

THE FUTURE OF EXPERIENCES IN ASIA

Three trends reshaping in-person customer experiences in 2019 and beyond!

Asian consumers are obsessed with experiences.

Over the last decade or so, the Experience Economy has crowned itself as one of the most important themes in the Asian consumer arena. The unrelenting quest for collectible experiences has seen consumers go from **public square dancing** a la Chinese grandmas to **seemingly death-defying** swings over Balinese forests.

In 2019 and beyond, the ride will only get wilder.

Some of the drivers propelling the experience parade: consumers' continual shift of preferring experiences over products, social media's unstoppable penetration of societies, the maturing of technologies like AR and VR allowing for more immersive experiences, and more.

Feeling like you can't keep up already? We've got you covered. Especially if your work takes you anywhere near the sphere of in-person consumer experiences – everything from cycling classes to retail pop-ups to all-inclusive resort stays – you have come to the right trend briefing!

Here are three powerful trends shaping the future of experiences in Asia:

1. SENTIENT SPACES

Experiences dished out in environments that know and adapt to the inhabitants

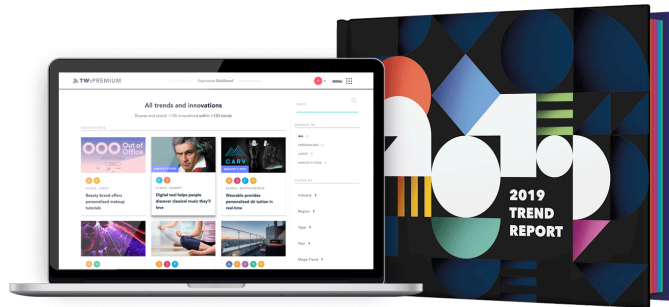
2. CONNOISSEUR CLUBS

Experiences that help consumers learn more about their consumption

3. ZERO-IMPACT EXPERIENCES

In 2019 and beyond, guilt-free experiences are the most impactful status symbols

Ready to explore the future of the experience economy? Scroll on!



2019 PREMIUM SERVICE

750+ leading B2C brands and agencies – including Accenture, Nike, TBWA and Starbucks – use our Premium Service to inspire better consumer-facing innovation.

[EXPLORE PREMIUM](#)

SENTIENT SPACES

Experiences dished out in environments that know and adapt to the inhabitants

In 2019, a handful of factors are colliding: massive troves of consumer data, the maturing of AI and smart physical objects, widespread use of facial recognition and sensors, and the ever-growing consumer demand for relevance and personalization. The result? Consumers can now expect physical spaces that recognize them and adapt to provide in-person experiences tailored to their needs.

Why now?

Cities in the cloud.

In the last few years, we have seen **data-driven solutions** for everything from **traffic congestion** to **shopping in slums**. As the region goes more digital - 732 million smartphones were sold in Asia in 2018 (GfK, February 2019), the opportunities for data-driven optimization will only grow.

C-Commerce.

2018 saw the physical retail revolution that was **C-COMMERCE**. This is setting Asian expectations (in China and beyond!) for brands to combine online customer data and in-store technologies to deliver personalized and seamless shopping experiences.

Expectation transfer.

C-COMMERCE might have started in the retail sector, but the expectations it is setting are already spreading to other spaces. 55% urban Chinese consumers think 'automatic adjustment to the environment' is a necessary function for smart-home devices (Mintel, February 2019).

Examples



1 – Billboards capable of facial recognition to be used in South Korea

September 2018, UK-based adtech firm Bidoooh entered agreement with Seoul-based media agency Labs to install 10,000 facial recognition-equipped

FUNAN – Facial recognition technology employed to offer recommendations to shoppers

Set to open in Q2 2019, the Funan mall will use facial recognition technology to provide recommendations to shoppers. Billed as Singapore's first online and offline

boards across South Korea. The billboards identify characteristics of passersby, including age and gender, use that information to deliver tailored advertising messages. The billboards will be installed in book stores, restaurants, offices and shopping centers across the country.

shopping center, features include a smart interactive directory using facial recognition to sort shoppers into profiles and then recommend relevant stores and products. The six-story mall will also use video analytics to study shopper traffic and crowd density. Funan mall also includes lyf: a coliving complex.

Your response

Be terrific, not terrifying.

Sentient spaces can very quickly get categorized into the creepy 'Black Mirror' trend box. The key is to show consumers you are delivering real relevance and personalization. See how SK-II is rolling out personalized skin care experiences for each individual.

Get smarter with time.

How can you ensure that the experiences you dish out to your consumers get better with time, even anticipatory? The RATIO robot interacts with customers to learn their preferences, and in time recommends the perfect cup of coffee or cocktail.

Invest in information.

Before you can tailor an experience, you need information! What data do you need to capture and how will you do it? Loyalty programs are a powerful source but not the only one. See how Funan Mall in Singapore will use facial recognition to segment shoppers and make recommendations.

SUBSCRIBE

Never miss a TrendWatching Quarterly Briefing!

Sign up

CONNOISSEUR CLUBS

Experiences that help consumers learn more about their consumption

Rising incomes and the democratization of wealth in Asia means that simply consuming a product, no matter how luxe, is no longer enough. Not when it feels like *everyone* can do that. Consumers are feeling the pressure to be more informed - to know the story behind their consumption, achieve expertise, and to have the ability to form educated opinions. Experiences that help consumers achieve this status fix will be embraced.

Why now?

Not so exclusive anymore.

Asia is blazing its path to prosperity. By 2030, two-thirds of all middle-class spending power will be concentrated in Asia (OECD, 2018). Simply being able to purchase luxury goods is no longer sexy.

Curators & creators unite.

At the same time, the curator and creator culture is growing. From F&B to fashion, consumers are exposed to endless content explaining their coffee's seed-to-cup journey, home-made natural skincare recipes, how to customize their Nikes - the list goes on.

Savvy consumption as status symbols.

Coupled with the *kiasu* spirit and Asia's competitive nature when it comes to education, consumers are turning consumption knowledge into coveted status symbols. One signal? The demand for wine and spirits education in China is higher than in any other region in the world - it contributed to 23% of global candidates taking the WSET exam for the 2017-2018 period.

Examples

STARBUCKS – Customers experience coffee-making in Bali sanctuary

Starbucks launched its largest, immersive coffee destination in Bali, Indonesia, in January 2019. The 20,000 square foot Dewata 'coffee sanctuary' invites visitors to de-pulp and wash beans, dry and rake green coffee beans, and observe budding seedlings in the nursery. An interactive video wall shows how coffee is planted, processed, roasted, shipped and brewed. Customers can taste from a selection of more than 100 different types of coffee. The store, inspired by traditional Indonesian architecture, features local craftsmanship and Starbucks has been serving Indonesian coffee around the world for over 40 years.

VIRGIN ACTIVE – Workout combines life-saving skills and fitness

Virgin Active's CPROBIC class combines fitness with learning life-saving skills. Launched in Thailand during April 2018, the exercise class is taught by CPR-certified trainers. Members can burn more than 400 calories in the class, while learning essential first aid skills. CPROBIC was created after research revealed that only 6% of patients needing on-the-spot CPR receive it before reaching the hospital, as most Thais have very little CPR practice.

CHANEL – C

The Chan

West Bunc

Previously

the showc

Karl Lager

products fi

Chanel wil

and payme

offline exp

Your response

A peek behind the scenes.

Not only are behind-the-scene stories of your production process or category heritage interesting for consumers, educational experiences can deliver a lasting source of value. Could you deliver an immersive learning journey, a la the Starbucks seed-to-cup experience in Bali?

Offer complementary skills.

Don't limit connoisseurship to your own core offering. The fitness industry in APAC has hit a record high and is now worth USD 16.8 billion (IHSA & Deloitte, 2018) and understandably, many consumers have gained considerable knowledge in it. So Virgin Active looked beyond and now offers life-saving skills on top. Boom.

Curate creator communities.

When you build your experience, don't forget to create a space for your brand aficionados to connect with one another. Let them bond over a shared passion and interest. That's how you make a lasting impact and nurture a network of brand advocates!



PREMIUM SERVICE

Consumer-focused professionals from adidas, Nissan, Virgin, Samsung, Sephora, ING, Orange, Fujitsu, Spotify and many more have gained 2019 access to our Premium Service.

In the coming weeks and months, they'll be using the platform to ensure their plans remain deeply aligned with what their customers want next.

[Join them](#)

ZERO-IMPACT EXPERIENCES

In 2019 and beyond, guilt-free experiences are the most impactful status symbols

The diversification of status is a complex story and the rise of the Experience Economy is not the final chapter. With Asia's experience-hunters spoiled for choice – [beauty ball pits](#), [crypto-powered music festivals](#) and [robot-powered hotels](#) – you may wonder: what's next? In 2019, as environmental concerns reach a fever pitch, experiences with zero eco-impact will be the most

impactful!

Why now?

Year of the blanket ban.

The beginning of 2019 saw waves of regulation banning single-use plastics everywhere: from [Indian airports](#) to [South Korean supermarkets](#) to [the entire island of Bali](#).

Not just products.

Travel is one of the most coveted experiential status symbols today, yet major tourist sites in Asia have closed down or are closing down due to irresponsible tourism: [Boracay](#) in The Philippines, [Maya Beach](#) in Thailand, [Komodo Island](#) in Indonesia. Status symbols lose their shine when they come loaded with guilt. Asians want guilt-free alternatives.

The race for first place.

Firsts are hard to come by. Once the [Akyra TAS Sukhumvit](#) in Bangkok claimed the title of 'Asia's first single-use-free hotel' last year, other businesses are now racing to be first in their categories to offer zero-impact experiences. It makes for one impactful press release!

Examples



IJEN – Zero-waste restaurant opens in Bali
Ijen, Indonesia's first zero-waste restaurant, opened in September 2018 at the Potato Head Beach Club in Bali. Offering local seafood caught by hand, the restaurant features furniture made from foam offcuts and recycled wood, and a floor created from cement, broken plates and smashed glass. Candles made from wine bottles burn used kitchen oil, while organic waste is recycled as local pig food or animal fertilizer.

SAMMAKORN COCKTAIL BAR – Mixologist creates cocktails from food waste
In December 2018, mixologist Mark Lloyd opened the Zero Waste Bar at Thailand's Wonderfruit Festival. The pop-up bar served cocktails made from waste food donated by vendors at the festival, which celebrates sustainability and wellness. Lloyd also hosted masterclasses to teach attendees how to make their own zero waste cocktails. The mixologist is also known for hosting the Sammakorn Cocktail Club, a 'secret',

TATA MUMBAI
Mumbai
The Tata M managed ; spectators and reusak handbook banned frc generated The move

inviteonly pop-up bar selling zero-waste cocktails. Open only once a month, the pop-up is located in Bangkok's Sammakorn suburb.

runner Shilpi Sahu, which called for a 'greener' event and received more than 114,000 signatures. Over 46,000 runners took part in the 2019 event.

of the proc
marginaliz
a local soc
disabilities

Your response

Educate through your experiences.

Much of Asia is still waking up to this shift. You can play a powerful role in introducing the zero-impact lifestyle through your experiences. The Social Space educates consumers on a bundle of social and environmental causes, all crammed into one experience!

Give it a great story.

Mark Lloyd's zero-waste cocktail bar is a hidden pop-up that only happens once a month, for 20 people, where he trials bespoke cocktails! Exclusivity: check. Mystery and intrigue: check. One-of-a-kind offers: check. Arm your customers with a story they can't wait to share.

Go for double positives.

Can you combine sustainability with other sources of status, such as the pursuit of peak personal fitness? The Tata Mumbai Marathon wins the trend bingo for its combo. Challenge yourself to deliver your customers the sense of pride and satisfaction those runners felt crossing the line at a zero-impact race!

SUBSCRIBE

Never miss a TrendWatching Quarterly Briefing!

Your email here

Sign up

GET GOING!

Phew, that was intense. Hope you enjoyed the ride 🚀

But in truth this moment should be the beginning of a journey, not the end of one. Now is the time to act.

And that starts with remembering that each of these trends is an innovation opportunity. That is, an opportunity to create your next magical, compelling, shareable, must-do (and do again!) in-person experience.

So take these trends and featured innovation examples back to your team, and challenge them. What can we do with this? How can we adapt this trend around our brand, our market, our customers, our values? What can we do to meet and exceed these emerging customer expectations?

For those of you who want to take this even further - we'll see you at one of our [upcoming events on the Future of Experiences](#).

Now, go - get started today! We can't promise that creating the next generation of compelling in-person experiences will be easy. But it will be deeply worthwhile.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Reinier

IT TAKES A TEAM

This Trend Briefing has many hands on it. A huge thanks to the team that pulled this together with such positivity and enthusiasm, especially: Vicky Kim and Nikki Ritmeijer (for design!), and also Maxwell Luthy, Vicki Loomes, Henry Mason, Alida Urban, Harry Metzger, Harvey Gomez, Jareth Ashbrook, Jonathan Herbst and Lisa Feierstein. THANK YOU!

Home

Products

Events

Seminars

Workshops

Students

Educators

2024 Trend Check

Community

About

Method

Team

Clients









News

Subscribe

Log in

Contact

Privacy

Join 100,000+ professionals who receive our Free Trend Updates:

Your work email here