphone, and turn to the speakers to show your interest.

Bending and, especially, tilting the head are also signs of attention, as is nodding. It all must be done subtly, without ending up looking like a clown.



human being needs time, and the different people of the team must

not forget that mistrust is a major obstacle to collaboration and that sharing knowledge is always experienced spontaneously as a loss of potential personal power.

It is also necessary to take the time to properly understand the project, otherwise the work done is likely to be superficial.

Body language

To manage the meeting, it is necessary to understand the impact of body language. Receptiveness is shown by uncrossing the arms and legs and by an "open palm" gesture, which will encourage others to participate. Put your feet flat on the floor. Avoid looking



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3

Changing the format of conference rooms

Given the productivity constraints that managers face, it has become imperative to justify the time spent “out of office”, outside work. Sometimes, in the wake of these necessities, one wonders about the justification of attending - or not attending - a professional conference.

In reality, they are indispensable, even if only because the valuable networking engaged in during breaks exceeds the value of the speaker himself or the agenda of the event, often by far.

The demand is different from that in the past.

However, the places where this type of event takes place seems to be unchanged from those in the past. It should be possible to recreate conference spaces into those adapted to current trends.

For example, one trend is to organize more intimate conferences, targeting a hundred people instead of the 500, 600 or even 1500 participants as done formerly.

The goal is to be able to facilitate peer relationships, which can be challenging in the traditional format of large conferences, since it is more difficult to determine who is attending and where the “interesting” people can be found. In addition, large gatherings generate nervous fatigue, even if only by the noise. The result is that there is often the impression of having missed an opportunity to establish business links.

Another consideration must be taken into account – it is clear that there is more competence in the audience of participants than on the stage. This is why there is increasing interest in sessions where participants interact with one another. This is a format where participants are divided into small groups under the general leadership of a coordinator-moderator.

Creating true contact areas

These new conference formats require changes in the rooms themselves.

Smaller rooms need to be designed or, at the very least, modular spaces, somewhat in the image of “huddle rooms” (in proportion, of course) compared to big company meeting rooms.

Here, the rooms would accommodate up to twenty people, with lower ceilings for acoustics, and there would be natural lighting (which results in an increase in creativity of around 15% when natural elements are near by, such as a view of the out-

doors or greenery). The furniture could be easily moved to adapt to the desired formats.

Rather than relegating “break times” to the corridors (as is often the case today), they would be hosted in contact areas labeled as such with appropriate amenities (stools, small high and low tables, soft and mobile seats) which favor contact and informal discussions.

These areas would play a key role in the conference. The technology would be discrete but effective. It would aim to increase par-



ticipants' collaborative experience by increasing interaction and allowing data to be shared with the group and subsequently disseminated to the outside if desired.

Videoconferencing would be present and widely used to allow dialog with other remote groups who would engage in the same research and reflections.

In this way, one could even imagine that hotel chains could create this type of place around the world, adapted to these new conference formats.

A large international conference could then bring together thousands of participants located in a myriad of more intimate places scattered around the world.



Technological tools and staff engagement

When staff is engaged in the company, they are more involved in the work they do. At the same time, they have more confidence in managerial decisions and, icing on the cake, their morale is at its peak. As a result, your business operates better and increases its productivity.

Some tips for better use of technological tools in business communications...

Email, videoconferencing and intranet

On the use of email. American workers devote ... a little over three hours (!!) a day tinkering with their messaging! This figure needs to be reduced by becoming more rational and clearer! The subject of the email must be indicated, concisely and meaningfully. The body of the message must begin with the most important information, and only then give the details. Paragraphs should be short and indicated by the use of subheadings. Deadlines should be in bold. Messages should only be marked "important" when they really are. Finally, reread the message to shorten it, spellcheck it and only use the "Reply all" function when it is really necessary.

To use videoconferencing. We know that this technology lets participants feel more connected than by email or telephone call. 94% of companies that use videoconferencing believe it increases their productivity. But there are rules to be respected: always test the technology

before the videoconference, look at the cameras as often as possible, make sure the microphones are near participants, do not hold parallel conversations and make sure not to make other parasitic noise.

Your intranet must be a real "one stop shop" where staff can quickly find what they are looking for. It is necessary therefore to design it – and keep it! – simple and clean, and offer a search option. The design of your site must also be suitable for mobile devices.

Digital signage, collaboration and scheduling software

Your digital signage system will let you mobilize people, strengthen culture, raise morale and increase efficiency. We know that content management software allows communication to be published throughout your company. But to do



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this, short messages with eye-catching designs are needed, with the right content being broadcast on the right screen and at the right moment. It is necessary to "do housekeeping" by removing obsolete messages.

Regarding collaboration software. These tools let staff manage tasks and collaborate on projects in real time. It is necessary to make sure that the tools are available online for traveling staff, and it is also good to exploit all the possibilities of these programs (to-do lists, schedules, document libraries, conferences). It is also necessary to appoint a manager who can overwrite changes. Finally, regarding meeting scheduling software, which allows spaces and rooms to be managed, in order for it to be really effective an application is needed that everyone can actually access and it is good to give details about the content of each room. The system will send meeting reminders 24 hours in advance.

Noise overload in offices

Noise, so annoying during air travel, is also prevalent in offices, especially when they are landscaped.

Yet it feels like you can get used to it more, which makes these nuisances all the more pernicious.

Can it be effectively fought?

The consequences are always the same: headache, inattention, difficulty concentrating, tinnitus, disturbed and disturbing work.

It is clear, as a corollary, that efficiency and creativity are reduced, which is also a handicap for the company.

But is it possible to fight this scourge?

Of course, we can act at the source and decide on another arrangement. Individual offices generate less noise. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to start from a blank page, for various practical and financial reasons.

It is necessary to distinguish between noise from machines (printers, keyboards, computers) and that generated by conversations (general hubbub). Printers can easily be relocated to a separate space and computers can be

soundproofed.

In fact, some computers are reputed to make very little noise (for example Apple's iMacs). The same applies to keyboards – certain models avoid the annoying clatter as much as possible.

A few avenues...

Regarding offices themselves, sound absorbing materials should be used that can be mounted on the walls, and draperies and other curtains that prevent sound from echoing. Of course, it is impossible to transform an office into an anechoic chamber (the so-called "dead room") and it would not be pleasant at all, by the way. Nonetheless, inspiration can be drawn from its equipment to very strongly reduce echoes and reverberations by using pieces cut into regular shapes, most commonly in foam, which is placed on the walls.

Significant noise is produced by telephone conversations. In this regard, it must be understood that the noisier the environment the more loudly people talk and therefore amplify the ca-



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cophony. Therefore, if we are already able to reduce the "ambient" noise of the office, phone conversations will be carried out with lowered voices.

But we can go still further by providing staff with telephone headsets that isolate them during phone calls. Since people adapt the volume of their voice to that of the person they are speaking to on the phone, the headsets can amplify the other person's voice, which will gain from 3 to 5 dB (which is excellent, when we know that sound "doubles" every 3 dB). Finally, we can provide a good "code of conduct" to staff to make them sensitive to the problem of "sound overload".

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"How dry erase paint changes the way people think and work"

In a rapid changing working environment employees not only need to have the space, but also the tools to give room to ideas.

The rise of the digital era we live in, offers us many ways to translate ideas and make them visual in a way, but they do not automatically give room to ideas. Although there are loads of digital 'tools' that offer an endless canvas to draw on, they are still limited in terms of looking at the bigger picture and realtime collaboration. What I mean is this: "Yes there are digital interactive ways of working, but with most of the solutions you're still stuck behind a screen, tablet or a phone. In my opinion a simple solution as a dry erase paint also referred to as whiteboard paint, gives space to ideas and can be used to strengthen the relation between 'analog' and 'digital' ways of working".

A writing on the wall...

Nowadays communication is be-

allows a space to become alive, interactive and records the evolution of ideas." This 'analog' solution is in some ways so primitive that without being distracted, it gives you the space to be young again and let's you draw again. And whenever you made a mistake or have another thought, just erase it, you can start all over again.

Integration

Without the intervention of any digital device, people become creative again and build upon each others ideas. Thoughts that can be exposed on a wall, table or whatever object that is coated with a dry erase paint, on which employees can elaborate easily. This offers the opportunity to give space to ideas without finalizing them directly in a print out, drawing or a typed out memo. And when a



front of a screen and having the need to clarify something on a flipper or whiteboard, which resulted in having not enough room to make your point?"

from the bottom to the top asking others to join the process of ideation.

This eventually changes the way of collaborating, because all can write and share at the same time.

New ways of working

When you give physical space to human beings they act differently. That's something we see happening all the time when a wall is coated with a dry erase paint. People use their imagination and write

Meetings become more active, instead of sitting behind the computer or screen. And when something needs to be erased, just use a cloth. So simple, but really a powerfull solution that is easily integrated, you only need a wall!

Combining the best of two worlds in creating new ways of working



Well-e combines the 'analog' and the digital world, and creates together with their customers optimal and meaningfull environments in which people are stimulated to collaborate.

With the combination of IdeaPaint, Moving Walls and digital solutions like SMART Boards, a flexible working environment can be created easily.

Existing walls can be turned into a high-end whiteboard, flexible spaces can be created

with our Moving Walls and both can be supported by all type of digital solutions which contribute to new ways of working.

Take a look inside one of our international clients, that shows the combination between the analog and digital world:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCY8VbPMzjw>

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coming more-and-more vital. With an overflow of information and messages being send every day, our creativity and with it the process of creation is under pressure. If the success of modern business relies on the ability to communicate and iterate ideas, then a dry erase paint may be a simple key to the future. By using a dry erase paint a wall can be turned easily in a massive seamless canvas and becomes a communication tool. "It

(stand-up) meeting in front of a whiteboardwall has ended, anyone who wants to have the notes can make a picture of them and distribute it easily to others. Also the integration of Interactive Touch Projectors and whiteboardwalls is something we see nowadays more and more in the workingenvironment. "Offline ideation followed by digital cooperation is happening all the time. And who hasn't experienced the example of standing in



Meetings, Conferences: It is all about preparing Spaces for Efficiency

Everyone is talking about how work concepts are changing and how the efficient offices of the future will have to be flexible and diverse. When we talk about flexibility concerning future offices we are not only talking about flexible working hours and mobile workspaces but as well about flexible furnishing in modern office landscapes – such as spaces for individual and focused work, quiet zones, meeting rooms and areas for social exchange.

Ultimately, it all comes down to preparing workspaces for work efficiency by choosing the right solutions. Therefore, here are a few tips on how to do it:

Unleash the Power of Communication

The workplace culture is changing and in today's world when you go to a meeting, it not always means you are going actually for a meeting room, to have a previously scheduled and approved meeting. The world is becoming unbelievably fast and in the business world opportunities come and go in a flash, so the way we work is changing in order to keep up. We need to be fast and always be prepared to present a good idea, concept or project whenever the chance comes and no matter the place.

Luckily, for us, work and presentation tools have also evolved a lot, and there are many high-quality portable, light-weighted or mobile solutions, which can easily be transported, and quickly be ready to use outside the office, in other working spaces or even outdoors, without compromising style.

Other optimal solution for meetings and conferences is to choose dry-erase office furniture, enabling ideas and concepts to flow freely without boundaries. Participants can write their contribution directly in the conference table or in the LCD cabinet in the room.

Choose Seamless Comfort and Design

To be at their utmost participants should be as comfortable as possible. It should be the right space, with good air quality and good lighting – natural light is better, but when needed use lighting that does not overheat heads. Avoid or minimize overhead lighting. Use bulbs that do not give off too much heat - organic light-emitting diode (OLED) would be the best choice. The Wall colors should also complement the lighting and bring more luminosity to the room.

Choosing ergonomic seats and the proper size and shape ta-

ble, depending on the type of meetings and conferences you are planning to have there. The furniture on the room should also have a comfortable look and feel. You can have modern distinctive design, while keeping it discreet and minimalist. There should not be any ex-

travagant piece that causes distraction. Simple handcraft-looking wood details blended with intelligent contemporary clean design usually does the trick.

You need furniture solutions that can blend in



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with the rest of your office or adjuvant spaces... and even with your company, hotel, and event personality!

The best meeting and conference rooms are the ones that express what your company is all about. If your company has a fun, playful image, you should definitely go for an original, out-of-the-box design, with many playful elements. However, if your company is more of the classic and reliable type, its meeting and conference spaces should reflect that too. Creativity is good, but authenticity is a lot better.

Provide All the Right Amenities

Meetings, Conferences, Conventions, these are all events that involve people and as we mentioned before in order to be produc-

tive and at their best people need to feel comfortable. Providing all the right amenities is crucial. Particularly when it comes to essentials like flipchart easels, whiteboard and screens.

Presentation tools and screens should be placed a focal point of the meeting room, and positioned at just the right distance from your audience. These should also be big enough for everyone in the room to see, but small enough not to be overwhelming, or very inappropriate for the space.

Aside from the size and distance, think about whether you will have the screen, or writing boards mounted on a wall, on wheels, in a tripod, and which surface and design details will go best with the colors and tones of your presentation and room.

Do not forget to consider accessories like cables, mobile stands, remote controls or speaker mounts.

To make sure participants are only focusing on what matters, you should consider providing other additional amenities like having a refrigerator nearby with fresh drinks, or at least water and a glass within arm's reach, so they can drink whenever they need it. Ar-



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ranging mini-cabinets, where your guests can stash their belongings while participating in the event or meeting is also a clever move. In addition, of course, do not forget to have a couple of bins (regular trash and for recycling) so that participants can dispose of their trash properly.

Arrange a test drive and adjust

When it comes to important events preparation is crucial. Therefore, the best advice we can give you is to schedule a test run first! It will help calm nerves, as well as catch any technical problems before they escalate, or solve any incon-

venient after the big day occurs.

Arrange a mock meeting where colleagues pretend to be other important intervenient while the presentation or discussion occurs, and at the end analyze everyone's feedback. You will certainly have good pointers on how to improve the presentation, the conditions in the room, etc.

Summing up, it does not matter how you design a conference/meeting room, it should, first, be a safe and comfortable space where professionals can gather, brainstorm and collaborate fluidly. With that in mind, and following the tips given above, it is going to be hard to go wrong!



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Relax, your phone is charging!

These are comfortable seats by 'Sonic Chair'. They are intended for businessmen and businesswomen who are waiting for their flight and want their phone to be fully charged before departure.

While seated, you can connect the phone by Bluetooth to the chairs sound system, and as it charges listen to your music files. You are then immersed in music, which 'sounds' like being at the concert!

Charging is done wirelessly (by Qi), just by setting the smartphone on the tray table. It is worth noting that the Sonic Chair has received the 'Red Dot

Design' award. The charging station can charge the following devices: iPhone X / XR / XS / XS Max iPhone 8 / 8 Plus Samsung Galaxy S9 / S9+ / S8 / S8+ / S8+ / S6 / edge / edge+ Samsung Galaxy Note 8 / 9 And all other Qi-compatible devices from Nokia, Microsoft, Google, LG, SONY and Huawei.

To put in the photo: 'two Sonic Chairs at Stuttgart Airport, at the Lufthansa gate'.

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Deux Sonic Chairs à l'aéroport de Stuttgart, au gate de Lufthansa

Jeenie, your personal translator, is a real person

Travel, by its nature, is a source of stress. Long-haul flights, broken sleep patterns, jet lag with resulting disruption to circadian rhythm, eating habits that are muddled are all difficulties that can be hard to swallow.

Yet that's not all, however, because then comes the well-known "language barrier".

Insoluble misunderstandings

Now imagine the situation that can take place in China. The businessman or businesswoman gets in a taxi and asks to be taken to his or her hotel.

The driver doesn't understand, because he only knows the names of hotels in Chinese. Spelling the name doesn't help, because he only recognizes Chinese characters.

This is an extreme example and the situation is far less likely to arise in Brussels, Madrid or Rome.

There, the vast majority of taxi drivers understand some English. However, a Chinese businessman will be faced with big problems if he goes to these three cities!

And this whole business travel situation will go well beyond stressful and relatively insolvable mutual misunderstandings. Because the situation will be repeated in restaurants and hotels.

In important cases, specialized personnel are also used (translators and interpreters).

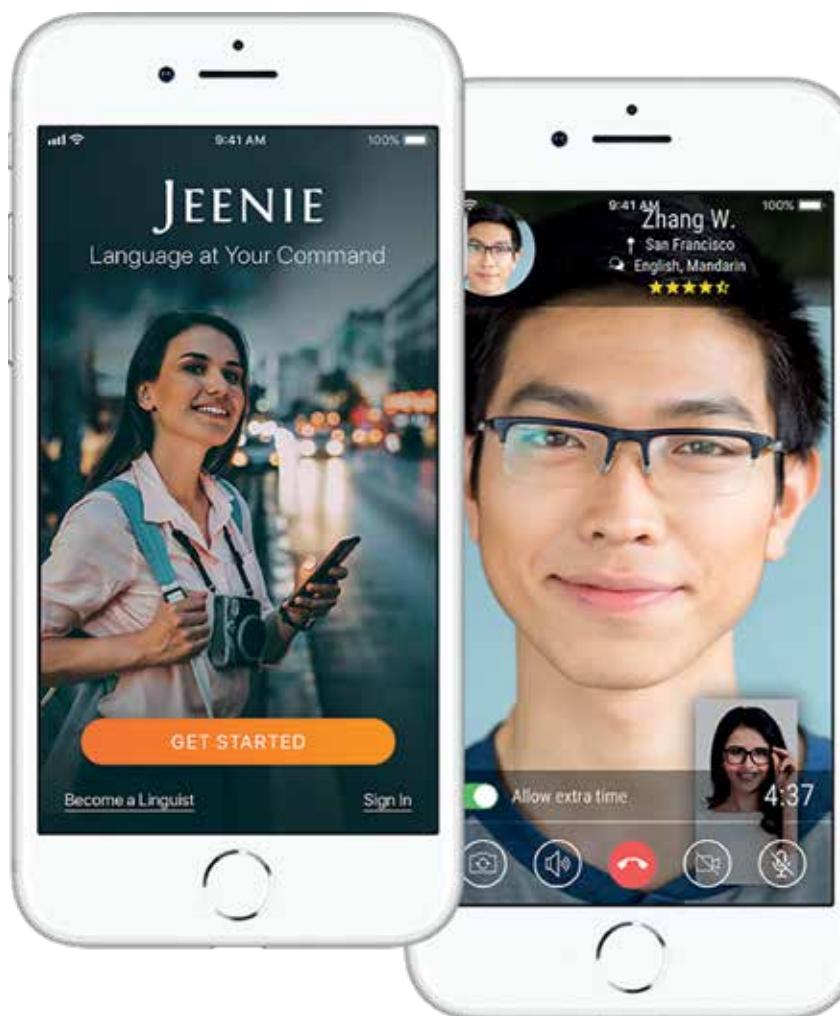
Of course, the "technology world" has addressed the problem, which is becoming more and more widespread with increasing global trade.

This has led to the birth of automatic translation software on Smartphones, that promise to be able to hold a conversation in real time.

They interpret and are professionals in your specialty!

Google Translate and, to a lesser extent, DeepL (which does not have a smartphone app and only uses writing), are among these tools that provide reliable service, although somewhat limited since difficulties are encountered as soon as a relationship and a real conversation are established.

The same problem is always encountered with technology that is struggling to make things simple, effective and practical, without losing human contact.



come from 65 different countries.

The customers are business travelers and companies. They download the app and, for about \$1 per minute, the appropriate linguist will be online, audio or video, in real time to help them. The average call lasts five minutes.

That's the principle. Large organizations that buy large packages obviously pay less.

So far, Jeenie offers the English-Cantonese and English-Mandarin language pair and, more recently, English-Japanese.

The accent placed on China is hardly surprising – in 2018 it was the fastest growing outbound travel market, with 145 million Chinese travelers. Other language pairs, including Spanish-English, Portuguese-English as well as Japanese-Spanish and Mandarin-Japanese, will soon be added.

Once again, it should be noted that Jeenie, which wants to be seen as a global product, understands the language and culture of the speakers.



Recently (mid-September), "Jeenie" has been on the market. Here the approach is very different from existing software.

Jeenie uses people who speak the language, but who also have experience in the industry and technology.

For example, an English engineer who speaks Mandarin or a Chinese project manager who knows how to speak English.

It is a community of linguists that are real human beings who work according to an Uber (or Airbnb) philosophy.

These people speak at least two languages fluently and have a smartphone. They come from all walks of life and from all over the world. These linguists register for free and currently



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Do you fly frequently? You too are probably annoyed by the noise!

Occasional travelers do not always realize this, given the stress that is always there to some degree related to take-off, followed by the ensuing relaxation. However, when a form of "routine" settles in, with flights one after another, it becomes clear.

A motorcycle for several hours?

Do you know that it reaches a sound level of 88-89 dB? This matches the sound that a motorcycle makes... or a noisy car. So it's not surprising that you feel tired and have a headache after several hours of exposure.

There is a solution, fortunately. Already, simple earplugs can help. But then we can only read or write. If you want to watch a movie on a tablet or listen to some music, you have to turn to a technological solution.

Noise-reducing headphones then make a lot of sense, as do noise-canceling headphones. They reduce the noise by 15 to 20 dB in frequencies that generally range from 50 to 500 Hz. Under these conditions, you travel comfortably while enjoying your movies or music.

The operating principle is simple and ingenious. Outside the headset, a microphone records the acoustic signature of the sounds; inside, an electronic chip calculates a sort of "antidote", a diametrically opposite sound wave. The headset earpieces broadcast this antidote and thereby counteract the ambient noise. Noise reaching the ears is therefore very attenuated. Just play a little music in the headset at an average sound level to erase what remains of the nuisance noise.



The dilemma

The difference between noise-canceling headsets and headphones is mainly in the size, with the latter being more easily stored in luggage. In addition, some people can find the contact of the earpiece with the ear duct to be unpleasant, while others don't like having a headset around the ears.

But watch out, sometimes it's a tough sell and although there is a large number of noise-canceling headsets and headphones on the market, their performance is very different in this regard. You have to refer to objective tests and then go to the store and try them out yourself. Note that it is very difficult to get a good idea there, because the sound environment in the store has nothing in common with the sound emitted by jet engines in an airplane cabin! However, you can easily assess the sound quality, which is also important, obviously.

The opinion of users, which can be gleaned on the internet, is also to be taken into account.

Despite everything, there are still many constants: a noise-canceling headset or headphones that are too cheap or of an unknown brand will probably give poorer results than those manufactured by the big brands and which obviously will cost more.

Some models are almost pieces of jewelry and combine performance with the pleasure of owning a (very) beautiful object, magnificently finished and protected by the boxes provided with the purchase. Added to this is the fact that noise-canceling headsets and headphones often come with Bluetooth (with rather comfortable battery life of more than five hours in general, some brands even last for 20 hours), and that it is also often possible to connect them by wire to benefit from the headset functions if the battery runs out.



Sennheiser

"I have a problem" "We will find a solution"

On a week-long trip to Brussels, this businessman from Madrid was anxiously aware that he had forgotten the cable and charging adapter for his MacBook.

Panic... The device "lasts" for one day and he is used to using it regularly. No question of stalling for a week.

There is "buy" and "buy" ...

A quick round trip on Google and here are a few selected stores that might be able to help. Just one solution is proposed: outright purchase.

At the Apple Store on Toison d'Or Avenue (which is a few hundred meters from his hotel) the tone is different. Informed of the problem, the employee is immediately reassuring: "We'll find a solution, follow me".

His colleague, a specialist in the field, nevertheless seems to first propose the same as everyone else: buying a cable and adapter.

"84 euros for one week, it's still expensive! All the more so when back home, it will be a duplicate."

The specialist smiles: "You buy it and return it to us the day before you return to Madrid. We will refund you the total amount."

So it was done, and our businessman was

served with class!

Create an outstanding reputation!

This little detail shows how much the concept of after-sales service can be promoted. Here, there was no question for the Apple Store of "making money", but satisfying an existing customer, by finding and then proposing the best possible solution to his problem.

Thinking about it, the brand comes out the big winner. On the one hand, the customer will retell his misadventure to his acquaintances (which he has already done with us) and on the other hand he will be further assured by the certainty that he made a good



Apple store Brussels-Belgium

choice with an Apple product... and finally will be less likely to buy another product later. This is called creating an outstanding reputation and, by the way, creating loyalty and contentment.

These little things are full of importance

Accessories have to be considered differently. It must be realized that they can transform themselves into objects of high value and attractive "design".

To do this, it is necessary to leave the easy mental shortcuts that relegate the accessory to the rank of gadgets and minor products with little importance.

Protect, but do not disguise!

However, logic encourages us to take this new direction. For example, when we have just bought a new high-end smartphone (we know many models that are displayed at over one thousand euros!), it will be imperatively necessary to protect it. But protecting it does not have to mean disguising it! In other words, the happy owner of this pricey laptop will logically want to head for classy protection, which should even add to the "subjective" price of the device. To a high-end laptop you have to add high-end accessories!

So we are entering the luxury world, into the world of leathers... we clearly banish in any case plastics and imitations.

Do the test, try to find the right case for your high-end smartphone... There is a big chance you will fail!

Google and the internet can help, obviously, but there will be few usable choices.

And these considerations are not trivial – we know businessmen who disdain protective jackets for their smartphone, simply because they alter the design of their device.

Solutions

The Smartphone example can be generalized to all products. Notebooks, cameras, optics, tablets, are all housed under the same brand insignia and also claim accessories, but they

have to be high quality.

An unfortunately, retailers do not take this desire into account and continually treat the accessory as would be done with "gadgets".

Businessmen who travel very frequently seek solutions to their problems. The case of adapters for power outlets is a good example – there is nothing worse than not having an adapter to charge your devices. It exists in attractive well-fitting boxes! Joining the useful with design! This is also the case for notepads which, in beautiful versions of sober luxury, underline at a glance the quality of the company you are working for.

One accessory that can prove useful to the frequent traveler is the business card scanner. It can save its data in a jiffy in the notebook, at the end of the day, for example.

In several cases as well, a traveling client comes to a store to be helped about one or another accessory that he has forgotten at home. This is often the case for mains power adapters. So there is a great temptation for the store to sell them. Note in this respect that this is not always the case (see the article on the Apple Store) and so it is really possible to graciously help.



E-commerce and bricks-and-mortar stores have the same fight... technology!

Although traditional commerce has changed radically since e-commerce appeared, the in-store experience is still important.

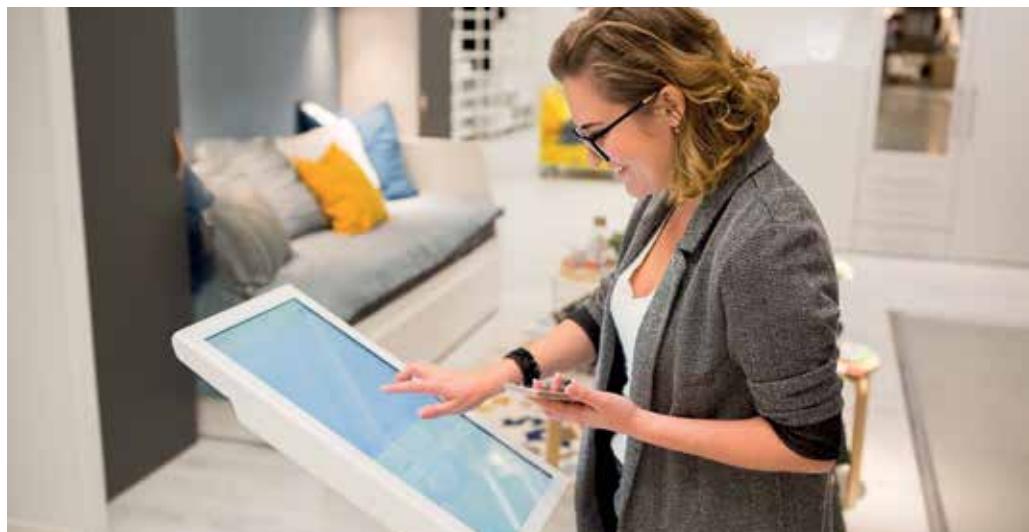
It is well known that purchasing decisions are strongly influenced by what people see and feel when they are in the store.

There needs to be consistency

It is important that this experience is consistent (online and in the store) when customers engage with a specific brand.

Appearance cannot change when going from one to the other – there must be reminders and real continuity.

Website designers, under pressure from brands, have focused their efforts on creating user-friendly sites that load quickly. There's nothing worse for business than when a buyer, tired of having to wait or enter mountains of



information, abandons his shopping cart and doesn't buy anything.
And in-store experience standards are just as important.

Customers have a perception of the brand that is influenced by many factors: lighting, cleanliness, the room to manoeuvre in the aisles and around product displays, temperature and air quality or the availability of the merchandise.

You only have one chance to make a first impression, so think about it carefully!

The store's aesthetics is a means for improving the brand's availability and, consequently, the consumer's first impression.

Technology makes it attractive

But the experience can also be improved by investing in the right in-store technology. Digital signage, interactive screens, free Wi-Fi, in-store navigation applications and, as well, digital kiosks are all ways to bring efficiency and enjoyment to customers, whether they are making

a quick trip to pick up an item or have the time to explore the shelves a bit more.

By using appropriate technology, the in-store customer can see product availability in real time and obtain information on stock or on the availability of missing items in other stores of the same brand.

It is now also possible to receive personalized offers while purchasing and based on the customer's location without the store.

Like an online site, technology is essential to create an attractive in-store experience that will inspire customers to stay and to come back.

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When your digital signage screens are ignored

Case in point: your digital signage installation is brand new. The content is finished, you launch into business... and you wait..., and wait, and wait ... and the audience seems to ignore your screens and not even realize that they are there.

Don't be thinking that it is due to a technical problem or the screen size and that you should have chosen one even more gigantic. Most often the reason is related to the content.

Two questions to ask

In order for the messages to be effective, they need to be relevant to your audience. So it's a question of studying your target market before translating your ideas into images on your screens. Information that seems valid in a static presentation may prove to be disastrous on a screen (which are animated by nature). So in view of attracting the Millennials (if they are your target) smileys are sometimes used that are outdated and therefore appear tacky.

You are broadcasting a message and ultimately you just have to ask the question, "How will it attract the audience?", and, as a corollary, this other question, "Is what my message asks the audience to do reasonable?"

Don't evade the complexity of these apparently simple questions. What attracts people can

vary depending on the type of audience, the time, place and location, and the second question forces you to determine whether "what you are offering is worth taking action".

So if you want to download an app for GSM, you should know that smartphones are often already loaded down with apps, and that it really needs to be worth it (for example an offer not to be missed) for the audience to take it and use it.

Avoid sound and visual competition

A short case deals with this phenomenon in this edition, but it is well to present it here as well: noise can negate your efforts at digital communication. And noise is everywhere! Be aware that we are not only talking about sound noise, but also the fog created by all the visual information that assails the audience.

As a result, a critical question arises, that of the location where your digital signage screen is placed. The more visual "competition" and "noise disturbance" there is, the less effective will the messages con-

veyed by your screen be. Of course, in terms of more "technical" considerations, it is also necessary to check that the screen's brightness is correct and also whether its size is appropriate to the distance from which it can be seen.

Finally, beware and don't make your screen a source of noise itself! This may seem paradoxical, but even if it is delivering relevant messages, it can lose all its impact if the broadcast is irritating, if the sound is incorrectly set or if your screen constantly transmits repetitive advertisements that are too short.



Powerful tools to build customer loyalty

Digital signage is becoming increasingly common in stores. It is also intended to build customer loyalty.

The goal is simple: bring value to customers by meeting their needs. The screens have to disseminate content that helps achieve this goal.

Everything revolves around customer satisfaction

The loyalty sought is very valuable. As we know, it is much less costly to retain loyal customers than to have to make the investment to find new customers.

At the same time, physical signs have to fight to be noticed. Not only do they compete with competitors but also with offers on the internet, which are more flexible.

The content disseminated on in-store digital signage installations plays a critical role, because everything revolves around customer satisfaction.

To get it, in order to create value and to satisfy the needs of customers, there needs to be more effective communication tools.

And the usual situation is not rosy: just open your eyes and look... and notice that many people often wander in the aisles, looking for this or that product that they fail to find.

However, with kiosks equipped with appropriate software, it is possible to provide all kinds of dynamic content.

This makes it possible to search for (and find) the desired item, instantly get its price, availability, location to find it, its best functional characteristics and, if desired, its technical characteristics.

This type of system can also warn if there is a new model available, to avoid disappointment after purchase.

Sharing brand values with customers

Regarding loyalty, the studies are definite: more than 60% of customers remain loyal to a brand when it shares similar life values with theirs. To give a very eloquent example, one cannot help thinking of Apple and its expertise in the matter.

There are often many values that a brand stands for and sometimes it is difficult to transmit them all without losing customers' attention.

This is especially true for more abstract con-



cepts such as "freedom" or "absence of constraints".

Digital signage excels at representing concepts suggestively and in images, along with the help of appropriate music.

It also allows for playing with the brand logo and sublimating it graphically.

But digital signage also knows how to be pragmatic and display very clear messages, for example staging happy customers who are using the brand's products.

It has all the tools needed to reach minds step by step, to increase involvement and enhance consumers' experience.

Hotels: digital displays and kiosks... intelligence is working!

Working in hotels is not easy! Guests present themselves at the front desks with their many questions, and the employees are overwhelmed!

Under these conditions, we quickly understand the usefulness of having a few interactive screens that let guests quickly find information.

The virtual concierge

In addition, although large hotels have the resources to set up staff dedicated to the concierge, the same is not the case for small organizations.

So here it comes back to the idea of the “virtual concierge” which would be, through technology, always ready, hyper-informed and full of information related to all the usual questions asked by guests (shopping, local transportation, itineraries, restaurants, maps, etc.).

The concept can be broadly expanded to several other locations.

So printed menus can be replaced by digital displays, which is very convenient for changing the dishes offered depending on the time of day, and to display the promotions of the day. Some professionals even raise (and lower) prices based on events and schedules.

The display at the entrance to meeting rooms can also use screens, which display the calendar and indicate whether the rooms are reserved and by whom, with the company logo as a bonus.

The digital display, in the form of picture walls, also allows the mood of the room to be changed, by using color schemes suited to the circumstances (based on the time of day, for example).

Injecting experience into the kiosk

Of course, it's not enough to decide to switch to digital abruptly. Nor, of course, to throw yourself into “technology”.

It is a question of getting your objectives and strategy across before any other technical con-



sideration. To give value to the information dispensed, it must not be easily found by other means.

Although the smartphone lets information be had almost instantaneously, it is not wise to

So spas can gain a lot by being promoted by digital signage.

Personalized reception and traffic regulation

The location of kiosks is very important.

A screen placed on a wall that looks like a TV will often be ignored. Here again, you have to put yourself in the place of visitors. Determine the places where people ask questions and put the devices there.

Compliance of the presentation with the graphical standards (logo, colors, character font) of the brand (when it is a hotel chain) must be respected.

Anyway, in this case the head office will take



broadcast it, as it will not be of interest to very many people.

It is quite different if you can see the dishes served in the restaurant or if you are aware of a hotel's special offers. In fact, the best solution is to use the hotel's whole acquired experience to determine the recurring questions the guests ask of the concierge and load the answers into the virtual concierge's kiosk.

It will also be a question of determining which services exist and which are underused because of the lack of information provided to visitors.

care of managing the graphical elements and the local hotel has its area to broadcast specific information. The “permissions” for inserting content are therefore variable and local staff can obviously not change just anything.

Personalized reception of guests by kiosks is on the way: tags, sensors, artificial intelligence are already in operation so that Mr. Louis is greeted in his own name when he approaches the virtual desk. It is indeed human nature to appreciate being treated like a VIP!

With this type of smart technology, a display system can also be designed that stops promoting a restaurant when it is full and switches to another when it is not yet full. This is smart “traffic regulation”.

More than ever, the success of this type of kiosk depends on their content and how they manage to deliver relevant information to guests.

