

Creative
Supply



The Hospitality Concept Handbook

The definitive guide to creating unique
hotel, F&B, office, and retail concepts

2nd Edition



→ Case study



→ Article

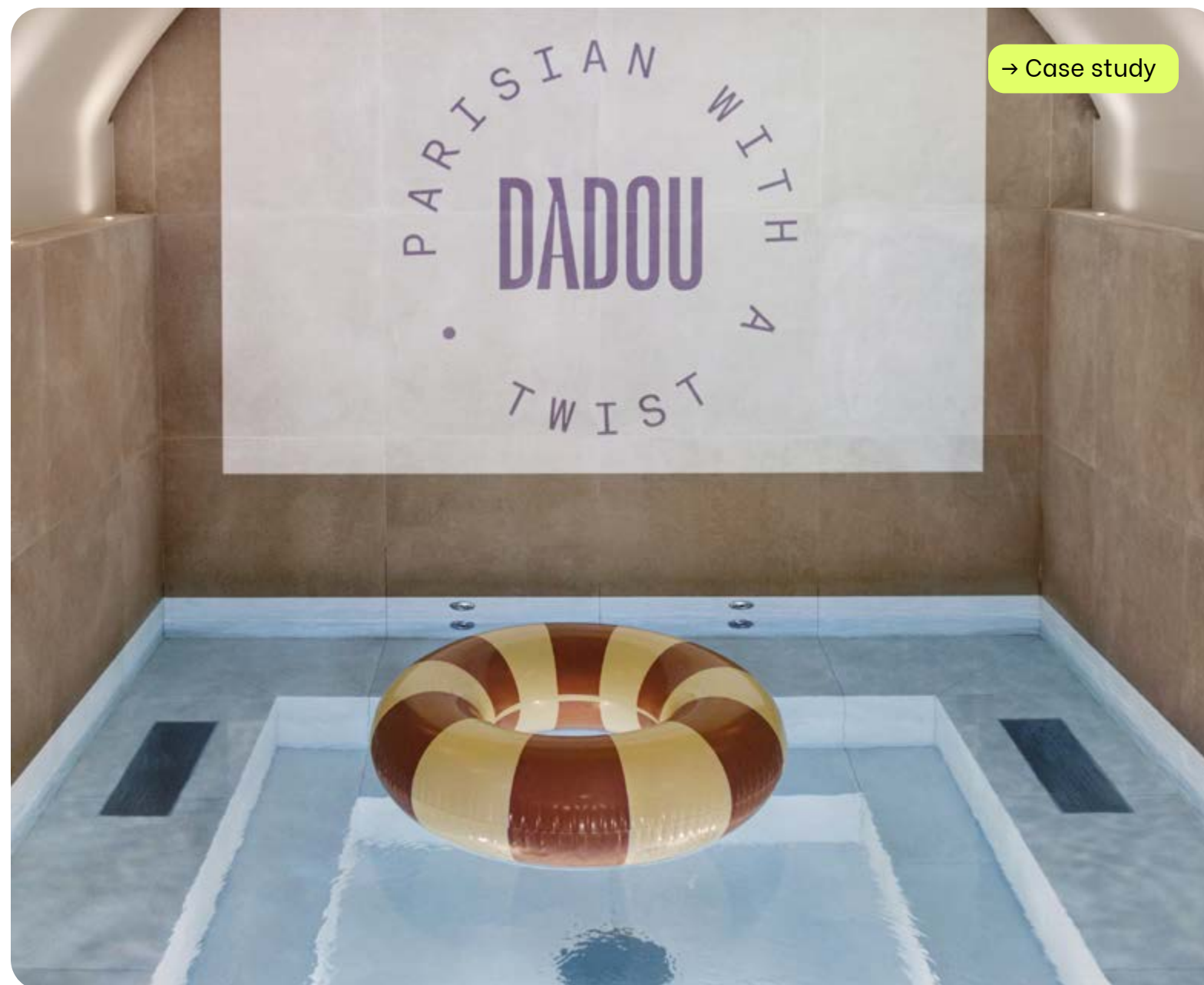


Welcome

Since we published the first edition of this handbook in early 2020, the world has evolved and so have hotels, restaurants, bars, workplaces and retail outlets. The hospitality industry has never been more dynamic and open to creativity and disruption. Opportunity, it seems, comes in times of change.

You're holding the definitive guide for ambitious hoteliers, F&B entrepreneurs, retailers and property developers who want to create or refine their concept and challenge today's vision of hospitality. This handbook brings together the latest trends, ideas and tools to help you and your team get the most out of your property or space for years to come. It's based on our many consultancy projects and our executive education programmes at EHL Hospitality Business School, ESSEC and HEC Paris. Through a selection of successful case studies, we share with you Creative Supply's methodology for creating unique hospitality concepts, like a luxury hotel in Champagne or a workspace provider in Zurich.

→ Case study



Custom illustration for a luxury hotel's all-day dining concept La Table des Airelles.

'La Nouvelle Vague', the cinema-pool of Parisian boutique hotel Dadou.

Article: Is the office of the future a service instead of a place?











To us, this second edition of our Hospitality Concept Handbook is a tribute to creativity and ingenuity.

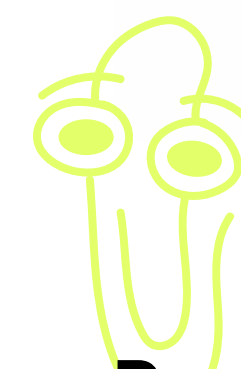
We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed creating it.

Youri Sawerschel
Founder



Content

| | | |
|---|------------------------|----|
|  | Check-in | 05 |
|  | Story | 14 |
|  | Brand Identity | 18 |
|  | Customer Offering | 22 |
|  | Space Design | 26 |
|  | Team & Culture | 30 |
|  | Partner Ecosystem | 34 |
|  | Community Activation | 38 |
|  | Communication Channels | 42 |
|  | Check-out | 46 |



Reading guide

Click the [→ Case study](#) button to discover some of Creative Supply's unique case studies

Click the [→ Video](#) button to watch insightful video content

Click the [→ Download](#) button to access bonus tools and publications

Click the [→ Article](#) button to gain exclusive insights from Creative Supply

Luxury watch company IWC opened its Big Pilot Bar in Seoul.

DJ Khaled piggy-backed on his name to launch food deliver brand Another Wing by DJ Khaled.

Gucci partnered up with chef Massimo Bottura to open the Gucci Osteria in Europe, the US and Asia.

Check-in

Let's start with the basics: what is a hospitality concept and how can it drive value for your business?

Hospitality is in the air

You're probably working on a hotel, restaurant, office, retail or residential project, in which welcoming and serving customers is central to your value proposition. But in the game of hospitality, the rules aren't set and the players keep changing. Fashion brands run hotels, watchmakers

serve cocktails, banks open co-working spaces, DJs deliver chicken wings, factories become community hubs, and coffee shops conquer supermarkets and airlines. Hospitality is everywhere and customers face an increasing abundance of choice.



It's time to raise the bar

In this context, being hospitable isn't enough. To be noticed, you must be attractive and different. To be acknowledged, you must have something outstanding to say. To be loved, you must exceed expectations. And to maintain all of that, to thrive and grow, you must do it all consistently. In other words, you have to create an eye-catching, feet-slowng hospitality concept.

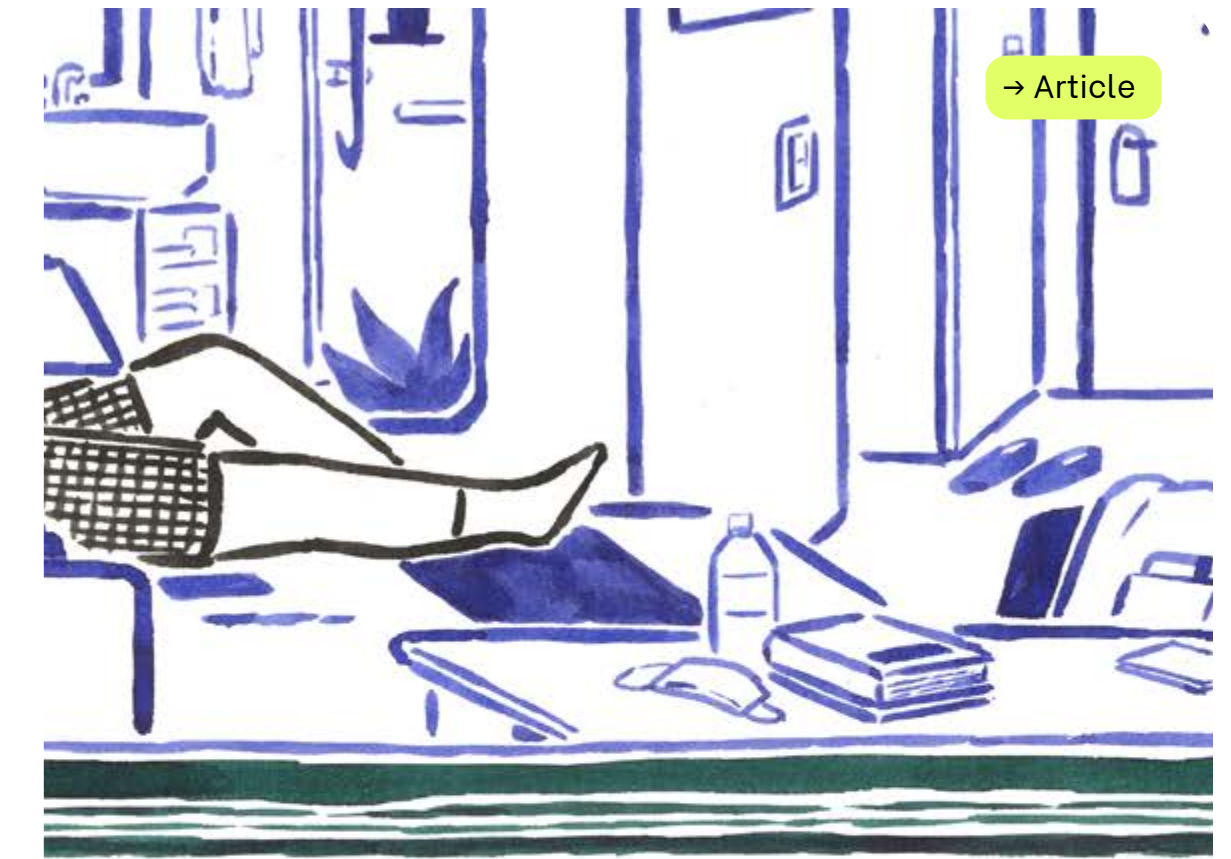
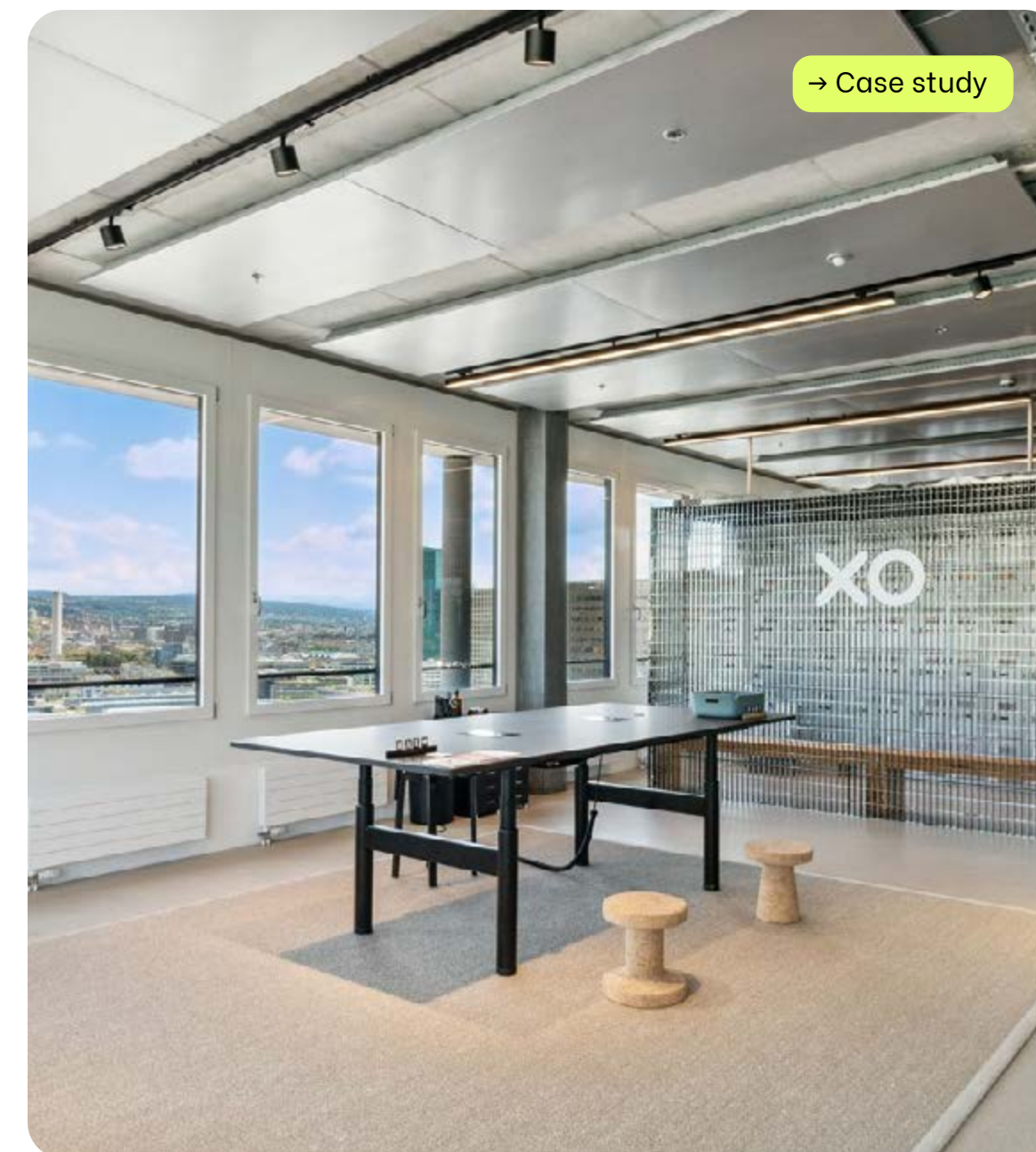
But where to start? How do you approach the creation of a new concept?

And how do you make sure you don't forget anything? Answering these questions (and many more) is what this handbook is all about. Through more than 110 best-in-class examples from all around the world, you'll discover our unique method of creating winning concepts for hospitality, from restaurants and hotels to office spaces and members clubs.



So, what is a hospitality concept?

At Creative Supply, we define a hospitality concept as a business with a physical location that comes to life by holistically and coherently integrating every aspect of that business, from operations through to marketing and design. Rather than attempting to rely solely on a unique selling proposition, a concept focuses on the combination of different components—or building blocks.



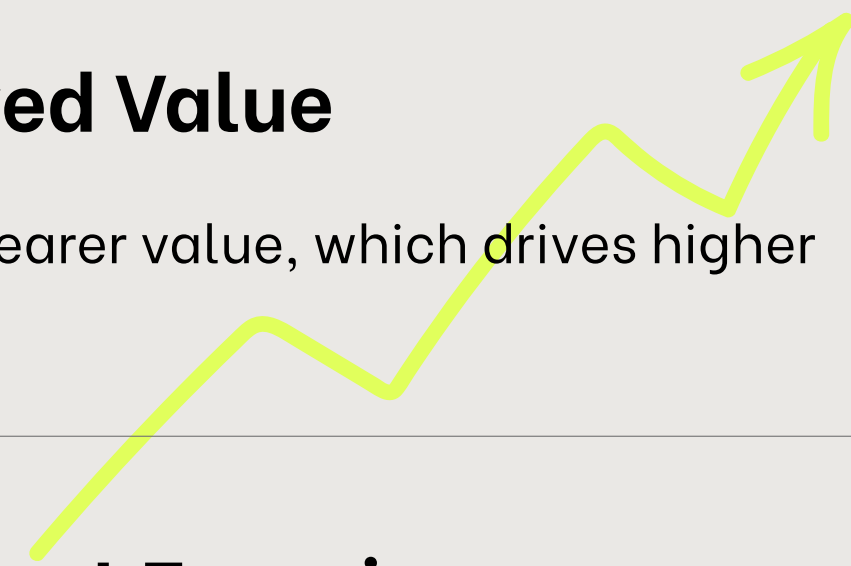
A well-thought-out hospitality concept has ten clear benefits to both the development and operational phases:

01 Unified Vision

Unites owners, management, staff and external partners under a shared vision and streamlines tasks to accomplish that goal

02 Higher Perceived Value

Gives your offering clearer value, which drives higher selling prices



03 Consistent Guest Experience

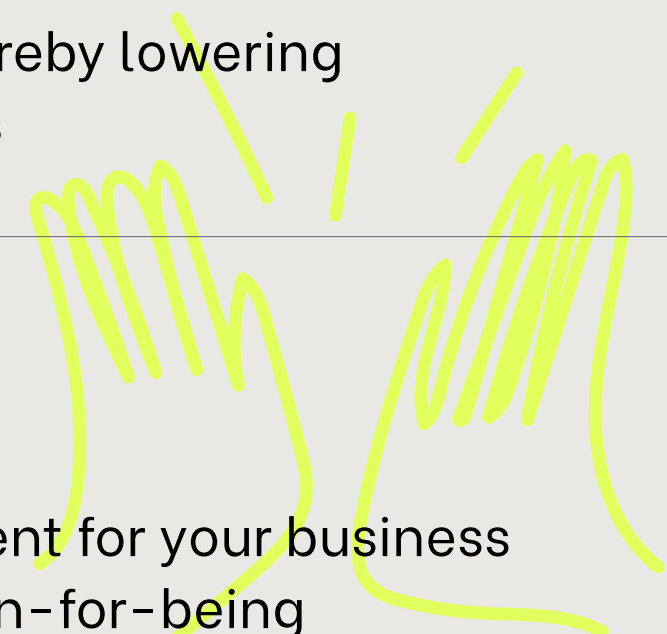
Provides a holistic overview of your guest experience so you can engage patrons at every touchpoint and convert one-time visitors into loyal followers

04 Lower Marketing Costs

Stands out as newsworthy on its own, thereby lowering your communication and marketing costs

05 Easy Talent Acquisition

Attracts and retains the right types of talent for your business by simply and clearly distilling your reason-for-being



06 Investor-friendly Approach

Brings on board investors and partners alike because it's easy to communicate but hard to replicate

07 Emotional Appeal

Leaves a lasting impression that connects with people's emotions, desires and aspirations



08 Differentiation

Contextualises your offering to help you stand out in a sea of "same-same competitors"

09 Timeless Story

Outlives fads and trends through storytelling that keeps evolving

10 Irreplicable stand-out

Bullet-proofs your idea to prevent copy-cats

4 pitfalls to avoid

Every hospitality project is different but some principles remain the same. Here are 4 fundamental pitfalls that we've seen done repeatedly by many businesses. Avoid these and you'll set yourself up for success.

Pitfall 1 Starting with interior design

Many owners and managers develop their hospitality concept by focusing on interior design only. However, a project can't position itself and stand out in the long term if it relies solely on decoration. A hospitality concept goes far beyond aesthetics. Instead, a coherent and impactful logic—

or story—should form its base, from which you build out all other characteristics and details. Meaningful and memorable storytelling should always define the contours of your establishment, its services, commercial strategy, communication and even clientele.

Article: Trends and challenges in real estate branding.





Pitfall 2 Not knowing your customers



Every destination has its own dynamics, seasonality and customer types. Having a deep understanding of who comes and why before you start developing your concept can't be stressed enough. This way you build your concept to tap into an existing demand rather than create a new demand, which is possible but difficult and risky. If you're developing a concept to be implemented in multiple locations, ensure you understand the commonalities between them and use these to inform the creative process.

Pitfall 3

Relying on same-
same but expecting
different

Your competitors have the same market reports, work with the same interior designers and search for the same information online. If you want to create something truly original, you must use different input. In other words, you must look for information not available on Google. Go out into the streets, speak to the locals, look around yourself. How are people dressed? Do they have dogs? Do they eat outside? You get the logic.

“Real world” market research in front of the Sacré-Coeur in Montmartre.



→ Case study



→ Case study

1^{re} ANNÉE — N° 8. Prix : 10 centimes. Le 5 Mai 1879

LES HYDROPATHES

JOURNAL LITTÉRAIRE ILLUSTRÉ
Rédacteur en chef: Émile GOUDEAU

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <i>Directeur-Administrateur :</i> Paul VIVIEN | ABONNEMENTS : | <i>Secrétaire de la Rédaction :</i> X... |
| BUREAUX 50, Rue des Écoles, 50 | Paris. -- Province. -- Étranger Un an : 8 francs | BUREAUX DE VENTES 18, Rue Monge, 18. |

Pitfall 4 Not respecting the past



Every location or building has a history. Make sure you truly understand it. If possible, visit the archives of your destination to unearth anecdotes and forgotten facts. For one of our resort hotel projects in Switzerland, we discovered a goldmine of information about the history of the hotel, from old memorabilia to vintage advertising. In one pamphlet from the 80s, the hotel was advertised as “a cruise without leaving the shore” – the story was right there in front of our eyes all along.



L'hydropathe MAURICE ROLLINAT

Photograph found during archival research at the Eurotel in Montreux.

Photograph found during archival research at the Eurotel in Montreux.

Cover of “Les Hydropathes”, a self-published journal from the 19th century, discovered during our research for the project French Theory.



The Hospitality Concept Blueprint

Discover the building blocks of a winning hospitality concept, from story to community activation.



To help you develop your concept, we've created a powerful tool: the Hospitality Concept Blueprint. Made up of 8 building blocks, the Hospitality Concept Blueprint covers all aspects of designing and running a hospitality business with a physical location: Story, Brand Identity, Customer Offering, Space Design, Team & Culture, Partner



Ecosystem, Community Activation and Communication Channels. This blueprint is designed to function as a “toolbox” from which you can select the tools, or building blocks, you need as you need them—whether you're creating a concept from scratch, renovating your business or redesigning your customer experience.



A proven story-led approach

Based on a central Story, our building blocks work together to build a unique, coherent whole. This story-led approach has allowed our hospitality clients to grow their business and, in the process, get countless (free) media coverage, from the likes of *The Telegraph*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Monocle*.

FRAME

ELLE

LE FIGARO

marie claire

VOGUE

IDEAT

Wallpaper*

HN hospitalitynet™

MONOCLE

PME

Leader
The magazine for school and college leaders

GLOBETRENDER™

KMU
MAGAZIN

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL









B
HOTELS

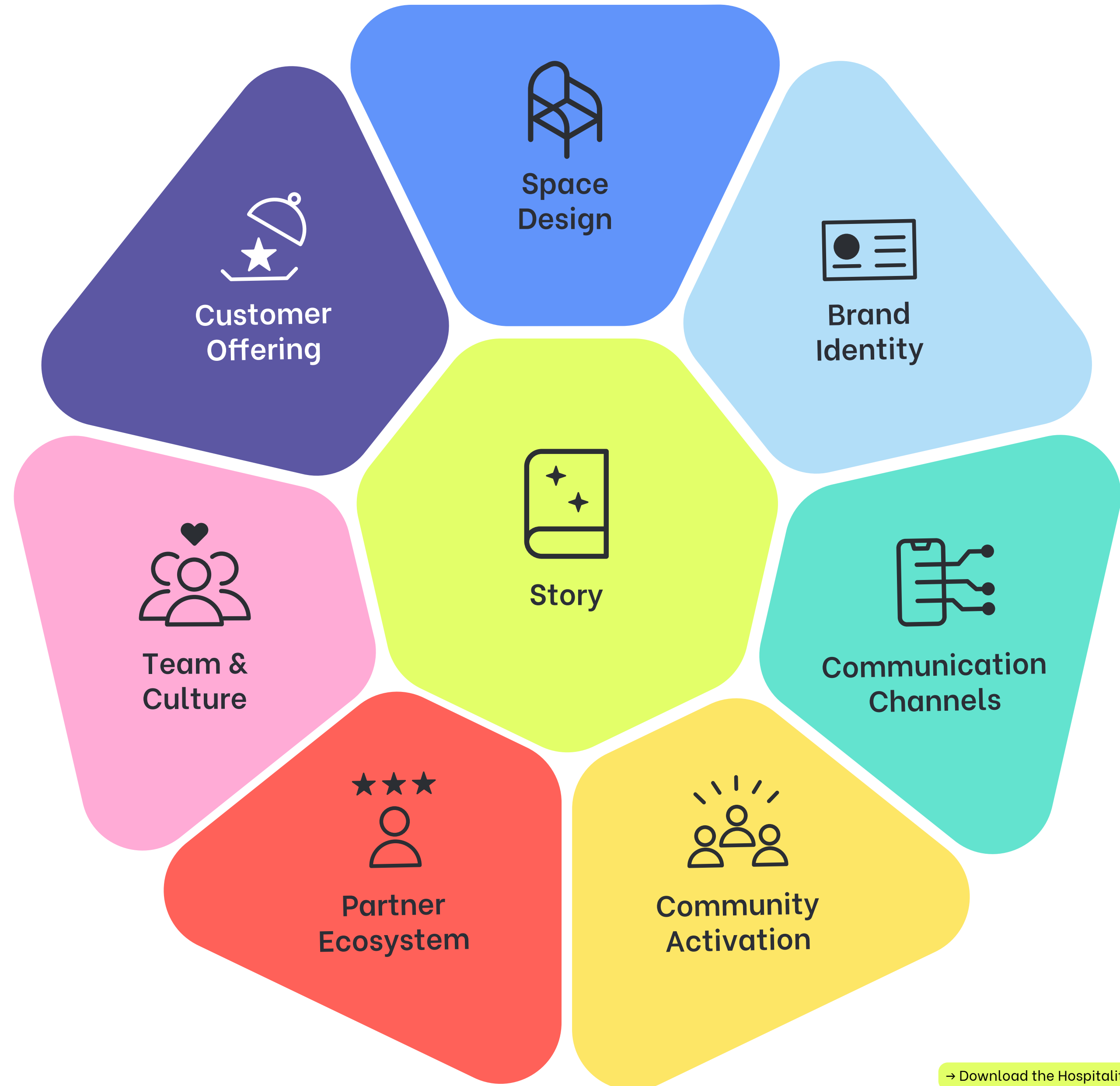
The
Economist

LUXURY TRIBUNE™

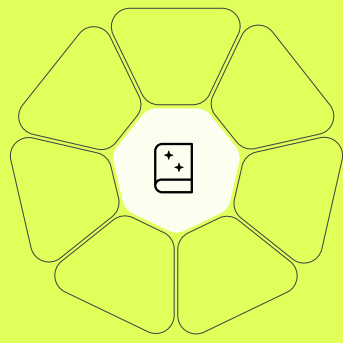
The Telegraph

The Hospitality Concept Blueprint

| | | |
|---|--|----|
|  | Story Reason for being and positioning of your concept | 14 |
|  | Brand Identity Visual, verbal and sensorial elements that identify your brand | 19 |
|  | Customer Offering Products, services and signature experiences that delight your guests | 23 |
|  | Space Design Spatial relationships, zoning (programming) and interior design of your physical space | 27 |
|  | Team & Culture Beliefs, shared values and standards to set your team up for success | 31 |
|  | Partner Ecosystem Complementary business partners that help you grow your concept | 35 |
|  | Community Activation On-site moments, events and activities that drive your community to take action | 39 |
|  | Communication Channels Digital and analogue channels to get your story out into the world | 43 |



[→ Download the Hospitality Concept Blueprint](#)



Story

Craft a compelling story that runs through your hospitality concept like a golden thread.

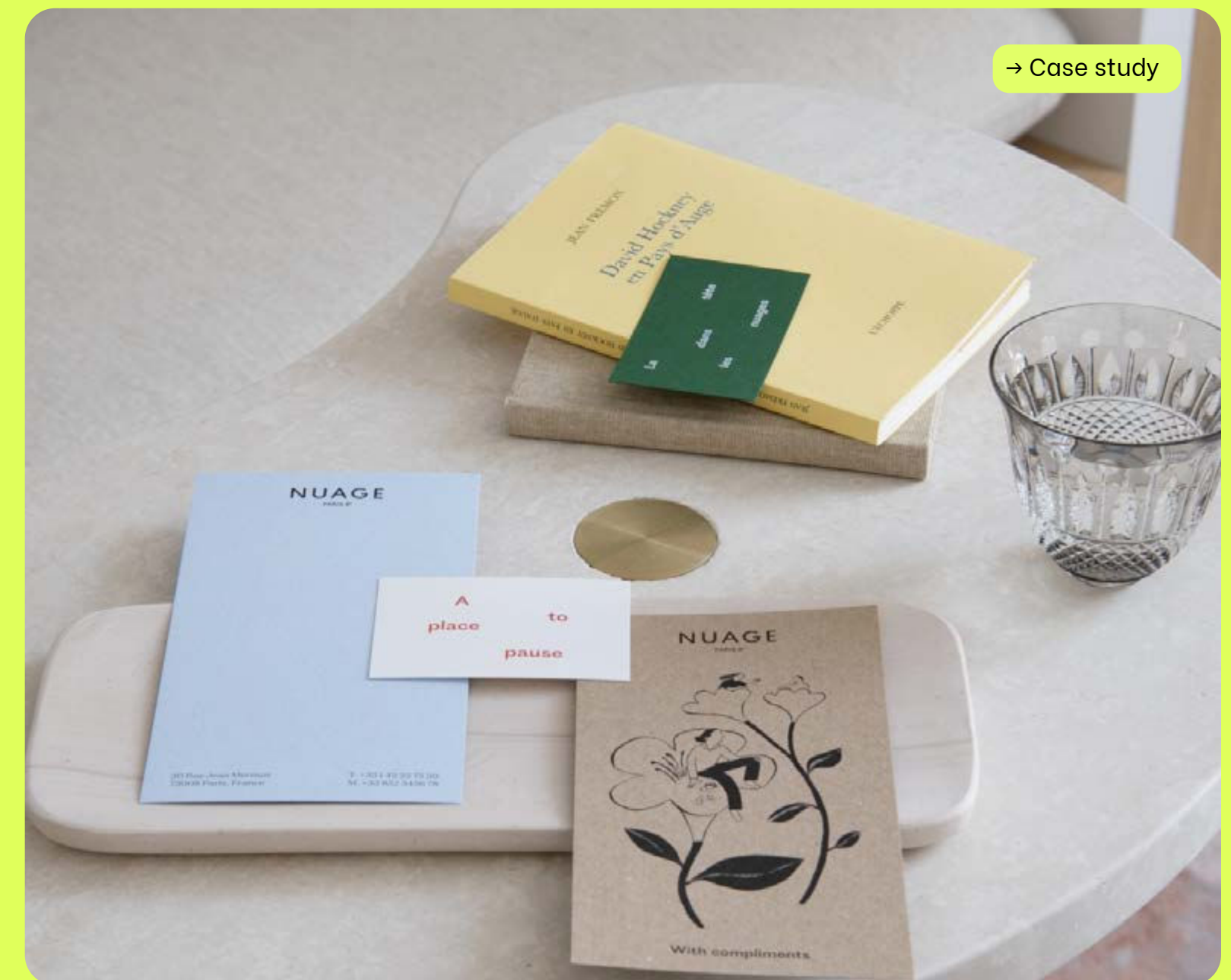
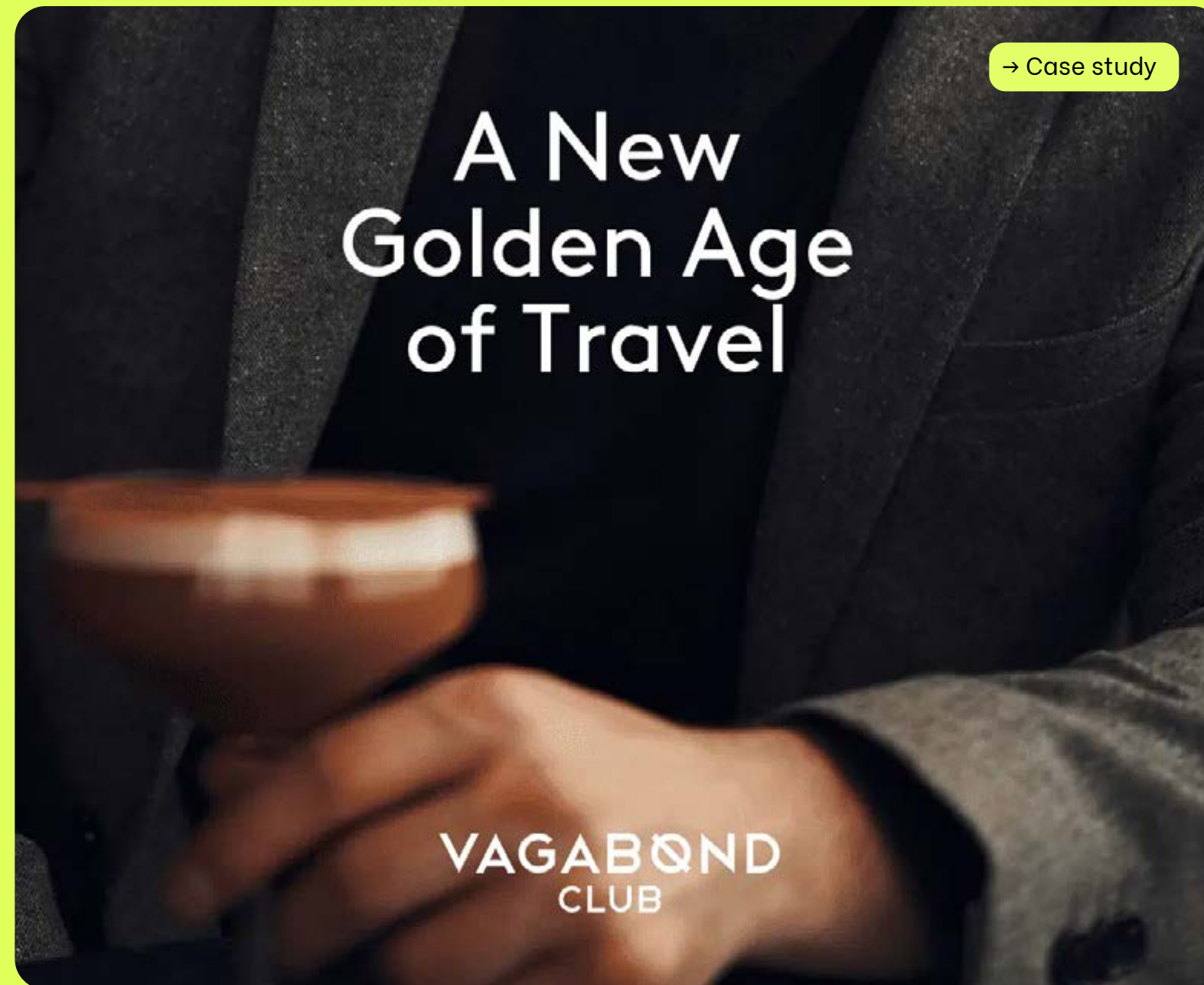
Storytelling lies at the heart of our approach. It acts as a golden thread connecting all the building blocks of your concept, which is why it's important to have a clear picture of your story before working on the rest.

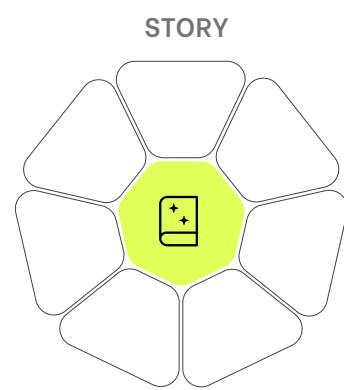
Vagabond club branding plays on nostalgia.

Photograph of members from the Zürcher Frauenverein (ZfV Group) uncovered during archival research.

Turkish celebrity chef Nusr-Et pulling off his signature move.

Branded collateral developed for Nuage, a Parisian slow-luxury destination.



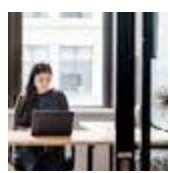
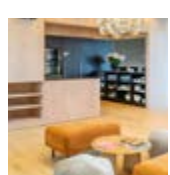
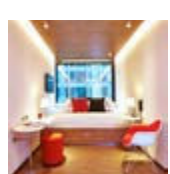


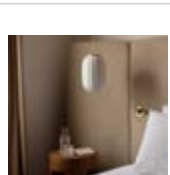
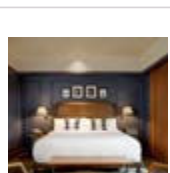
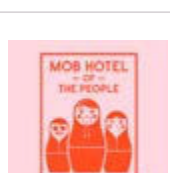
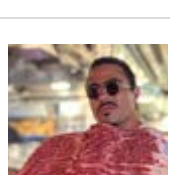
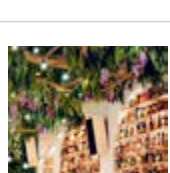


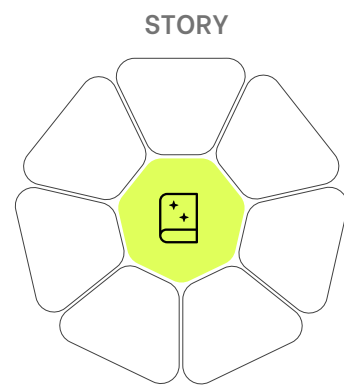


From a product-centric to a story-centric perspective

A story defines the role of a hospitality concept and its positioning. It conveys why customers should visit you, beyond booking a room, ordering breakfast or renting an office space.

In other words, moving from a product-centric perspective to a story-centric one differentiates your concept from your competitors and creates greater perceived value for your customers.

| Concept name | Product-centric | Story-centric |
|--|---|--|
|  Starbucks | A chain of coffee shops | A third-place to socialise |
|  Soho House | A membership-based hospitality concept | Connecting creative culture |
|  WeWork | A chain of nicely designed co-working spaces | Empowering tomorrow's world at work |
|  FlexOffice → Case study | Office rental with shared facilities | A collective of forward-thinkers and problem-solvers |
|  CitizenM | A 4-star hotel chain with prefabricated rooms | Affordable luxury for global citizens |
|  Terrass" Hotel | A boutique hotel in Montmartre | The artists' address since 1911 |
|  Vagabond Club → Case study | A portfolio of hotels in Germany | Reinventing the golden age of travel |
|  Nuage → Case study | A luxury hotel in Paris 8th district | The flagship of slow luxury <i>à la française</i> |
|  Life House Hotels | Affordable lifestyle boutique hotel chain | The art of thoughtful travel |
|  MOB Hotel → Article | A budget hotel in the suburbs of Paris | A cooperative and caring movement |
|  Nusr-Et | A steakhouse with celebrity clientele | A spectacular meat feast for all your senses |
|  Big Mamma | Trattorias with instagrammable decor | Transporting you to Italy |



Play on your strength

Coming up with a meaningful, memorable, and timeless story is a creative exercise. As a rule of thumb, you want to find something that uses your strengths and gives your customers what they want and your competitors don't have. You want to assign "an active role" to your place, a role that goes beyond the cliché of "a home away from home". A story should also consider the team, culture, location and infrastructure of a property. For instance, centring a story around avant-garde street art would not be consistent with an airport hotel run by conservative founders.

Having a good story presents a number of clear advantages:

Brand positioning and visual created for the Terrass" Hotel, an upscale Parisian hotel in Montmartre.

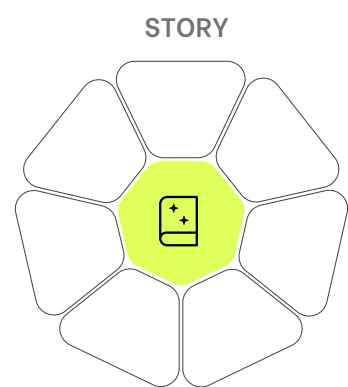
1. A story lasts virtually forever and can evolve.

2. A story is hard to copy and can increase awareness around your property.

3. A story is inexpensive to create, in relation to the overall cost of building and construction.

4. A story can trigger an emotional response and decrease price sensitivity.

5. A story is engaging and gives journalists a reason to follow you over the years.



3 tips to create a great story

Tip 01

Don't mix up your product with your storytelling

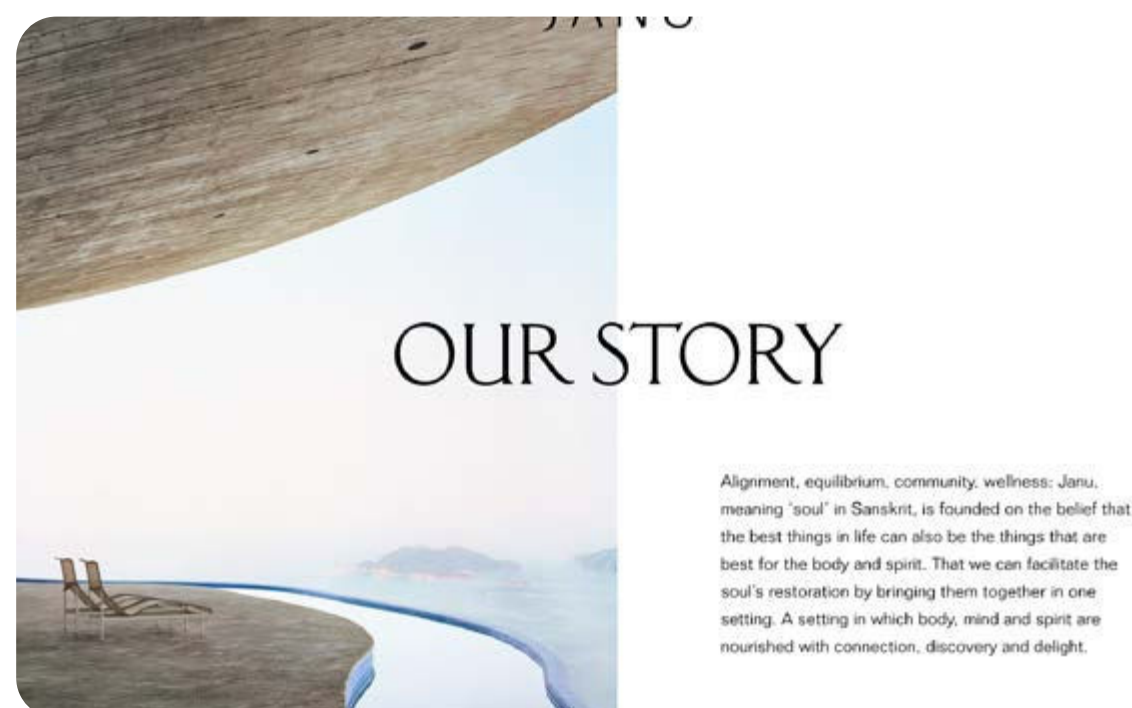


Turkish chef Fatih Tutak in his kitchen.

Good storytelling doesn't just describe your product. It puts it in context. Storytelling explains how your decor or menu is part of a broader vision or ideal. Take Fatih Tutak, a two-star Michelin chef in Istanbul, whose story is about "creating a new alphabet for Turkish cuisine by reinterpreting familiar flavours". Sounds better than a list of ingredients, doesn't it?

Tip 02

Create narrative tension



Website from Janu, the diffusion brand of Aman.

Compelling stories are triggered by a narrative tension, a situation that must be resolved, changed or improved. Take CitizenM, for example, which is on a mission to make luxury affordable, or Janu, the diffusion brand of Aman which promises to "restore equilibrium through connectedness". All have an invisible enemy that must be overcome (expensive luxury and unbalanced life, respectively).

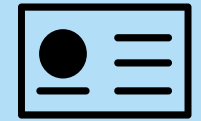
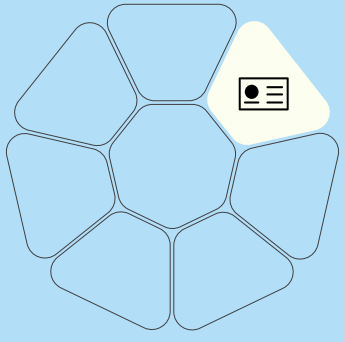
Tip 03

Avoid the thematic pitfall



Room design based on a theme rather than a concept.

It's important not to confuse story and theme. Themed concepts try to recreate a set universe (mainly through design), but few of them take the time to work on their story. A sailing-themed hotel might appeal to few one-time guests, but how often would you want to visit? A good story does not have to be literal, but it must be engaging.

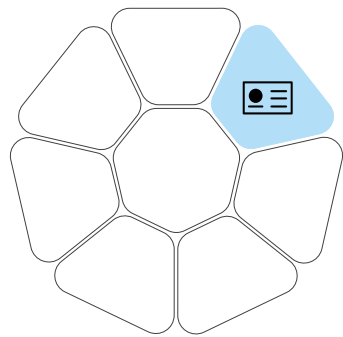


Brand Identity

Design the visible elements of your brand to communicate your story and identity.

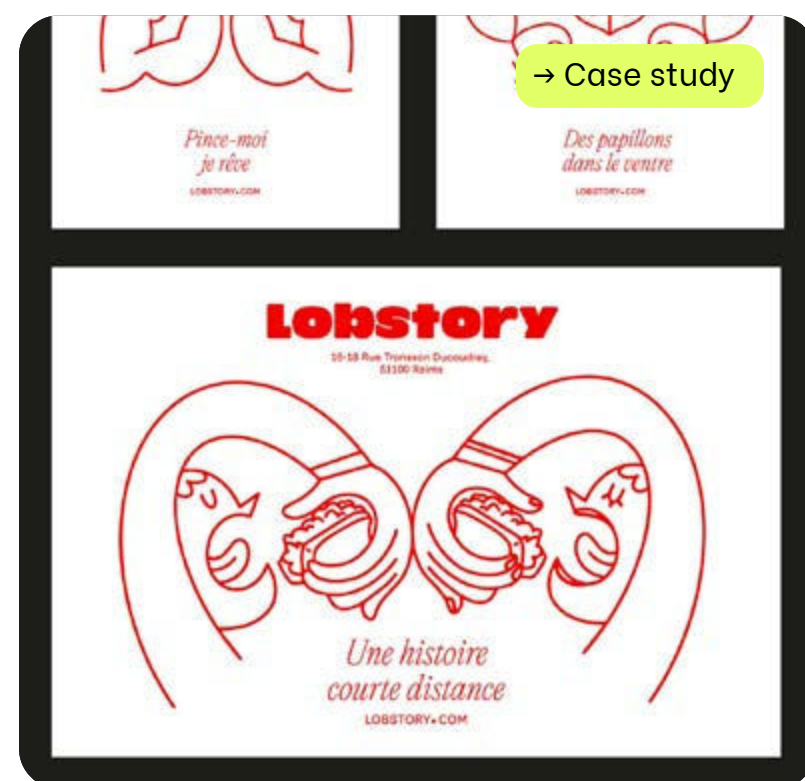
A brand identity encompasses all the graphic, verbal and sensorial aspects of your hospitality concept. From corridor signage and website design all the way to on-hold music, each and every touchpoint is an opportunity for a concept to express its unique identity. Your identity shouldn't only be fully coherent with the story of your concept, but also integrated within all touchpoints before, during and after your customers' visit.





Visual consistency

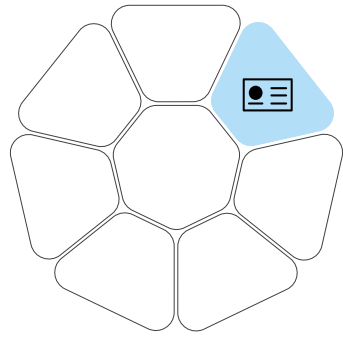
Visual identity plays a particularly important role in creating a brand identity. Your logo, colour palette, photography and/or illustration style should all work together to express your story. For Velâdzo, a mixed-use hospitality development in Bulle, we created a series of hand-drawn illustrations to visualise the human touch and local anchoring of the brand. The visual identity you develop also extends to the content you create. Whether website, Instagram post, trade show banner or YouTube video, your content should always be on-brand. Repetition and consistency will help cement your brand in the minds of your customers.



Brand identity for Lobstory, a chic lobster roll restaurant concept in Reims.

Brand identity for Velâdzo, a mix-used retail and hospitality concept in Fribourg.

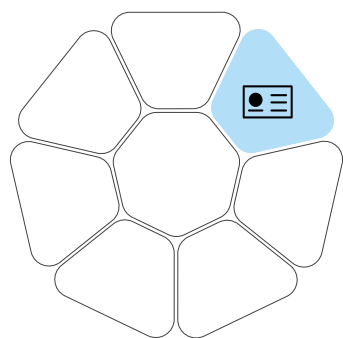




Cliché alert

Clichés and stereotypes can ruin an otherwise authentic experience. Be sure to avoid pictures of soulless city views—or worse, stock images—and think beyond local landmarks as a replacement for a hotel logo. Sensorial experiences need to be subtle too. A funky playlist can enliven your bar in the evening but is likely to drive away guests if it's playing the next day at breakfast. Pay particular attention to the smell and composition of bathroom products: nothing ruins a good shower like blatantly artificial fragrances and a dry scalp.

[→ Case study](#)



3 tips to create a unique brand identity

Tip 01

Think system,
not logo



Brand identity for Velâdzo, a mix-used retail and hospitality concept in Fribourg.

Uninspiring logos on every piece of collateral are a no-go. Your brand identity should be recognisable even without your logo. Create a visual system made of colours, shapes and typographies. For example, the visual system we developed for Velâdzo, a mixed-use retail concept in Switzerland, is instantly recognisable thanks to its unique red-green combination and line pattern.

→ Case study

Tip 02

Sell pictures,
not rooms



Suite with a swing at Nuage, a Parisian slow-luxury destination.

Your customers will likely be exposed to your concept online before seeing it in real life. This means that customers make purchase decisions based on pictures, not reality. Think like an e-commerce business and spare no expense to shoot breathtaking pictures of your concept.

→ Case study

Tip 03

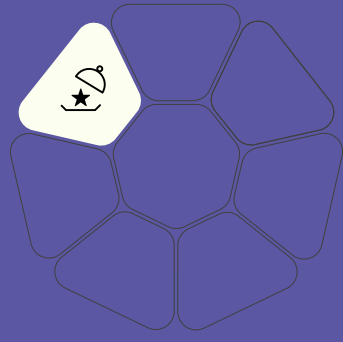
Write
the details



Custom illustration for La Table des Airelles.

Confirmation emails, Wi-Fi passwords or purchase receipts are all text-based touchpoints. But most of the time their content is standard and uninspiring. Yours don't have to be. A meaningful (branded) name for your Wi-Fi password, for example, can give your customers reason to pause. Sometimes a word is worth a thousand pictures.

→ Case study



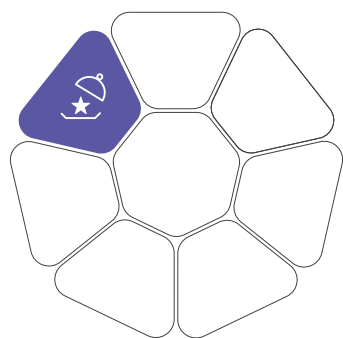
Customer Offering

Implement products, services and experiences to wow your customers and keep them coming back.

Your offering defines the services and products you want to provide your customers with. Take-away sushi? Fitness or a meeting room? Deciding what (and what not) to offer depends on your story, location, competition, target segments, capability and ambition.



A fully equipped recording studio in BUNK, a hostel located in a former church in Amsterdam.



Unique on-site signature experiences

Mobile apps have, and will, continue to change the way hospitality concepts define their offering. Netflix has long since replaced pay TV; Uber Eats has become a direct competitor to room service; and Zoom has taken over the physical office. So, what can you offer that these digital upstarts can't? One answer to this question is unique on-site experiences.

The digitalisation of the hotel experience

| Outlet | Digital equivalent |
|-------------------------|---|
| Reservation | Booking.com, Skyscanner |
| Concierge desk | Tripadvisor, Google Maps, robotic butlers |
| Room service | Uber Eats, Deliveroo |
| Taxi / airport transfer | Uber, Gett, BlaBlaCar, Taxify, Lyft |
| In-room entertainment | Netflix, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok |
| Room telephone | WhatsApp, FaceTime, Skype |
| Meeting/office space | Zoom, GoTo Meeting, Google Hangout |
| Fitness | Freeletics, MyFitnessPal, Nike Run Club |
| Wellness | Happify, Headspace |

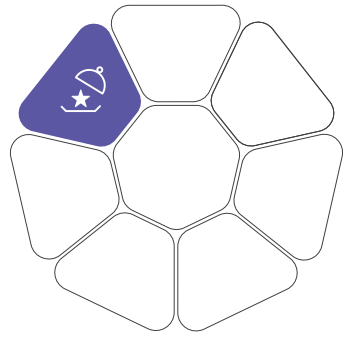
"Shower beers" at the BrewDog hotel, a hospitality concept opened by the eponymous beer brand.

An instagrammable entrance at Bunk, a hostel located in a former church in Amsterdam.

These can take many forms, but they should all be linked to your hospitality concept. Take BUNK, a hip hostel brand in Amsterdam located in a converted church, that promises to check guests "into a world of wonder". Alongside other experiences, BUNK

features a "secret studio" where they welcome artists and producers to create, record and stream their new sounds. Or check out the brewery BrewDog's DogHouse hotels that offer beer fridges in the showers and beer taps in every room.





How much technology do you really need?

When planning your offering, consider the role and use of technology in delivering your value proposition. Prioritise customer-facing technology that's technically simple and has high perceived value. In other words, WhatsApp concierge service is in and electronic curtains are out.

Non-customer-facing technology can also be used in your storytelling. Just look at the upcoming Svart Hotel in Norway, which employs solar panels, sensors and heat recycling technologies, tangible proof points of its promise to “inspire discerning travellers to care for nature”.



Rendering of Svart Hotel in Norway, a luxurious sustainable hotel in development.

Thinking beyond your four walls

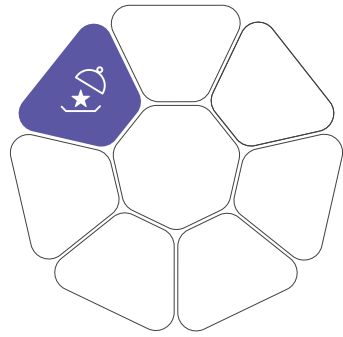


By basing your offering on a story, you'll easily be able to expand your offering across diverse products and services. Cipriani, an Italian hospitality group focused on “luxury hospitality in simplicity”, has used its story to build a diverse F&B empire that includes restaurants, hotels, catering services, grocery products and food

Umamido's very own Gyoza sauce.

subscriptions. Even independent concepts can successfully expand their offerings. Take Umamido, a Brussels-based ramen restaurant chain, which started to sell its own gyoza sauce and raw oil online. Don't let physical walls limit your growth potential.





3 tips for delivering a superior customer offering

Tip 01 Combine universes



Nice Weather, a concept store in Seoul, modelled after a ubiquitous convenience store.



Burger and Lobster's Taittinger brunch features a Champagne Train running along the bar.

To generate out-of-the-box ideas for your offering, consider combining different universes that aren't normally associated. Burger & Lobster, a London-based restaurant chain, surprises guests with a miniature champagne train. And Nice Weather, a reinvented grocery store and market in Seoul, turns the local kiosk into a place of cultural consumption.

Tip 02 Develop principles



French ultra-luxury hotel brand Airelles has clear development criteria for choosing new locations for its hotels.

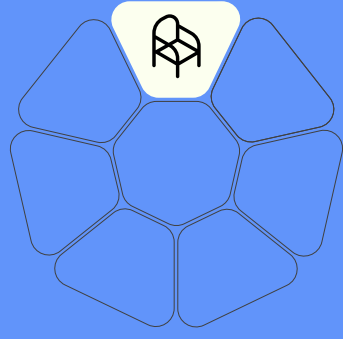
If you're expanding your concept to more than one location, you'll need to develop principles, also known as "development criteria", to assess the concept-fit of potential locations. Specify all your criteria, from the essentials to the nice-to-haves. Typically these include minimum rooms/seats, customer facilities, site typology, etc.

Tip 03 Never forget the basics



Clean room, hot water, working Wi-Fi... the importance of the basics can never be overstated.

Start with the basics. It doesn't matter how comprehensive your service catalogue is— if the bedroom is dirty or the water is cold, your customers won't come back. Think about mapping your offering on Maslow's pyramid of needs, from physiological (food, sleep, etc.) to self-actualisation (enabling your customers to become the best versions of themselves), to see where and how you can add value.



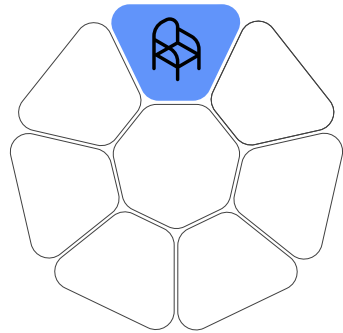
Space Design

Plan your space to deliver a unique experience while optimising your revenue per square metre.

Effective space design is critical to developing your concept. The key is to begin designing your space only when your story and offering are clear. This way, they'll inform and guide the space design. For example, STAGE, an event space in Paris, is designed to reflect its story as a local cultural and social hub, while RYSE in Seoul is built to express the spirit of Hongdae, a neighbourhood known for indie culture and urban art.



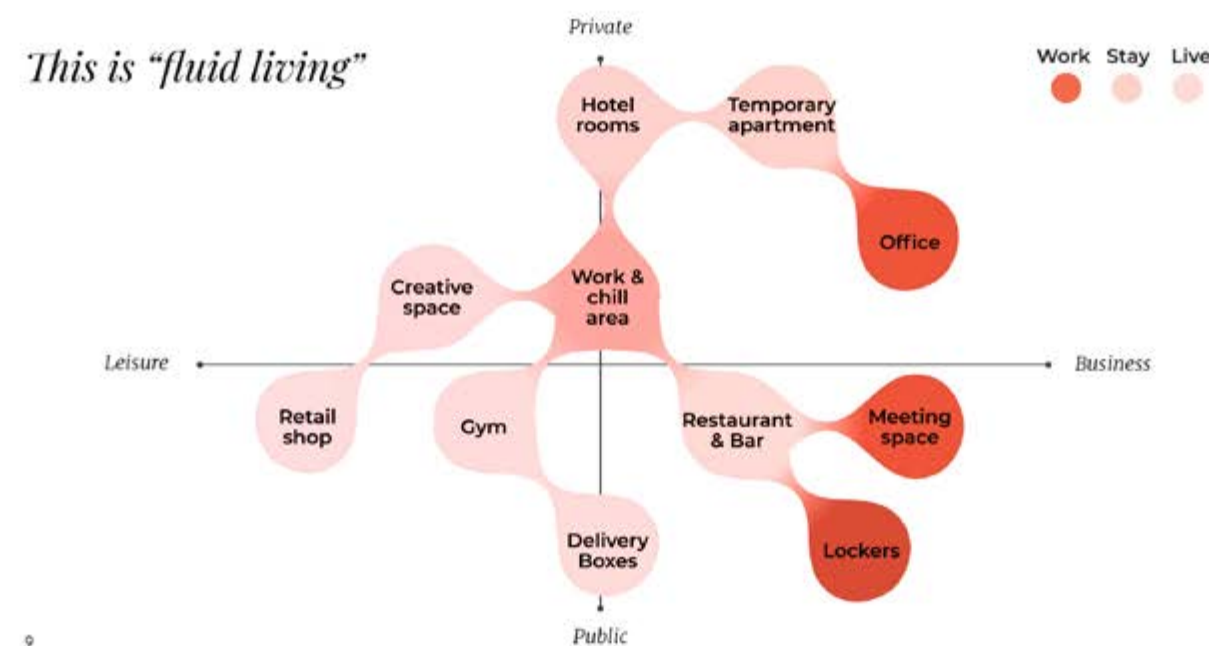
Open layout in the lobby of RYSE, a contemporary luxury hotel in Seoul, part of Marriott's Autograph Collection.



Space design typically has *three steps*: Spatial relationships, Architectural zoning & Interior design.

→ Case study

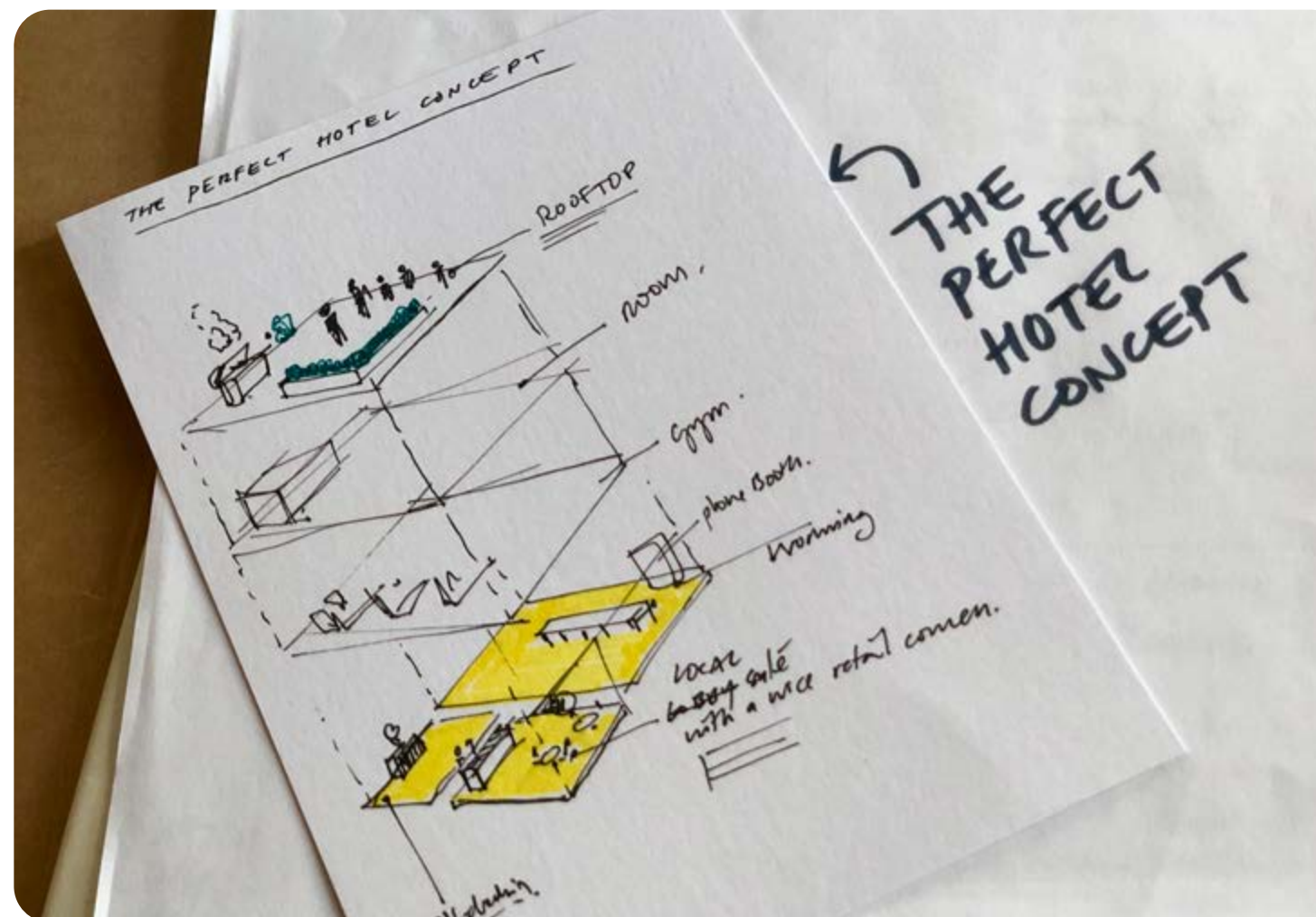
R.evo is like a campus for grown-ups, where the boundaries between work and leisure are blurred



Mapping of spatial relationships for Vienna House R.evo, a hybrid hospitality concept that mixes hotel rooms and long-stay apartments.

Concept drawing for a city hotel in Eastern Europe.

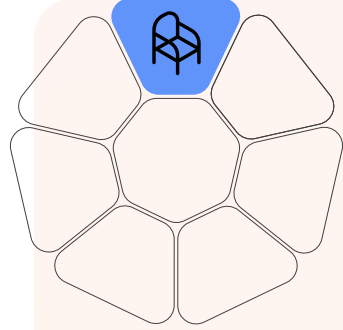
Cafe Lounge at the BnA Alter Museum in Kyoto.



Step 1 Spatial relationships

The first step in planning your space is to map out all the different outlets or zones of your concept, and identify their spatial roles and relationships to each other. This will help you clarify the overall customer flow and pinpoint any operational issues. At this stage, you should have a solid understanding of your customer offering – after all, you wouldn't plan your space the same way for a tapas bar as you would for an *à la carte* fine dining restaurant. Create a "spatial relationship diagram" to visualise your space concept and inform the interior design or architectural work. For a greenfield hotel project in Lago Maggiore, Italy, we developed a detailed spatial relationship diagram that helped refine the initial architectural plans, improving the overall guest experience.





Step 2 Architectural zoning

Also known as “space programming”, this is the stage where the plan meets reality—or you learn to make adjustments and compromises. Zoning is the translation of the flow map into the actual blueprint of the space. Different spaces have different purposes and require different placement. A quiet library space, for example, won’t work well next to a busy restaurant or hotel bar. Legal requirements (e.g. access for people with reduced mobility) need to be considered at this stage too.

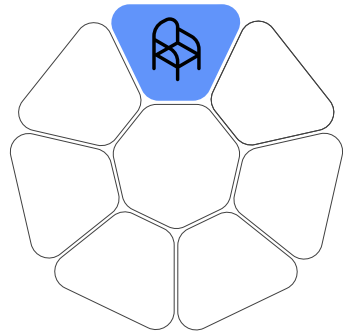
Floorplan designs for Gilda, a luxury residence in Andermatt.

Step 3 Interior design

Interior designers should consider the story, as well as the customer flow and zoning. Establishing these variables before initiating the design process lets your interior designers focus on aesthetic quality and bringing your story to life with the right combination of furniture pieces, textiles, materials and decorative objects.



Gilda interior design sketches by MACH Architecture.



3 tips to ace your space design

Tip 01

Think about social norms



Cosy and intimate atmosphere at the Vagabond Club.

Consider cultural and social norms when designing a space. Narrow corridors and dim lighting encourage your guests to be quiet, while a bar area with high stools and loud music signals social interaction.

→ Case study

Tip 02

Anticipate the media shot



The Cinema Pool at Dadou naturally attracts media attention.

The media will look for a picture that tells the story of your concept. For Dadou, a Parisian hotel with a twist, we conceptualised a cinema-pool called La Nouvelle Vague that successfully got the attention of the media.

→ Case study

Tip 03

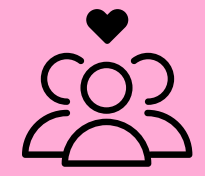
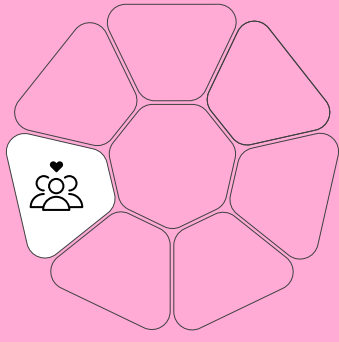
Think about forgotten spaces



The staircase at French Theory doubles as an art gallery.

Elevators, staircases or corridors are typically forgotten in the creative process. Giving special attention to forgotten spaces will surprise your guests. French Theory, a Parisian lifestyle concept, transformed its staircase into an art gallery called *La Galerie qui Monte* (the gallery that climbs upward).

→ Case study

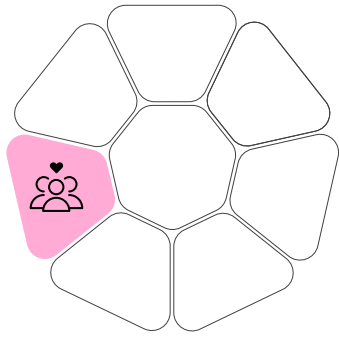


Team & Culture

Rely on the power of your story to draw together the best team for your vision.

Your team, particularly the customer-facing side of it, play a critical role in delivering the experience you've so carefully planned. Getting them on board at both the conceptual and operational stages is the secret to making your strategy a reality.





Good stories bring people together

Your story is your starting point for not only recruiting the right people, but also training them to deliver a customer experience that fulfils your promise. Good Hotel, for example, has committed to delivering “premium hospitality with a purpose”.

To make good on that promise, they offer skills training to long-term unemployed local workers, giving them a chance to reintegrate into society. Or take ChâteauForm’, a meeting and corporate events venue provider founded by a couple.

The company insists on hiring couples to run each of its venues to promote conviviality, a key value of the brand.

The Good Hotel supports social programmes far beyond its walls.

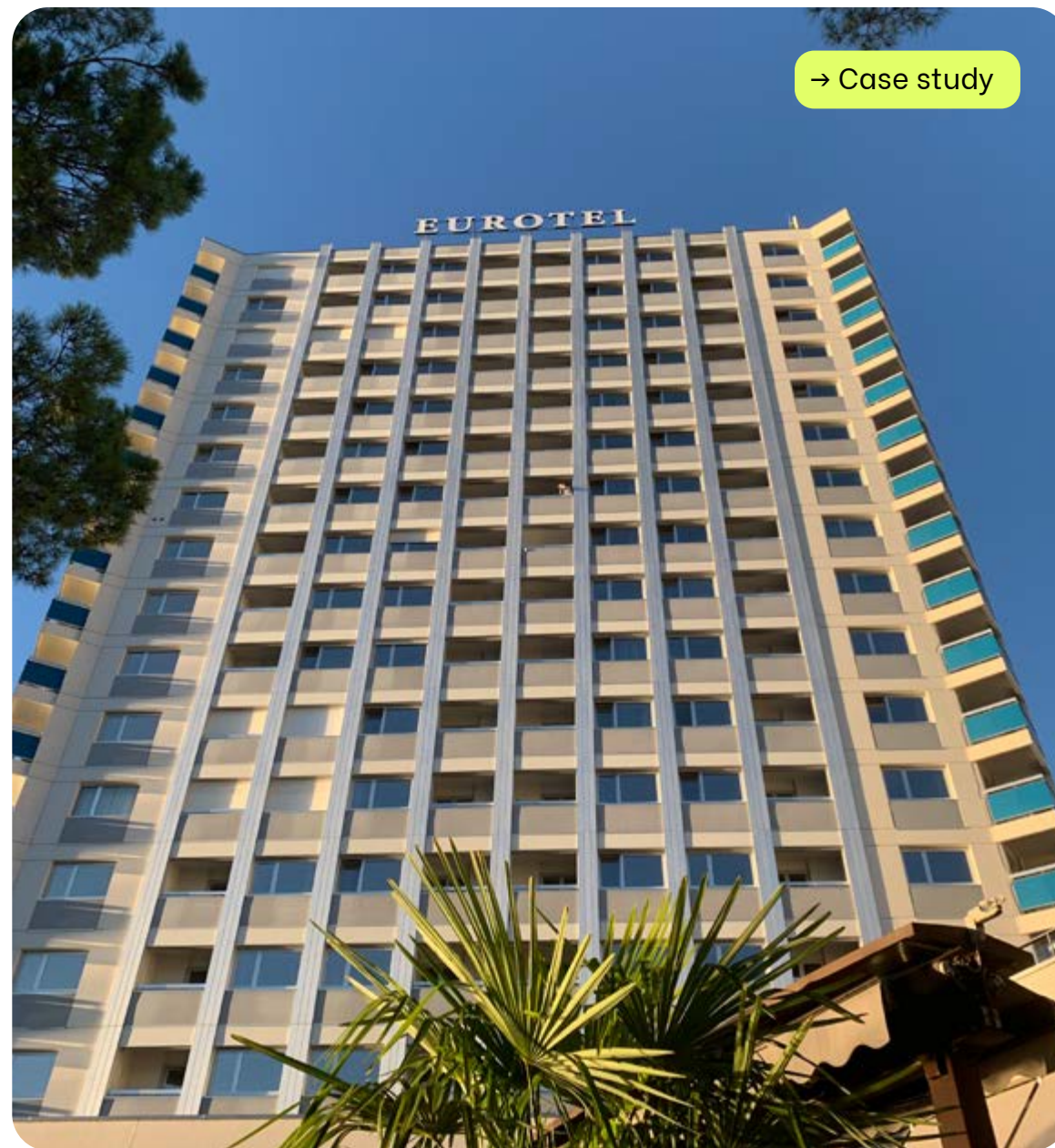
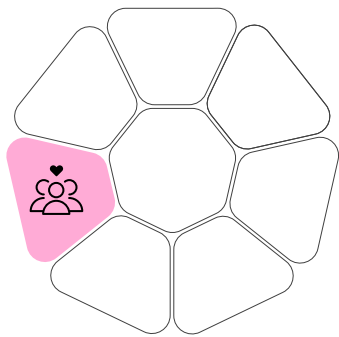
Châteauform’ employs couples to manage its properties to create a family atmosphere.

A sense of belonging

Empowered staff or scripted interactions? The right balance between standards and freedom will depend heavily on your concept. Either way, you must guarantee your team a sense of belonging. Selina, a fast-growing budget resort brand targeting digital nomads, does this well. Selina’s employees are considered part of the “Selina neighbourhood”, alongside their customer base of freelancers, non-stop travellers, break-takers and local communities.

Another good example is Habitas, a barefoot luxury resort brand that describes itself as “a family that shares a passion for sustainability and community”. Joining Habitas as an employee is more than a job. It’s a calling.

Community focused Selina encourages employees to take initiative.



Respecting existing peoples and cultures

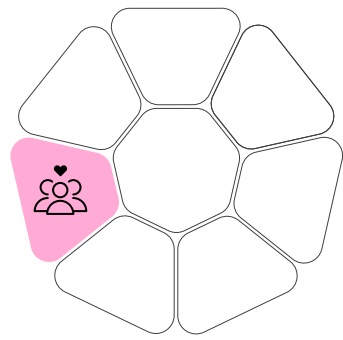
Owners, managers and employees should all shape the way a concept is developed. Whether independent hotel concept creation or large hotel group rebranding, we always run a series of workshops with both line and management teams to understand the culture in place. Sometimes the location itself has a strong culture. Like in the Champagne region, where tradition is highly valued and newcomers are frowned upon. Understanding these subtleties was necessary for us when creating Rue de la Folie, a new upscale hotel in the centre of Epernay.



The Eurotel in Montreux has a rich history of more than 50 years.

Workshops are essential to generate ideas and align stakeholders.

New development in a historic region like Champagne must respect its heritage.



3 tips for building a winning team and culture

Tip 01

Empower your team to deliver on your promise



The Ritz Carlton empowers its “ladies and Gentlemen” to delight customers.

The people dealing directly with your customers should be empowered to make decisions on the spot. Ritz Carlton Hotels, for example, allows its employees to spend up to \$2,000 per guest, per incident, in order to improve or fix an aspect of the customer experience – without having to ask a higher-up for approval.

Tip 02

Employ creative people to drive value



Folie Douce team members are not only carrying plates.

As you build your team, consider bringing some creative people on board. La Folie Douce, an Alpine party restaurant brand, not only has a photographer, graphic designer and social media manager on site at its restaurants, but also organises annual casting sessions in Paris and London to recruit show artists.

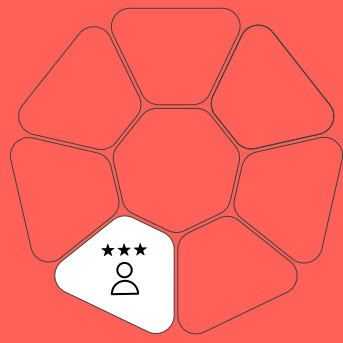
Tip 03

Hire beyond skills



Genuine attention at Zürichberg Hotel.

Too often, managing people is seen as a purely operational issue, primarily centred around skills training to increase the quality and consistency of service. But intangible elements, like beliefs and shared values, can also significantly impact the customer experience.



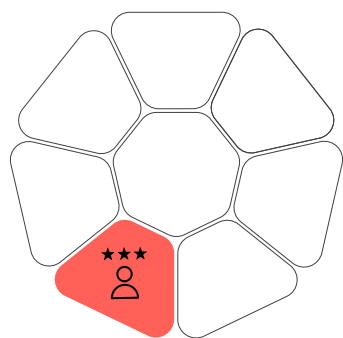
Partner Ecosystem

Leverage your partners' expertise, reputation and network to create new sources of value.

In the hospitality industry, we speak a lot about suppliers—those who provide coffee, bed linens, laundry, housekeeping and so on. But what about leveraging certain suppliers to make them partners? By using their name, reputation and profile, you can increase the value proposition of your concept.



From expert mountain guides to private plane pilots and specialist food suppliers, the experience at Sheldon Chalet, a remote luxury hotel in Alaska, relies on many stakeholders.



Fogo Island Inn hosts artists in its own artist residency.



Partnering around your story

If you don't know what you stand for, you'll look for any old supplier or jump on the next big hype. Your story acts as a magnet and binder for your partners. Take the Fogo Island Inn on Fogo Island in Newfoundland, Canada. This secluded hotel is all about supporting a sustainable economic future on Fogo Island. Through its Artist-in-Residence programme, the hotel works with artists who create contemporary art inspired by the island. Selected artists are then invited to present their work at the Fogo Island Gallery, located within the hotel.



Startup Minoan allows guests to “shop the room”.



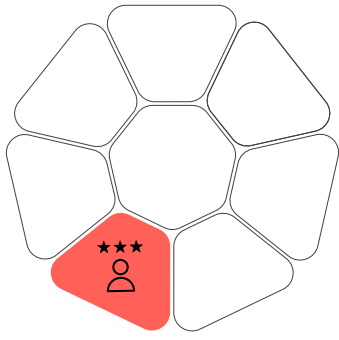
Zurich-based Miró Coffee has partnered with Swiss Airlines to offer premium coffee in economy class.



Expanding and diversifying your offering

Consider partnering up to reach out to new audiences as well as create new revenue sources.

The airline Swiss, for instance, gets its coffee supplied by Miró, a small-scale coffee shop in Zurich. This particular partnership strengthens the airline's “Swissness” while enabling Miró to expand its reach. Partnerships are also about combining complementary competencies, such as e-commerce and design. Companies like Minoan Experience or Maison Flâneur, for example, partner with hotels to turn their spaces into immersive shopping experiences. Like the kettle in your room? Just scan the QR code and order it on the spot.



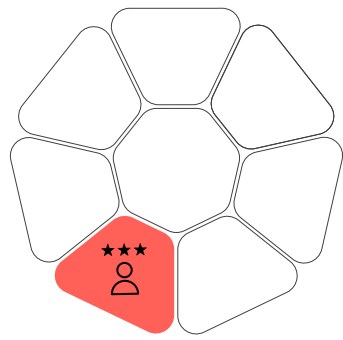
Co-branding partnerships

Smart co-branding partnerships can unlock unique customer value. Ferrari, for example, is tapping into the fame and following of chef Massimo Bottura for its on-site trattoria in Maranello, Italy. And The Intercontinental in Singapore held a competition for sous chefs from three-star Michelin restaurants. The winner would open and run the hotel's new fine-dining restaurant. This proved to be a clever way to create buzz around their new restaurant without having to hire a celebrity chef.

The Cavallino restaurant reinterprets the spirit of Ferrari within the walls of the original restaurant founded by Enzo Ferrari in 1950.

An Italian bistronomic concept restaurant, LUCE by Davide Giacomelli at Intercontinental Singapore

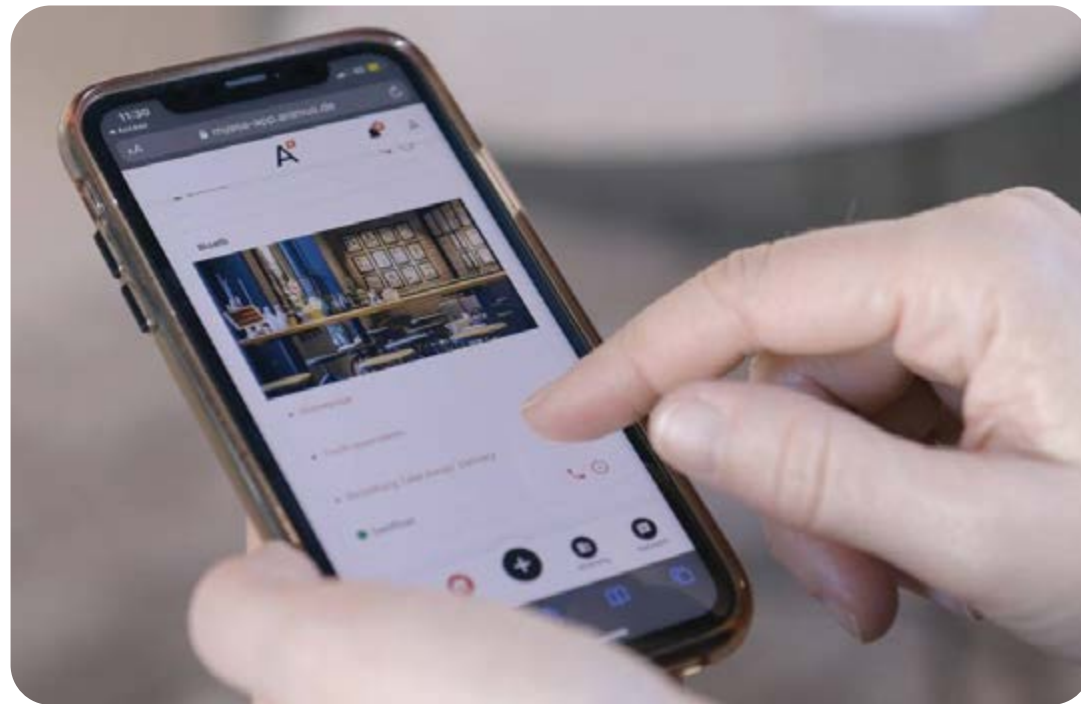




3 tips for forming a win-win partner ecosystem

Tip 01

Turn your customers into partners



Residence owners at Andermatt Reuss get access to an exclusive app to connect with each other.

Owners who purchase an apartment in the new Alpine village of Andermatt Reuss also get access to a private owners' app that allows them to organise social gatherings or find a tennis partner. The prospect of joining an exclusive group of owners isn't only attractive to new buyers, but also works as a way to make existing owners part of the value proposition.

→ Case study

Tip 02

Co-drive revenue



Why not partner with a yoga club to increase revenue for a health-focused hotel.

Collaborations can, in certain cases, drive direct bookings to your establishment. If you run a wellness resort, for example, you could ask yoga studios in your feeder markets to refer customers to your establishment in exchange for a commission.

Tip 03

Consider pop-up collaborations

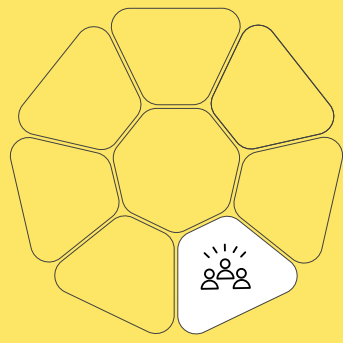


Ralph Lauren takes over the Twiggy beach club in Dubai.



Rapidly growing in Asia, Flash Coffee partners with niche labels to launch fashion capsule collections.

Temporary collaborations can be a great way to generate new interest in your property. The Twiggy beach club at the Park Hyatt Dubai invited Ralph Lauren to take over the space for a month and a half through customised sunbeds and private cabanas, a branded ice cream truck and signature refreshments.

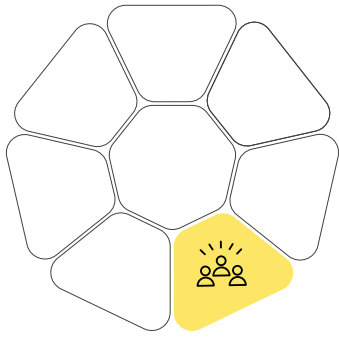


Community Activation

**Consider on-site moments,
events and activities to engage
your community all year round.**

Hospitality concepts have a great advantage: they are immersive by definition. While advertisers need to fight for a few seconds of attention on YouTube or Instagram, hospitality businesses literally have a captive audience. A successful activation makes the most of your customers' on-site visits.





Triggering customer actions

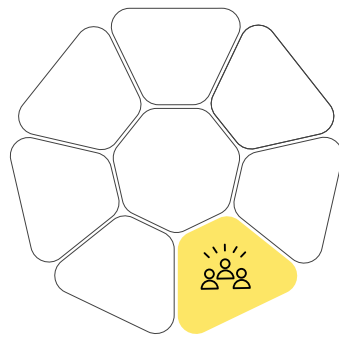
When your customers are on site, it's much easier to engage them than when they are away. E-commerce sites scatter call-to-action (CTA) buttons everywhere to incite visitors to take action. You can apply the same thinking to your physical space. Think about where, when and how you want your customers to take action and integrate the right CTAs into your customer journey. Check out the "On-site activations" table for inspiration.



The iconic champagne button at Bob Bob Ricard Soho, London.

On-site activations

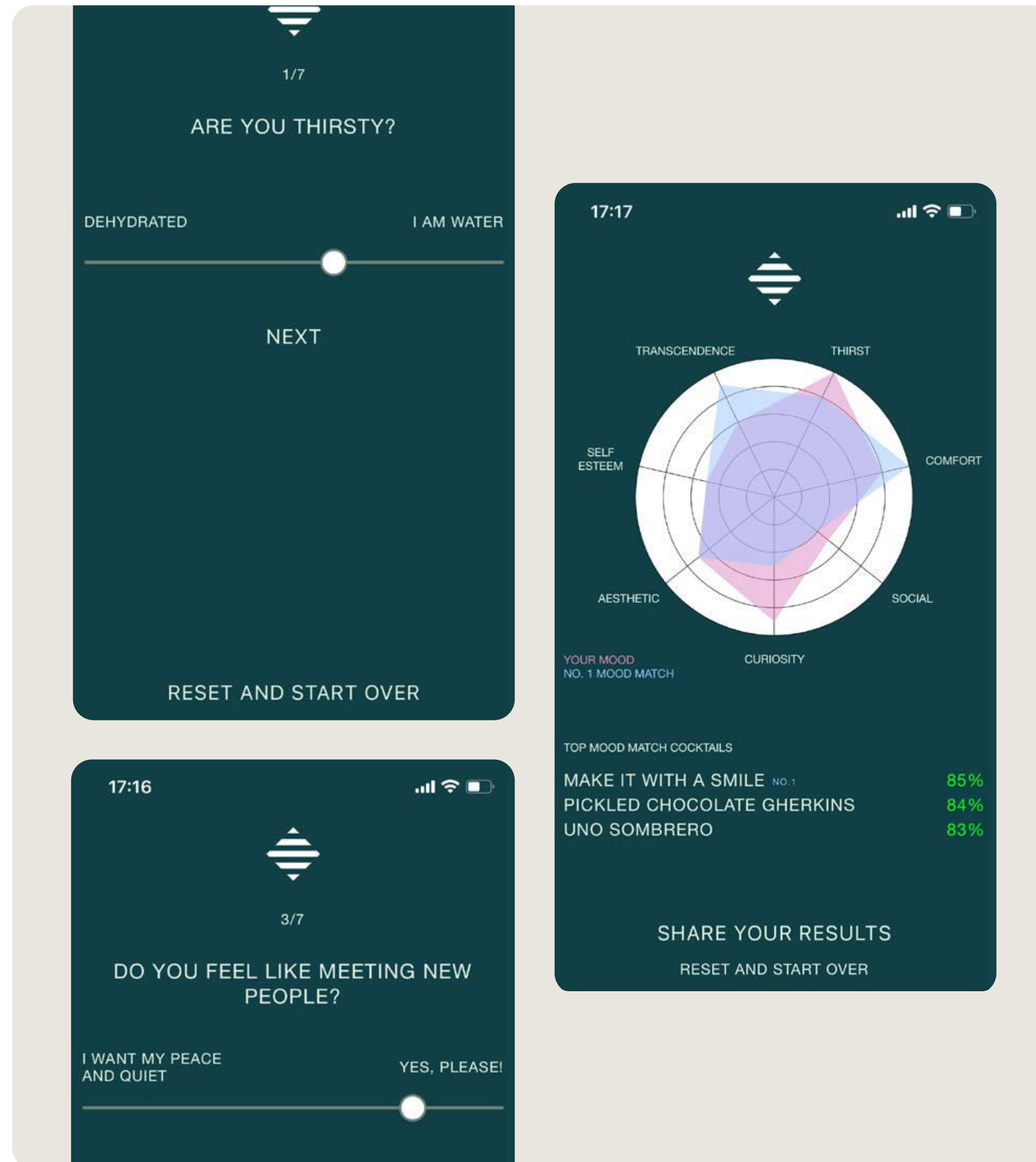
| Call-to-action (CTA) | Examples |
|----------------------------|--|
| Take a picture | Over the holiday season, Starbucks invites its customers to draw on special red cups and post their artwork on social media using #RedCupArt. |
| Reorder a drink | London restaurant Bob Bob Ricard entices customers to order another drink with a "Press for Champagne" button on each table. |
| Invite a friend | Uber rewards its existing users with credit for bringing in new customers. Did a bar ever offer you a discount for inviting your friends? |
| Write a review | Car rental Sixt's staff give customers a written card asking for a 5-star review. |
| Purchase an item | Alpine party restaurant La Folie Douce placed its shop directly by the outdoor dance floor to increase purchase conversion. |
| Order an appetiser | Istanbul restaurant Zennup 1884's menu is full of small comments highlighting the must-tries on their menu. |
| Order a dessert | Fred's restaurant in Cancun uses mouth-watering videos on an iPad to tempt customers to order dessert. |
| Book an activity | Lapoint surfcamp frames sport or cultural activities as social outings, taking advantage of social pressure to generate sign-ups. |
| Trigger a new visit | When checking out of a QT Hotels & Resorts property, guests receive a 'QT Passport' to collect stamps from every QT property they visit and receive special discounts and free extras. |



Burlesque show in the mountains at la Folie Douce.

Making the experience unforgettable

Having customers in your venue gives you the opportunity to create a memorable moment through sensory experiences that can't be replicated online. La Folie Douce Hotels surprises guests with a burlesque show that moves around the restaurant's tables, while Bar am Wasser in Zurich offers customers an interactive quiz on their smartphones to determine their next drink. These experiences not only engage customers, but also provide content for social media.



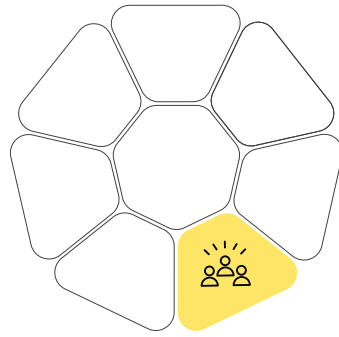
An app to find the perfect drink for your mood at Bar am Wasser in Zurich.

Yoga classes at STAGE, an event studio in Paris, part of the Terrass' Hotel.

Activities that tell your story

Activities should bring your story to life. But before you start organising flea markets, film nights, modern art exhibitions and outdoor Pilates classes, check that these activities align with your brand's core story. Generator, a hip hostel brand claiming to be "masters of the social experience", offer community-building events that include live concerts, karaoke nights, free walks, pub crawls and sporting events. All of these also provide content for social media.





3 tips for activating your community

Tip 01

Empower your community



Inclusive club Crane in Singapore gets its community involved.

Provide your community with the tools and space to organise activities themselves. Zoku, a hybrid between a hotel and a co-working space, activates its community by organising weekly communal meetings (called rituals). And Singapore-based Crane, an inclusive social club, gives its members the possibility to self-organise community events.

Tip 02

Define boundaries



After party at Soho House Berlin.

A community truly exists if it has both insiders and outsiders (think university alumni or business networks). Make sure you're clear on the rules to getting in (and staying out). Soho House memberships are for the creative elite, not everyone.

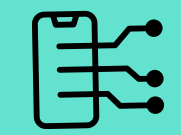
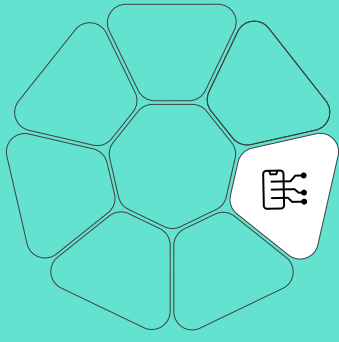
Tip 03

Engineer social interactions



Table tennis at Bounce London is more social than sporty.

People don't tend to strike up conversation out of nowhere. If you want to see social interactions, facilitate them. A pool table, a complementary tequila shot or a daily jogging tour can make all the difference.



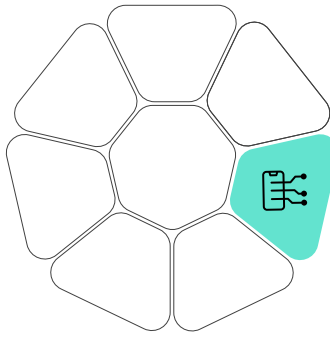
Communication Channels

Get your story out into the world by any means, from website to advanced content strategy.

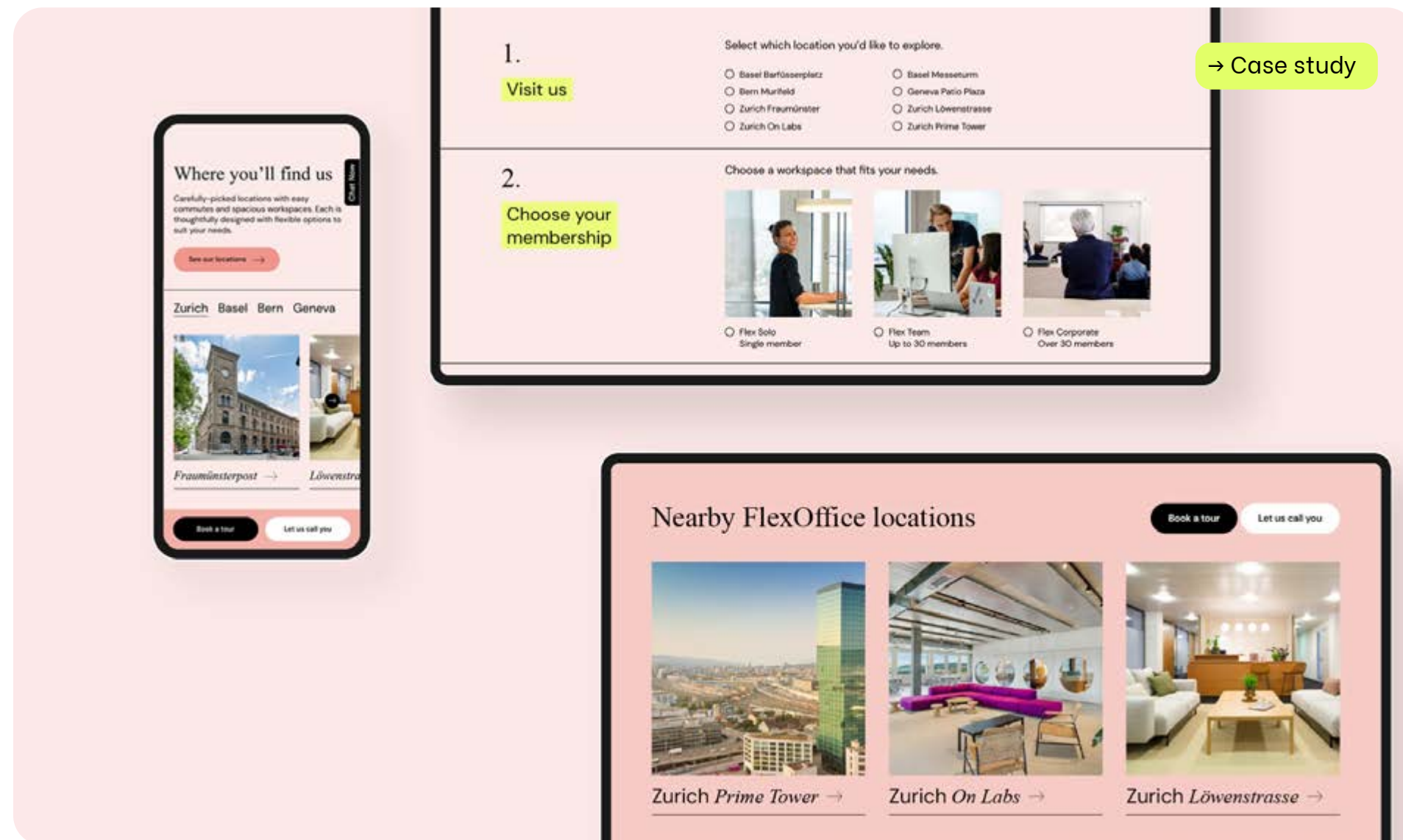
Identifying and using communication channels wisely is an integral part of developing your concept, as they are the first points of contact customers will have with your brand. Carefully plan digital and analogue channels, without underestimating the importance of community word-of-mouth.

→ Case study

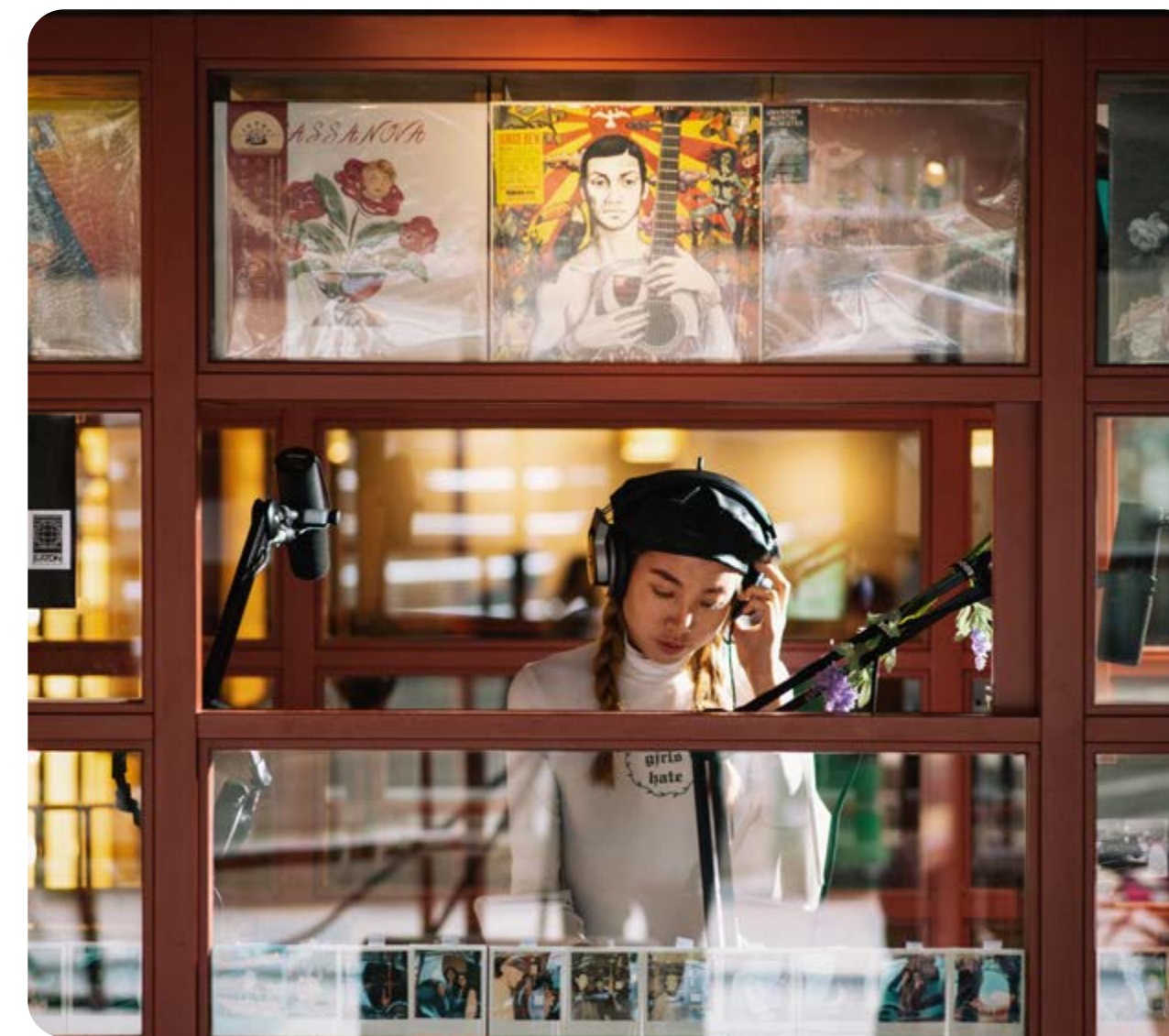




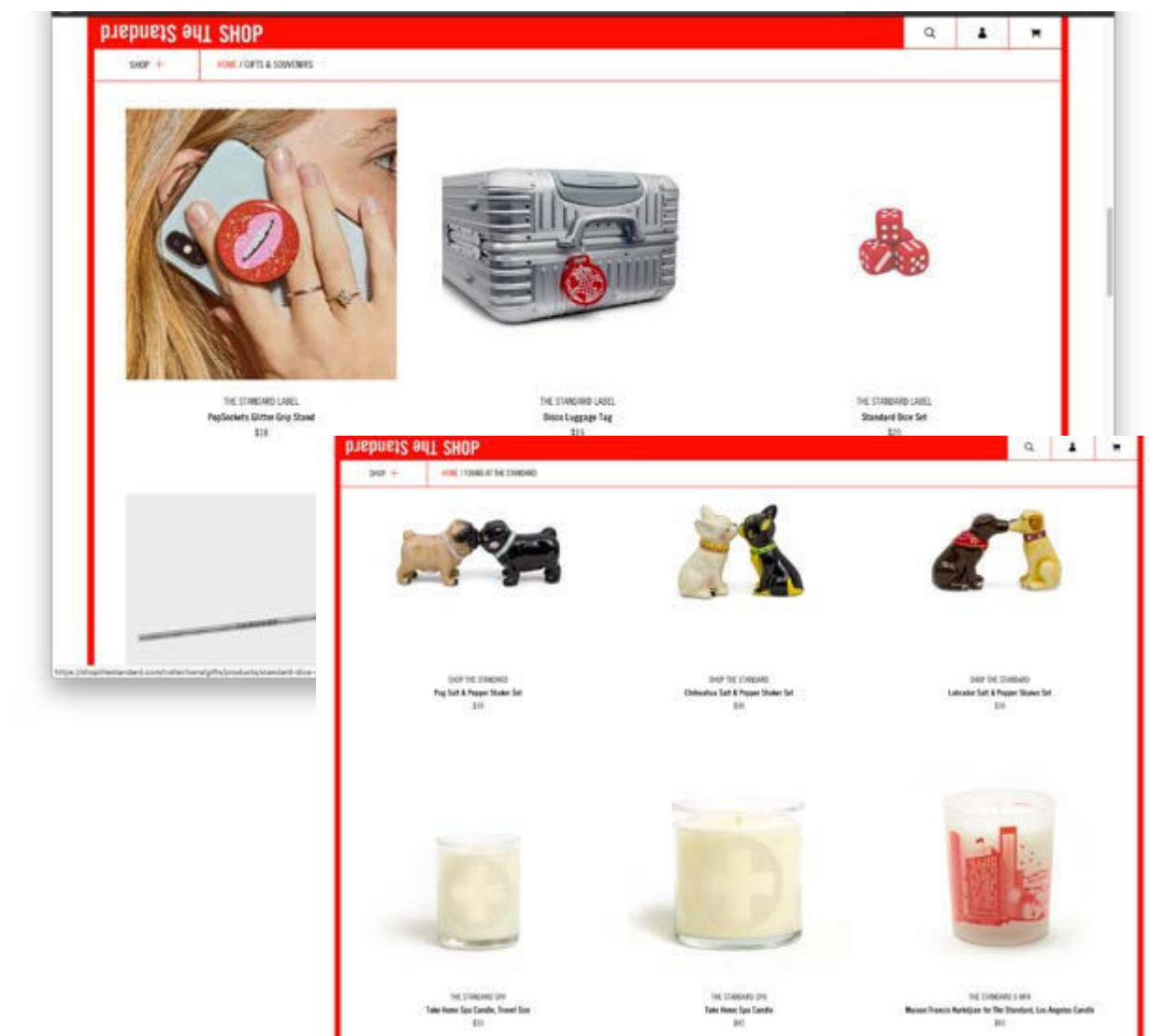
FlexOffice website design focused on user engagement and conversion.



Eaton Workshop in Hong Kong and Washington has its own recording studio and radio station.



The Standard Hotel offers an extensive selection of branded products on its website.



Investing in channels you can control

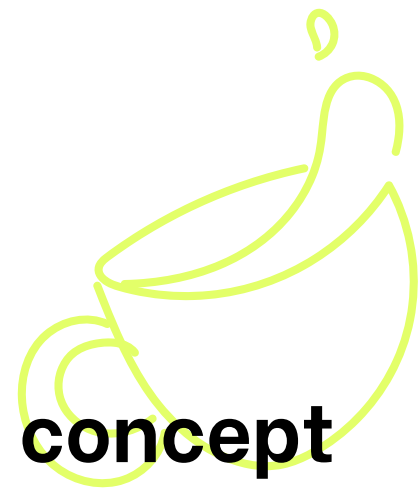
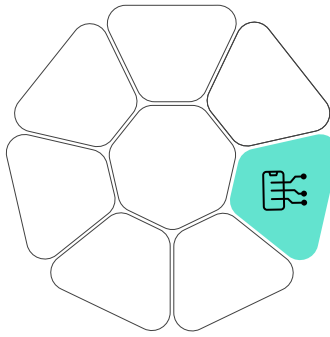
Digital channels are likely to play an important role in your communications. But don't pour your budget into social media just yet. Social media may give you instant results, but it comes at a high cost and a loss of control. Instead, invest in what you can control: your website, or as we like to call it, your digital headquarters. Your website isn't just a digital

brochure. It should tell your story, persuade your intended audience and encourage them to take action. For FlexOffice, Switzerland's leading workspace membership company, we created a brand new website that tells the FlexOffice story and facilitates the sales process. The new website increased leads for new members while reducing sales effort.

Content strategy: from podcast to fashion

Good content can showcase multiple facets of your story, educate your target audience, improve brand reputation and generate free press. It also helps you stay in touch with guests and customers. Your content strategy should be informed by your story. For example, Eaton Workshop in Hong Kong and Washington has its own recording studio and radio station.

They prompt guests to participate in radio programmes and invite artists for recording sessions. Meanwhile, The Standard hotels has taken content creation to the next level. The brand has its own fashion label and hosts art installations, transforming from a pure hospitality player into a lifestyle brand.



The channel is the concept

In some cases, the channel itself is the concept. Consider luxury watchmaker Breitling, which opened a restaurant in Seoul, or Jaeger-LeCoultre, which opened the 1931 Café. These luxury brands are developing original hospitality concepts that act as a gateway for customers to learn more about them. You could also consider creating a “mini-concept” to raise awareness of your “big concept”, like Hôtel de Crillon in Paris. This Rosewood hotel runs a pop-up ice-cream truck during the summer.

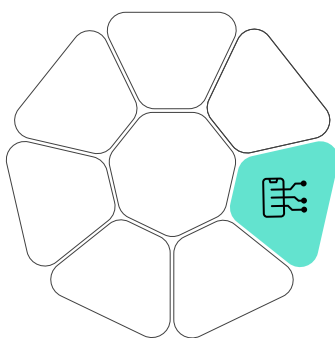


[→ Article](#)

Luxury watchmaker Breitling opened a café in Seoul.

In summer, travellers and locals alike can enjoy ice cream from the truck at the Hôtel de Crillon, a Rosewood Hotel.

1931 Café by Jaeger-LeCoultre, a F&B concept by the luxury Swiss watchmaker.



3 tips for mastering your communication channels

Tip 01 Build anticipation



Concept illustration for a travelling foodtruck for Velâdzo, a retail destination in Switzerland.

Consider building anticipation and interest months before your opening. Take Velâdzo, an ambitious project combining residential, hotel and retail. Ahead of the opening of its first flagship location in Bulle, we conceived the Velâdzo Mobile—a mobile retail trailer that toured the local markets to raise awareness of the Velâdzo concept.

→ Case study

Tip 02 Find your ambassadors



The Goodtime Hotel in Miami has the public support of Pharrell Williams.

Word-of-mouth alone can make or break your business. Make sure you identify the natural influencers of your concept. These could be customers, partners or even investors. Look for people whose personal branding and values are in line with your concept (see our Community Building Map) and incentivise them to be your brand ambassadors.

Tip 03 Think like a journalist



Zero-star hotel Null Stern, an innovative Swiss concept that gets constant media attention.

To get media coverage for your business, you need a story that journalists will find newsworthy. Go for tension (this bar opened despite having 10 lawsuits brought against it), the unexpected (ex-doctor opens a cocktail bar) or thematic relevance (cocktails recommended by AI). The hotel/art installation, Null Stern announced the launch of its anti-idyllic in the summer of 2022. To reflect on the world's crises, this hotel without walls opened on the side of a road, next to a petrol station, in the Swiss village of Saillon.

Check-out



From a distance, you might think that a hospitality concept is nothing more than the sum of its parts. A good story here, a trendy design there and a quirky social presence to wrap it all up. Et voilà! You've got yourself a hospitality concept. But hospitality businesses all over the world have proven that a good concept, in combination with excellent execution, results in an experience that's greater than the sum of its parts. A good concept also provides the perfect template for sustainable growth, as new experiences serve to update and strengthen it over time.

There are countless ways to innovate and improve a hospitality experience. That's why we hope to see hospitality businesses far and wide using our Hospitality Concept Blueprint to do just that. If you've got a great concept you'd like to share with the hospitality world, send it our way. We'd love to feature it.

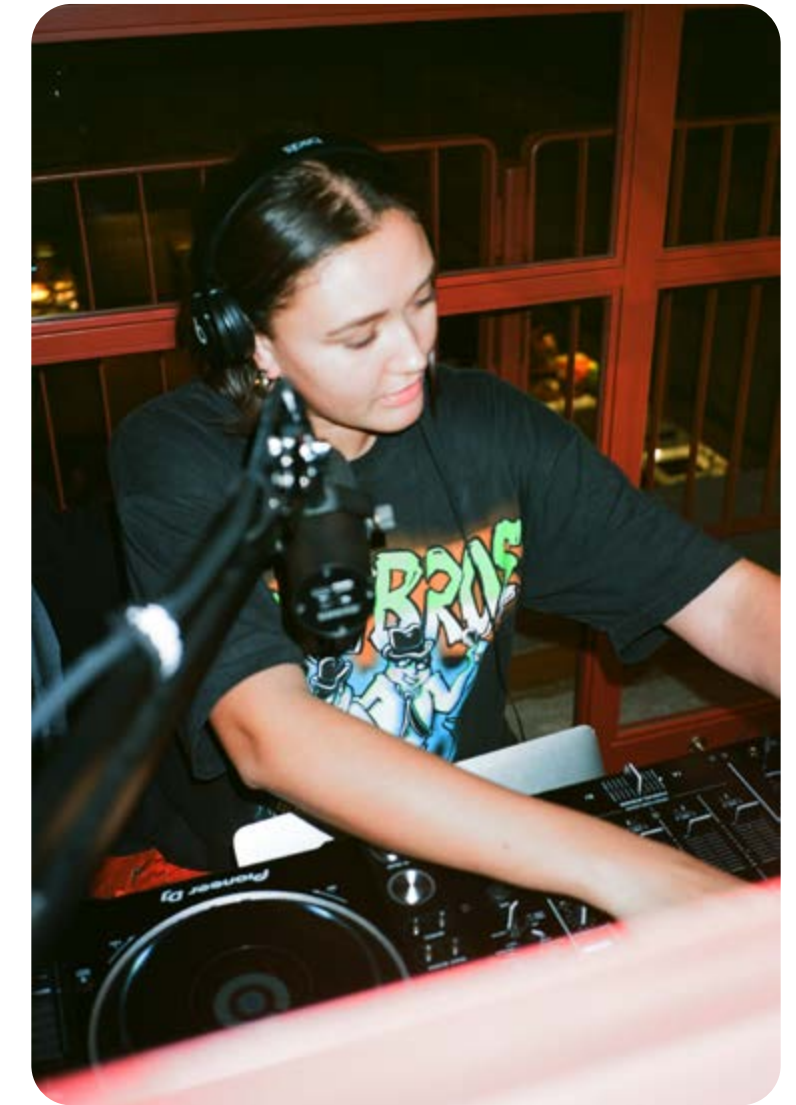
If you enjoyed this handbook, and would like to learn more about our other projects and publications, please visit our [website](#) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#). If you have comments regarding the handbook, or would like to get in touch with the Creative Supply team, please drop us a line at hello@creativesupply.com.



Hoxton, Paris



Le Grand Quartier, Paris



Eaton, Hong Kong



Mona, Montreux (CH)



Le Barn, Bonnelles (FR)



The Fife Arms, Braemar (UK)



The Student Hotel, Amsterdam



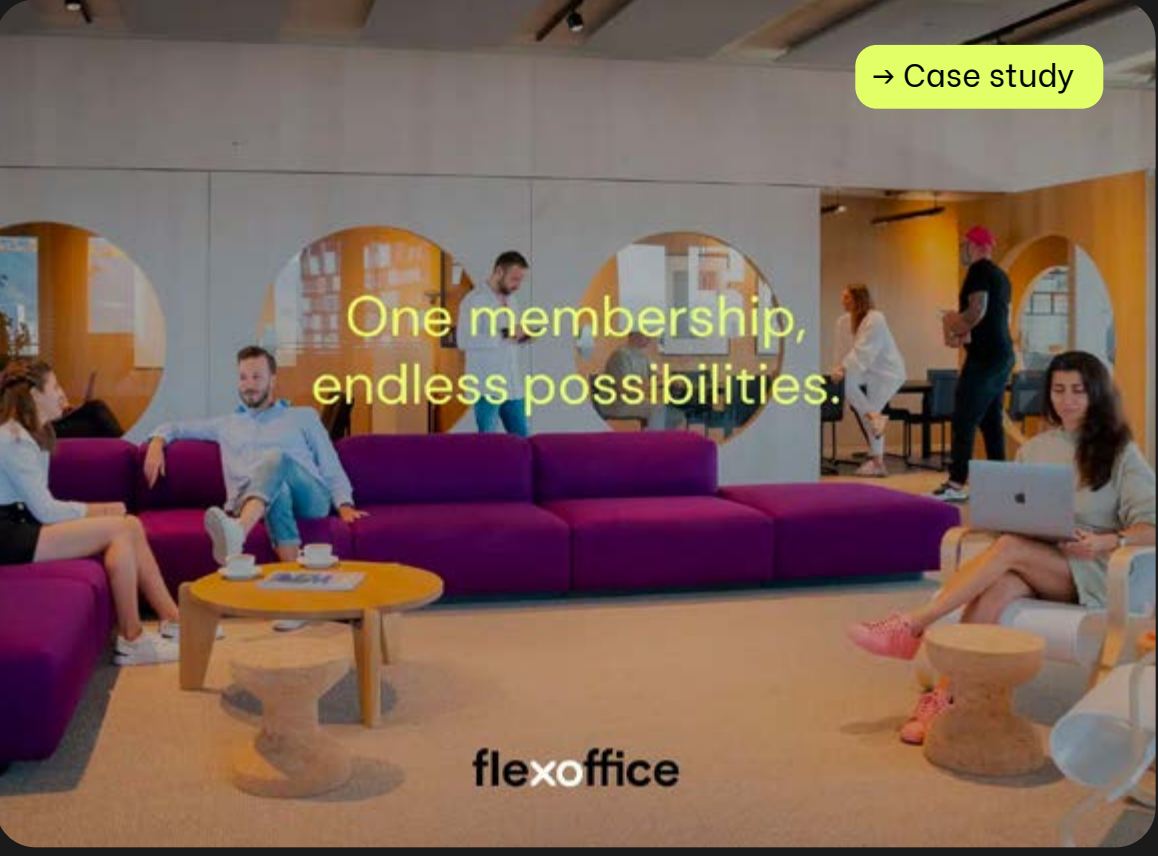
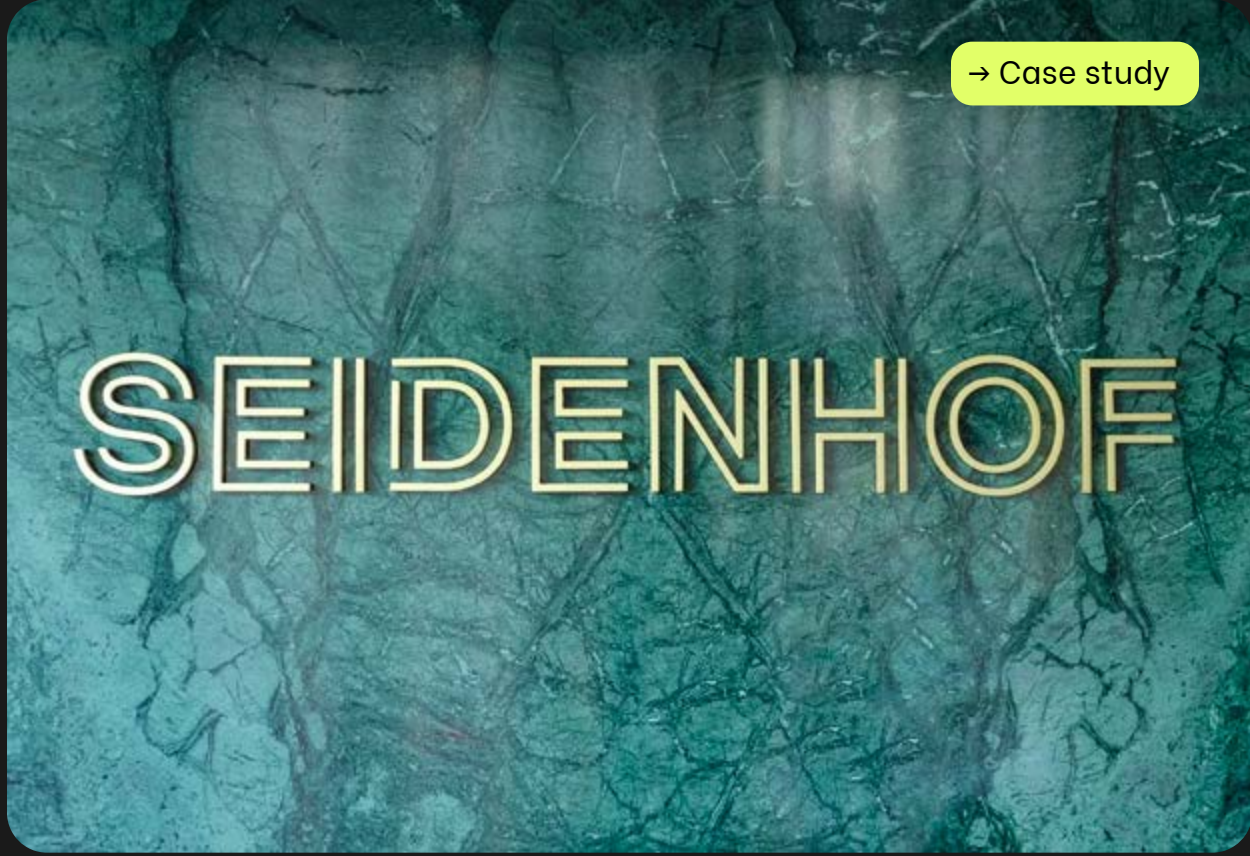
CityHub, Amsterdam



Casa Cook, Rhodes (Greece)

Explore more hospitality *case studies* from Creative Supply

[→ All case studies](#)





Discover more from Creative Supply

TEDx Talk

How to brand
anything



Youri Sawerschel, Founder of Creative Supply, transforms a random pen.

[→ Video](#)

Publication

Brand Storytelling
Handbook



Our flagship publication downloaded by thousands of readers.

[→ Download](#)

Publication

Sustainable Branding
Guidebook



A short guide to grow your brand while respecting the planet.

[→ Download](#)

About the author



Yuri Sawerschel
Founder of Creative Supply

Yuri Sawerschel is the Founder of Creative Supply, a creative consultancy based in Zurich. Yuri has been involved with projects focused on creating, launching and managing brands in Europe, China and the Middle-East. He has worked with brands as diverse as Kempinski Hotels, UBS, EPFL and Mondelēz. Yuri is a lecturer

at HEC Paris, EPFL, EHL Hospitality Business School and ESSEC Business School. As an accredited Innosuisse start-up coach, Yuri has helped dozens of technology companies develop and refine their branding strategy. Yuri graduated from the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs in Geneva and EHL Hospitality Business School.

Layout design

Nelly Damas

Follow us

[LinkedIn](#)
[Instagram](#)
[Behance](#)

creativesupply.com

About Creative Supply



Creative Supply is a full-service creative consultancy designing brands, experiences and campaigns with a strategic mind and a human touch.

We love bringing out the best in our clients. And they love the results. From global industry shapers to driven start-ups, we are trusted by some of the world's most visionary leaders at UBS, ABB, Kempinski, EPFL, LVMH, Mondelēz, Marriott, Proton Mail, Swiss Arbitration, Vienna House, FlexOffice and more.

Our projects and publications are regularly cited by esteemed industry news sources such as *Frame*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Monocle*, *Hospitality Net*, *Le Figaro*, *The Economist* and *The Telegraph*. From students to executives, we also empower thousands of branding, digital and marketing enthusiasts through lectures, seminars, conferences and our free Learning Hub.

Contact
hello@creativesupply.com

[Book a call with us](#)

Zürich

Regensbergstrasse 89
8050 Zurich
Switzerland

Paris

15, rue des Halles
75001 Paris
France

