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Face to Face: Adapting to New Times

Cara a Cara: adaptándose a nuevos tiempos

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English translation (2026) by the author

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Abstract

This paper «face-to-face: adapting to new times» is a research about the benefits of the face-to-face communication and how it could be used through new technologies such as video conference and telepresence to create new ways of interactions for the guests and customers in Hotels, Restaurants, Cafeterias and others. Thus open the subject to discuss about how the new generations with their natural adoption of technologies will change how they will connect with the staff and their social life.

Hereby the author collect information about these technologies applied to the service industry, reviewing papers and studies related at face-to-face and propose some concept ideas to introduce the telepresence in the hotel's process and create services with it, with the intend to transform the Hotels in a social hub at the same time allows to gather information about our customers with the help of a service based in the telepresence.

These concept ideas and the experts' opinions were contrasted against the data collected with a survey created to obtain information from the customers view. The people from America, Europa and Asia answered about their perceptions of the staff and their own behaviors when they use the videoconference. The survey shows revealing data to understand their preferences and behaviors in order to adopt this technology in the hospitality industry.

Keywords

Communication, face-to-face, telepresence, videoconference, service.

Introduction

This work aims to put forward a different vision, based on my own experiences, of how the hotel world will evolve. Taking the principle that "everything changes and the only thing that does not change is change itself", I intend to set out the possible changes in service that could come to the industry.

I consider myself an eternal traveller, always on the move, looking for new experiences and for the chance to meet different cultures again. This passion for travel has meant, for work or for adventure, leaving behind my native country and, with it, my family and friends. Likewise, on my many journeys I have met wonderful people with whom to share these new experiences. But every new destination means being physically far away, although thanks to new communication technologies that distance feels shorter.

Today we live in a different world; mass tourism is very different from what it was at its beginnings in the 1950s. The way of travelling and the behaviours have changed. The industry is reaching impressive numbers: tourism accounts for 9% of world GDP, and in 2013 there were 1,087 million arrivals around the world[1]. People move more and more, and farther; they can afford to choose where to go, and also where to live. This trend does not seem likely to disappear unless humanity were to find itself in a catastrophic scenario.

Over the years we have seen new generations of customers emerge, with new habits and ways of consuming that make them very different from the previous ones. This is shaping the hotel industry as it goes about meeting these new needs. That is how we see hotel chains create new brands, almost as many as there are types of customers. These chains cannot dismiss the obligatory presence in the virtual world, nor the need to incorporate "gadgets"[2] into their rooms, trying to keep pace with their customers.

Therefore, in times when everything moves faster, the new traveller lives in a world interconnected through the Internet and personal devices (smartphones, tablets, etc.). They keep their ties through the countless social networks that exist, in which there are no faces, only emoticons. So why not try to generate more face-to-face[3] moments? That way we could avoid losing the connection with friends, family, colleagues or customers while travelling. This dehumanisation of relationships between people is influenced by the lack of time and by geographic position, both of which work against "face-to-face" interaction.

However, this "dehumanisation" presents us with an opportunity. Helped by existing technological advances, could we create the situations in which face-to-face interactions can be encouraged? Can we think of hotels as hubs of human connection and interaction? Here teleconferencing and telepresence can provide answers when applied in different areas. They can therefore change the way our customers communicate with their close circles and with the hotel's employees; or how the "heart of the house" can benefit in order to improve the work and training of its team.

In this way, I believe it is necessary to make explicit that what I intend to develop is not a solution for an isolated hotel, nor for every type of hotel establishment. My aim is to put forward solutions for hotel chains with a worldwide presence, or hotel organisations that form a broad, global network; because the principles of my approach are designed to address the new generations, who are taking over and who share the values of living in community, with collaborative environments, in a digital era.

I invite you to imagine a future in which the paradigms of how we relate to each other and use technology are very different from what we have lived until today.

Problem

When we have to travel – for leisure, study or work – our everyday life stays at the point of departure. A new experience then begins to unfold before our eyes. So, from the point of view of human communication and relationships, mobility presents us with the following problems:

- For an occasional traveller this may not affect their life, but for those who travel more often it can cause inconveniences and problems, in particular in relationships with a partner or in marriage[4] (Cohen, 2013). It can also cause health problems for the partner left behind[5] (Willis, 2014). So why not have the possibility, despite the distance, of moments to share, through telepresence, with whoever matters to them?

- On the other hand, in professional life, travelling to visit customers or to hold meetings with colleagues in other destinations is important; in addition to the economic costs, it necessarily means time away from the company and the usual working environment, which means postponing personal and work commitments. Telepresence, despite the distance, would make it possible to attend those meetings, interviews, lunches or dinners, and so on, helping not to postpone decisions and to remain productive. Consequently, the industry's adaptation is necessary in order to answer: how could a hotel meet these needs of travellers?

- On the hotel's side, generational changes are driving changes in the way service is offered. The incoming generation (Y and Z) prefers fast, efficient service, where they do not have to interact too much with staff. This suggests replacing much of the human team with self-service kiosks, so that human contact may be relegated to special circumstances. Could telepresence help to be present at that moment?

- Among non-millennial travellers, habits will not change so quickly; faithful to their beliefs, they will prefer face-to-face interaction in front of them during service. At the same time, millennials have reformulated the way of interacting face to face. This opens up opportunities to ask ourselves: how could this be used for better service? And in turn, how can we exploit the human face and technology in our favour?

- It has been studied that face-to-face interaction, together with time, in family or professional settings, contributes to generating trust and makes it possible to build lasting relationships. So why not try to bring this "face-to-face" time into other processes? Will this change help us to

know our customers better and strengthen our ties with them?

- This could begin a different way of relating to our environment. How can this resource be used to differentiate ourselves from the rest of the competition? Seen from an evolutionary point of view, it is a matter of adapting the company to current habits and technologies. It could also help find ways to be more productive and save time without sacrificing "face-to-face" moments (Martin, 2007).

Moreover, as many simple tasks begin to be replaced by digital platforms, the trends point towards the robotisation of many processes, with customers interacting with intelligent computer systems. It is therefore possible to think that, in the future, face-to-face interaction will become part of more exclusive services, where "real" people will take on greater value and will be reserved for services outside the commoditisation[6] aimed at the masses.

These are the guidelines that mark the starting point for my research and my attempt to create proposals that help innovate and improve hotel services.

Purpose

Understanding the new scenario created by new technologies and by the new generations who use them, we are faced with new challenges: to change paradigms, move towards innovation and create hotel and restaurant products and services adapted to new times.

That is why, after gathering the necessary background on the new customs and habits, as well as on the usefulness of face-to-face interaction, and on the current state of technology and its possible developments, an interest arises in proposing new tools that are useful for maximising the effectiveness of communication and of the relationship with the customer.

Literature review

To better understand the overall concept of this idea and its possible applications, it is necessary to understand that incorporating technology into the way we relate to each other in our daily lives is a natural part of the cultural evolution towards which we are moving; it belongs to the process of cultural innovation that has been fed since the industrial revolution and that has been present in our society's imagination for more than a hundred years.

I therefore consider it necessary to begin by reviewing popular culture around it, the first ideas and since when it began to circulate in the cultural imagination. Next, I summarise the qualities of "face-to-face" communication, its role in the interaction between individuals and the benefits it brings. I also look at the characteristics of the generations that make up the customer base and their successors. Likewise, I review the current state and possible developments of the technology that allows us to build the interface for this interaction.

From there I begin to design the proposals and to look at their possible applications in hotel services, matching the alternatives to the areas of the hotel and to the moment of the cycle (Before – During – After) at which we can get the best out of the tool.

Popular culture

I therefore begin with the origins of this concept, which takes us back to the beginnings of science fiction. Today a large part of it is becoming reality thanks to technology, specifically with the development of videoconferencing and telepresence.

In popular culture in the West, the concept of teleconferencing goes back to the time of the invention of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell, a time when several of Bell's contemporaries predicted the future of the recent invention. Bell himself also designed the concept and invented the "image dissector"[7], a device to achieve communication with images and sound. Its main element was the recognition of how important it is to see the other speaker during the conversation.

As a consequence, as in every age, art and literature are influenced by their context. We thus find the book "Tom Swift and his Telephone Photo" (Appleton, 1914), in which the author tells of a novel invention, a telephone that transmitted photographs through the telephone wire, classed as something "impossible" at the time; this could be classified as one of the first stories to bring the subject to the "general public", although before it we see it in the book "In the Year 2889" (Verne, 1889), where imagination leads Verne to get ahead of his time and predict the invention of videoconferencing.

As these literary precedents show, videoconferencing was conceived many years before technology made it possible. So, moving on to the end of the 1960s, we find futuristic visions in cinema, this time influenced by the context of advances in computing, with the release of the first commercial

computer, as well as the Cold War and the space race in which the United States and the former Soviet Union were engaged. The director Stanley Kubrick takes us to 2001 with the futuristic film "2001: A Space Odyssey"[8], which can already be considered a classic.

Figure 1. 2001: A Space Odyssey – Videophone sequence – YouTube [Image omitted in this edition; see the original Spanish document, page 15.]

This film shows a future in which human beings manage to develop the technology needed to travel to and inhabit space. In the film there is a scene (figure 1) in which Dr. Heywood Floyd, from Earth orbit, calls his daughter on Earth by videoconference, inviting us to imagine that a videoconference call will be as natural and everyday as the telephone was beginning to be at that time.

Something more contemporary: we find another film in which we see how that generation pictured the future, "Back to the Future II"[9] from 1989, with settings full of robots, holograms and other advanced devices; there is a scene (see figure 2) in which, in a café in 2015, the waiters are screens with the faces of former idols, in this case Michael Jackson serving this diner and explaining the menu.

Figure 2. Back to the Future 2 – YouTube [Image omitted in this edition; see the original Spanish document, page 16.]

These examples are part of the countless films, television series and books in which stories of futuristic worlds are told and in which we can see how, at some point, people dreamed of the future. There is therefore an extensive base of references that has built up over the years. These ideas or concepts have been seen by many individuals belonging to the different generations that are today part of the world's consumers. Together with daily experience of technology, this makes it easier to understand that it is possible to interact in ways different from those we know.

Consequently, these generations expect to be fascinated and look for new experiences, knowing that they live in a world where everything changes fast and surprising things, beyond the known, are created all the time; for that very reason they assimilate changes and new proposals more quickly. Modelling services that bring technology into the process will therefore allow us to bring futuristic dreams into present-day reality.

So who are these generations? And what are their characteristics? Their ways of seeing the world and relating to it are very different from one another, so it will be necessary to identify the generational framework in which my proposals will be applied and whom they will serve.

Generations of customers

The world has changed quickly, and each generation has lived through the changes in a different way; this is how different styles have been defined, shaped by historical events, whether political, technological and/or social, which have changed the behaviour and the way of seeing the world of each of them.

Understanding the different generations is understanding customers, so below I review the main characteristics of each generation, focusing on the one that is starting to take over right now and that over the next decade will be the one that shapes the industry.

Currently the Baby Boomers are the generation aged between 50 and 70, so they have more time and money to spend on travel. For several decades they were the dominant segment with the greatest purchasing power, and for this reason many hotel brands had prepared their hotel products and services to meet their needs. However, as is logical, time means that these generations – while still important because of their purchasing power – are replaced by customers from the successor generation: the Gen-X'ers, who have clearly changed tourism compared with previous decades.

Baby Boomers and Gen-X'ers

Baby Boomers and Gen-X'ers have some similarities: both prefer customer service in which face-to-face interaction prevails to resolve their queries and concerns, although the younger ones are less patient than their elders, and both respond well to recognition and praise. Among those who travel on business, Gen-X'ers tend to take their work out of their rooms, preferring to work in more social environments such as the lobby, the business centre or executive lounges (Bartnick, 2014). The former look for stress-free destinations, so they prefer to book tourist packages or the hotel through a travel agent or to call the hotel directly. Once at the destination, like the X's, they want to have the time to explore on their own. On the other hand, during the stay Gen-X'ers are more social and look for places where they can interact socially, such as restaurants and bars.

Millennials or Gen-Y

The still younger ones, the Gen-Y or Millennials, are the ones starting to take over, and because of the volume this generation represents it will be of great importance in the coming decades; in the US market they will be demographically larger than the other generations by 2030 (see figure 3), which obliges hoteliers to equip lobbies, rooms and lounges with what is needed to satisfy these technology-savvy customers with new habits.

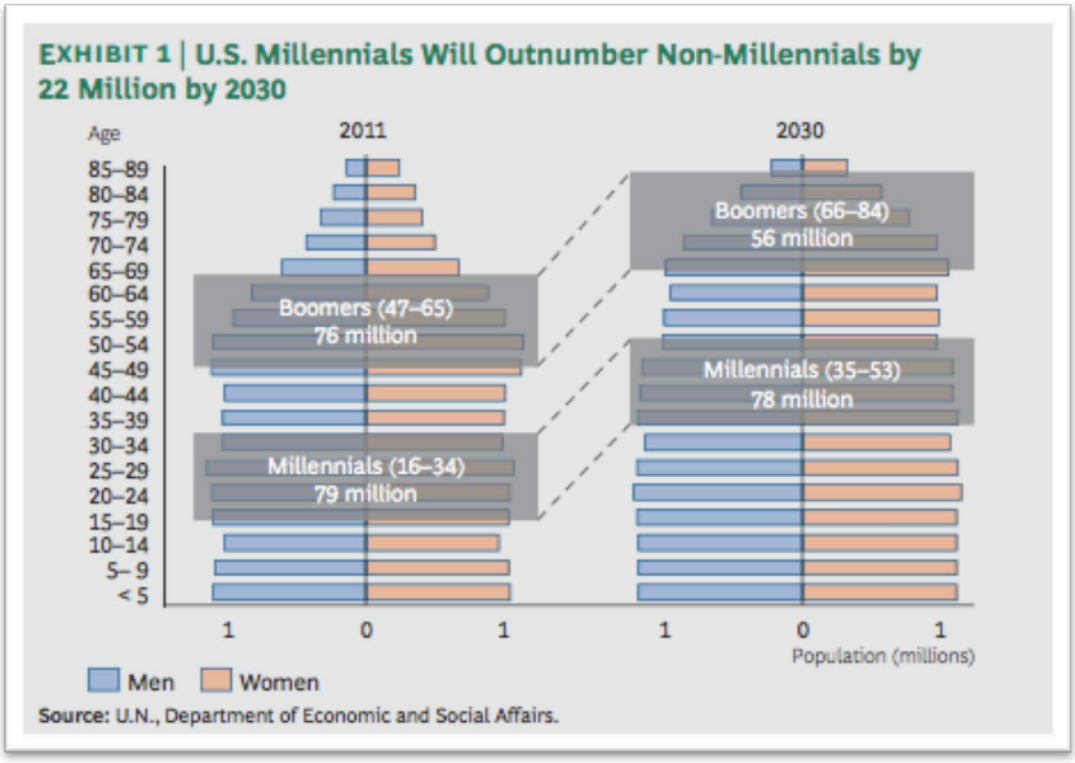


Figure 3. US Millennials versus non-Millennials in 2030. (Barton, Fromm, & Chris, 2012)

In this way we can see that generations "Y and Z" are currently the generations with the greatest volume in the world population, reaching 28.10% and 34.07% respectively (see table 1). This is why generation "Y", or "Millennials", is beginning to take on a more important role than the entry of Gen-X into the hotel market may have had.

Table 1: Birth years, ages and population by generation from 1901 to the present (2014)

Generation[10]	Birth years[11]	Current age (2014)	2010 population[12] (in billions)	%
Generation Z	1995 – 2013	1 – 19	2.44	34.07%
Generation Y	1977 – 1994	20 – 37	2.02	28.10%
Generation X	1965 – 1976	38 – 48	1.04	14.47%
Baby Boomers	1946 – 1964	49 – 68	1.25	17.43%
Silent Generation	1929 – 1945	69 – 85	0.38	5.35%
GI Generation	1901 – 1924	90 – 113	0.04	0.58%

Millennials, according to Adam Weissenberg (2013), should be considered an opportunity for companies, since they present growth potential, with a purchasing power that will increase as the decade goes on, which would justify driving changes and investments to adapt to these new customers.

So what are Gen-Y'ers like? Millennials are completely comfortable with technology. They are "digital natives" because they have grown up with technology and social media, which they use as if these were natural and an integral part of their personal and working lives. They also tend to own multiple digital devices such as smartphones, tablets and game consoles. This probably makes them much more "multi-tasking"[13] during their time online, constantly moving across the different platforms (mobile, social networks, PC and games). Gen-Y'ers also spend almost as much time on the Internet as other generations, except that they do so mostly to share their thoughts and experiences, contributing to user-generated content sites. They are also much more involved in activities related to rating products and services, as well as uploading videos and images and blogging on the web.

Within them we can distinguish sub-groups, with differences according to the age bracket they are in, and also by their motivations and interests. These are: technology and "gadgets", the environment, charitable and social causes, family-oriented, or business-oriented. Nevertheless, across all of these subgroups the following attitudes and behaviours can be identified.

- "**I want it fast and I want it now**" This makes them look for immediate results to their needs, because they have grown up with technology that gives them instant access to information, so they are not used to waiting. They therefore expect speed and efficiency in their travels, which makes them prefer self-service terminals for check-in, thus avoiding queues and unnecessary interactions with staff, as well as exploring the destination and finding restaurants thanks to information they access through applications and platforms on the Internet, without needing to turn to the concierge.

- "**The now generation and real-time information**" They are constantly connected; even while relaxing in the lobby they are always following events and news through several social networks at once. They also share their experiences and thoughts through social networks, which is where the question arises: "If you didn't check in and didn't post photos online, did it really happen?" (Lee, 2013). It is the "likes" and comments that give approval and recognition from their peers. Hoteliers who publish their events in real time as they happen often manage to increase the "buzz"[14] and spontaneously bring more millennials to join their friends.

- "**I trust my friends more than what corporations advertise**" Millennials grew up bombarded with advertising, so they are too sophisticated to be fooled by marketers. Consequently, they turn to their peers for their "expert" opinion, so they will always read several reviews before making a purchase decision, which they also do when choosing a hotel or restaurant.

- "**I am a social creature – online and offline**" Gen-Y'ers are sociable creatures both online and offline, always in contact with their circle of friends through the various messaging services such as Facebook messages, Hangouts, WhatsApp, Skype, among others. The use of social media to relate to others is also fed by the "fear of missing out", so they always feel the need to share their location, what they are doing and their opinions with others, and this becomes their method of interaction; it allows them to validate the "fun" they are having with the approval of their peers in the form of a "like" on their status or check-in, which gives them a wider reach than previous generations. Whereas previous generations phoned their friends or relatives to tell them about their holidays, they simply post a photo or a review that can easily reach many more people at the same time. At the same time, in offline life they prefer to share with friends and interact with others in bars or public spaces; even if they are alone and know nobody where they are, they stay connected to their circles through social networks, which is called "isolate togetherness"[15] through a laptop or phone, but done from a public place. If they cannot be with their friends or close circles, they use media such as Skype, Hangout, FaceTime, etc., where they find a safe space to share emotions and feelings with their friends and family. Among millennials aged 18–24 who use Skype, a third[16] of them do so on average for 30 minutes at least once a week to communicate with their family, and at least half of them to communicate with close friends weekly (McMurchy, 2014), which shows that for many, interacting face to face through videoconferencing is part of their lives and a valid space for sharing. As business travellers, if they have to work they also prefer public spaces such as business centres, lobbies or cafeterias, which they turn into their workplace before shutting themselves in their rooms, as was the custom of the Baby Boomers, who demanded a desk in the room.

- "**Authentic local experiences**" Millennials look to be in contact with and soak up the local culture, to live different experiences and not only see the tourist sites; they want to experience what the ordinary inhabitants of the place they visit do, so they want to go to the café where locals go and find hidden places that not every tourist can get to know. In this way, interaction with local people is so important because it opens up the everyday side of life and they can have an authentic experience, far from the tourist circuits.

- "**I can make the world a better place**" This generation is more aware of the environment and of healthy eating, and has a "Green" attitude when consuming, which makes them prefer products that are committed to sustainable practices, fair treatment and are environmentally friendly; they also prefer brands that are committed to social and charitable causes, taking part by supporting the causes that interest them or donating through their phones, but not getting involved beyond that. So when travelling they choose to stay in "eco-friendly" hotels with LEED[17] certification, even in hotels with development programmes with local communities, so as to feel that they are contributing to a better world.

Among other beliefs and attitudes, we can highlight a general egocentrism beyond what is expected in young people, a global point of view and a full understanding of technology; also standing out – related to their youth – is a tendency to make last-minute decisions and not to contribute resources to large organisations such as the government.

Generation Z

This generation, made up of children and teenagers, is considered the "true digital natives", since they were born in the full swing of technological development; in a world with mobile phones, where their books are Kindles and iPads and CDs are a collector's item of fashionable "vintage". Why have an mp3 player if the smartphone already has everything? For them social networks have always existed and technology is fully integrated into their lives. They are technology; they were born and grew up in an already interconnected world.

As consumers they manage their parents' purchasing power, since despite having no income they manage to acquire high-value gadgets such as tablets, smartphones and game consoles. They manage to influence their parents' decisions on all kinds of products and services, especially on food, clothing, entertainment and travel, because they are great connoisseurs of brands, and therefore know what it can mean to tag or untag others and to endorse a brand with a "like". They prefer brands that have a presence on social networks and are associated with fair, responsible and ecological practices. We could say they are similar to their predecessors the "Gen-Y", although they are even more sociable and concerned about the environment.

Thanks to Facebook, Skype, Hangouts, FaceTime and others, they communicate in a "real" way with members of their family and friends across the world, without needing to be in the same place (Cross-Bystrom, 2010). This generation shows pragmatism in its way of communicating, given that they know how important 140 characters are for communicating, and long-distance relationships are being redefined with the help of technology, so they have started a new way of interacting face to face.

In summary, we see that each generation has its particularities, and we see a great leap in the way Gen-Y and Gen-Z behave and socialise compared with their parents and grandparents; this poses new challenges for hoteliers in satisfying these new customers who will start to take over and hold the purchasing power in the coming decades. That is why it is necessary to start anticipating and designing the modifications to service and venues in order to captivate demand.

As regards the way of socialising, we see that both generations are reinventing the way they communicate, preferring digital media and seeking, despite geographic distance, to maintain face-to-face relationships and interactions with their circles of friends and family.

Despite all the advances in technology, we see that there are customs and traditions intrinsic to the human spirit that are preserved and define us as a species. So what are the qualities of face-to-face communication? How does it affect our relationships?

"Face-to-face" communication

"Face-to-face" communication is an essential part of the everyday life of every individual; it is the moment in which we relate personally to the people around us. It is now necessary to understand that this type of communication is made up of the use of words, the manner of expression, or simply gestures and postures. Although this is related to culture and social traditions, it is inscribed in the communicative circuit. According to Luhmann (2005), communication exists only in social terms, which means that communication is given by the society that provides the codes, symbols and means to carry it out.

We can therefore understand that communication is more than words, that understanding the vocabulary does not by itself mean understanding the message, but that the message comes enriched by the codes we have acquired through tradition or cultural heritage. As Desiato (1996) describes:

> "…"face-to-face" communication is fundamental to the existence of a polis, a "spiritual city" in which individuals recognise one another as persons, influencing each other mutually." (p. 103)

In this way we can understand that the communication process from sender to receiver through the direct channel necessarily generates feedback and immediate interaction between both parties, since while the message is being sent – in its linguistic and paralinguistic form – sender and receiver can at the same time read the signals given by the gestures and expressions emitted, both conscious and unconscious, by each of them. Consequently, this reading (in both directions) can modify the discourse in its form and content so that it adapts to the communicative objectives; face-to-face communication therefore has instant feedback for both parties, even through silence.

We can then see that recognising expressions of emotions and moods makes the message easier to decode; that is, different meanings can be understood in the overall message. This can be reinforced by the results obtained by Mehrabian (1977), which show that the understanding of a message during a conversation in which feelings and attitudes are communicated is made up of the following percentages: 7% of the meaning is given by the words spoken, 38% by paralinguistics (the way in which the words are said) and 55% by facial expressions. Referring to his experiments, the participants took the 93% of non-verbal language as more important in meaning for understanding the overall message, even when it contradicted what was said verbally. Professor Mehrabian points out that this formula is not applicable to all situations, only to contexts in which the person declares liking or aversion regarding feelings or attitudes, but it gives us a reference for seeing the importance of face-to-face.

This involves the recognition of the six universal emotions[18] present in all cultures – Western and Eastern – across the globe (Ekman, 1972), and of those specific to each people, with the cultural meaning inferred. On this last point, we can identify a set of codes and expressions shared by most modern cultures and, thanks to globalisation, even when they are not part of one's own culture, we can identify and understand the symbolism given by the values that belong to each person according to their origins.

In this way each individual who belongs to society builds their own person, in accordance with the self and the interaction with others in their environment. The act of communicating makes them a "homo communicator", making others participants in what they have, making common and extending to others their objectives and experiences (Desiato, 1996), a personal process that means recognition with others, generating bonds of affection, belonging and identification. So in a world that allows almost unlimited geographic mobility, when an individual is uprooted from their usual environment, communication in the form of face-to-face makes it possible to break the alienation and rebuild that identification with other human beings and, in turn, with society.

All this shows the importance that face-to-face interaction has for human beings. It goes beyond the communicational sphere alone, rising to a metaphysical level, since it is related to the expression of the individual, involving their identity – individuality and self – consolidated thanks to the relationship with others; building society and forming collective identity.

Hotel service: communication and staff

Following on from the above, we know that communication is present in everything we do as a society, and therefore in work environments in companies or organisations we distinguish internal and external communication; in the latter, companies favour means of communication other than face-to-face, where communication is impersonal, formalised, rigid and distant, its aim being to eliminate as much noise as possible in order to increase its effectiveness; where individuality and the self are not important, and so communication is generated to meet objectives and carry out the work, although according to a global survey 67% of executives and managers think that their company or organisation would be more productive if their superiors communicated personally more often (Martin, 2007).

As for external communication, it must be in line with the objectives defined within the "Promotion" and the communication plan; here all the channels deemed necessary are clearly used to achieve the communicative objectives and so that as much of the target public as possible can get to know our company. Face-to-face, undoubtedly, cannot be the only channel considered.

In the case of tourism businesses, these guidelines also apply to the 3 additional "P's", which are People, Processes and Physical Evidence, proposed by Booms & Bitner (1982), in order to maintain congruence in the service. As for people, this is where the attitudes and the profile that the members of the team must have are defined.

In hospitality, defined as a service industry, customers look for "signals" that give them some indication of the quality of the service they will get. Today, thanks to online distribution, a large part of sales is helped by the physical evidence shown through suggestive photographs of rooms and spa-

ces, and also by the references or reviews that can be found on the web, relegating face-to-face interaction to the moment when customers arrive at the hotel. The exception is the business and professional channels, where the sales force comes into contact with some of the customers.

This is where the "Staff" play a very important role, since they are the ones who deliver the service and convey to the customer the information relating to it (Kotler, Bloom, & Hayes, 2004), so they are the element that can secure the customer's trust in taking the service or not, becoming, in this case, the face of the hotel. In short, it is the human link and relationship that the customer has with the company.

Quoting Talaya (1996) (in turn quoted by Del Alcázar Martínez (2002)): "The quality of tourism services, like most services, depends on the human factor, that is, on the provider–user interrelation", listing the main characteristics of tourism products from the perspective of customer demand. The "Staff" – who apply the processes and deliver the services – with their experience and knowledge of the place, thanks to their cultural identity and their own lived experience of the place, contribute to generating the customer's experience through "cultural exchange", which takes place inherently through face-to-face communication.

This is reinforced by the statement of Acosta, Fernández, & Mollón (2002), who point out:

> "It is impossible to reach total quality and, therefore, customer satisfaction and loyalty without thinking about communicative processes that produce deep interrelation and interconnection.
>
> It has even been proven that in this sector [tourism, hospitality and catering] there is a close relationship between the internal and the external customer. This explains why some customers become loyal to a hotel, bar, restaurant or other tourist facility."

Continuing along the line of fostering relationships, according to the results obtained by Bashar Aref & Al-Haj (2010) in their study of the motivations of tourists visiting Petra in Jordan, we see that among the first 10, 5 are related to an interest in getting to know the people, culture, traditions and customs of the place. This positions the factors that involve human interaction as one of the main ones that influence the reasons for travel and that shape the expectations of the travel experience they wish to have. Although this study was carried out with visitors to Jordan, it serves as an example for understanding the motivations that may be present on a leisure trip.

Table 2: Values of push motives[19]

#	Push factors	Rank	Value
1	Visiting a place I have not visited before	1	4.14
2	Experiencing new or different styles of traditions or ways of life	1	4.08
3	Appreciating natural resources	1	4.02
4	Exploring cultural resources	1	4.01
5	Increasing my knowledge of the foreign destination	1	4.01
6	Seeing how people of different cultures live	2	3.97
7	Exchanging traditions and customs	2	3.94
8	Having visited a destination listed among the new seven wonders	2	3.93
9	Being away from home	2	3.89
10	Relaxing physically	2	3.75
11	Fulfilling my dream of visiting a foreign land or country	2	3.74
12	Taking part in new activities	2	3.71
13	Satisfying my desire to be somewhere else	2	3.69
14	Visiting a tourist place	2	3.66
15	Finding emotion and excitement	2	3.59
16	Improving communication with the local community	2	3.56
17	Reconnecting with spiritual roots	3	3.49
18	Meeting new people	3	3.47
19	Relaxing spiritually	3	3.33
20	Raising my social status	3	3.3
21	Having a pleasant time with my travel companion	3	3.24
22	Visiting a place my friends have already visited	3	3.23
23	Visiting a place that would impress my family and friends	3	3.17
24	Seeking solitude in a foreign land	4	2.97
25	Visiting friends and relatives	4	2.71

From this we can extrapolate that the employees of a hotel will form part of that overall experience. If we then consider the premise that customers do not distinguish between the organisation and the employee – for the customer or user, the employee is the company (Performance Research Associates, 2009) – the hotel or tourism company must therefore encourage these interactions and bring staff closer to the customer.

Going further and thinking about the characteristics of generation Y, which sees staff not merely as the service provider or the face of the company but as the person who can provide that link or bridge to the authentic experience they are looking for, contributing to travellers with their knowl-

edge of the place the best options, making possible immersion in and connection with the local culture.

Hospitality, face-to-face and the business world

I believe it is pertinent to review the studies carried out by large hotel chains on face-to-face and on meetings, in which the opportunities in the business and professional segment are assessed. Bearing in mind that the context of crisis is beginning to show signs of improvement and there is optimism about economic recovery, this is creating the possibility of growth in the segment as a result of the trend towards more meetings and events globally.

According to studies commissioned by important hotel companies in the world (Hilton and IHG Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts), which stress the importance of "Face-to-Face" in the business world, they highlight the value of giving priority to face-to-face time with customers in order to succeed with them. For many business men and women, about 40% believe that the lack of face-to-face time caused the loss of business or deals, which can be estimated as missing out on around 24% of annual sales (Carter-Showell, 2013).

Continuing with the figures presented by the study conducted by Carter-Showell for IHG, called "Business meetings in the modern world", face-to-face meetings are preferred by 81% of respondents[20], reaffirming that this type of interaction helps build trusting and lasting business relationships because it makes it possible to read non-verbal language and look the other participants in the eye, a factor of great importance when closing a deal, since we do business with those we trust enough to do so.

They are also perceived as driving the involvement of participants further, reducing the chances of misinterpreting the message, and as a great opportunity to build trust (Carter-Showell, 2013, p. 16). This is likewise reaffirmed in the work of Arvey (2009, pp. 4–6), which in its first part analyses CMC[21] versus face-to-face communication: the former serves for dealing with matters of low importance that require neither coordination in time nor immediate decisions, whereas the presence of those involved is necessary to reach consensus and make decisions, which is achieved during "real-time" meetings.

In this regard I cite Schwartzman (1989) (in turn cited by Arvey, 2009), who points out:

> "Historically, face-to-face meetings have played an important social role, and especially in the political life, of Western and non-Western societies."

We see that the meeting is part of universal culture; we find it in all the civilisations and peoples of the world, who use it as an indispensable tool for finding solutions and agreements. It is therefore a deeply rooted custom that will not disappear despite generational differences; whereas with CMC, in some contexts, equivocal or ambiguous information can be transmitted, which limits it to certain interactions and topics (Woolgar, 2010).

This therefore shows itself as a market opportunity for hotel brands positioned in the business segment. For that reason hoteliers already exploit not only the sale of rooms to business men and women but also have meeting rooms and lounges, plus other services suited to meeting the needs of

this segment, where the MICE sector presents itself as a generator of extra income when the market where they are located allows it.

Although the industry is fully prepared to meet its customers' requirements, we see that for large formats traditional media with in-person, face-to-face interaction are still preferred, although "virtual" and hybrid type events are slowly beginning to emerge.

In virtual events the interaction is entirely by virtual means, with the use of CMC, audio and video; participants are in different geographic positions and share only a common virtual space; in this form, job fairs, business fairs, conferences and seminars (or "webinars") have already been held.

In "hybrid" events the interaction is developed by combining traditional methods of in-person interaction with virtual telepresence methods; this type of event can join audiences or exhibitors in different geographic places, which translates into the possibility of widening the audience or having speakers present, thus minimising the economic and ecological costs of transporting all the attendees.

According to the report "2014 Global Meetings and Events Forecast" by American Express Meetings & Events (2013), in the section "Special Sections", virtual and hybrid meetings are slowly beginning to gain a place in the global market. The report stresses that virtual collaboration tools are widely used worldwide. Web meetings, conference calls, videoconferences, etc. are seen as alternatives to business travel, considered for addressing small audiences or groups in work environments.

Despite their almost generalised use at a collaborative work level, they are not being adopted quickly for large audiences, where the technology-related sectors use them more frequently (American Express Meetings & Events, 2013).

According to the report, organisers see in this type of meeting the possibility of reducing costs, reaching larger audiences and reducing travel time and time away from the office. On the other hand, when assessing the obstacles for event organisers (see figure 4), they point first to the inability to engage the audience and to monitor their participation in the event. Next, as reasons, we find that the owners of the meetings or events are not ready to rethink traditional live meetings, together with the fact that they do not see virtual and/or hybrid meetings as a valid alternative to replace live, in-person events.

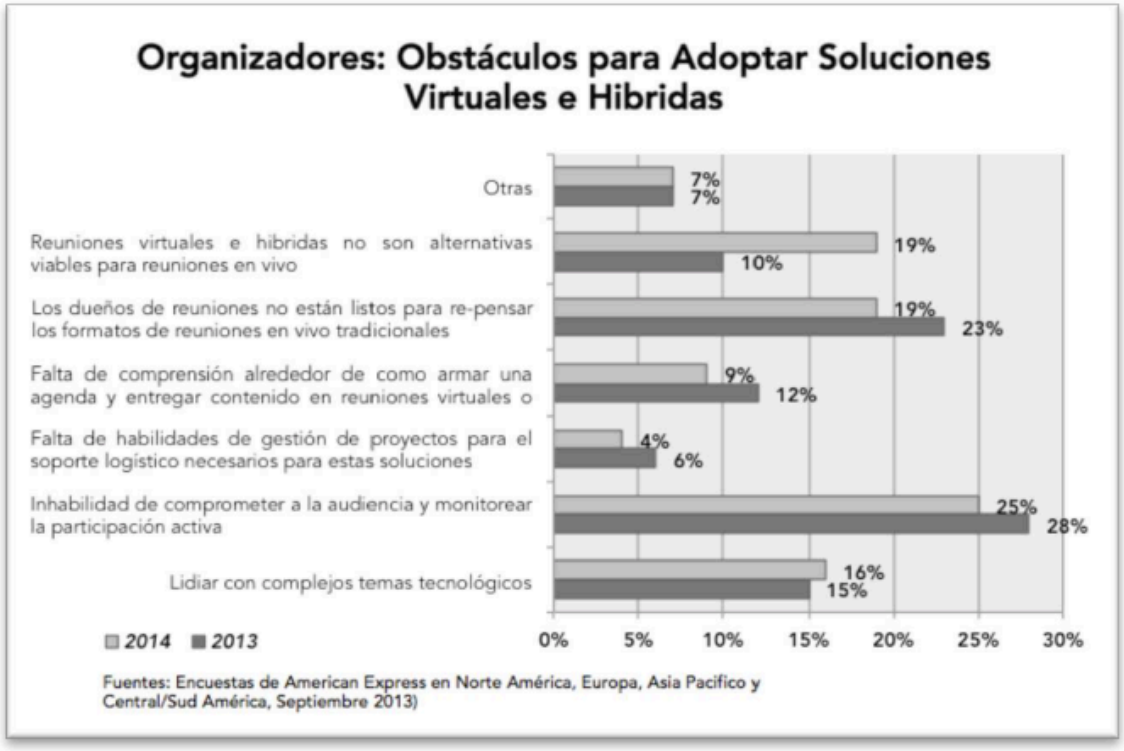


Figure 4. Obstacles to adopting virtual and hybrid solutions / Organisers (chart labels in the original Spanish; the bars compare 2014 and 2013 survey results, by obstacle)

From the hoteliers' point of view (see figure 5), we find that the biggest obstacles they encounter are: dealing with complex technology issues, as well as the investment these require, and, like the organisers, they see the owners' lack of understanding with regard to these formats as an alternative for rethinking normal events or meetings. These obstacles mean that the adoption of these formats for large audiences is low and that progress has been slow over this last decade.

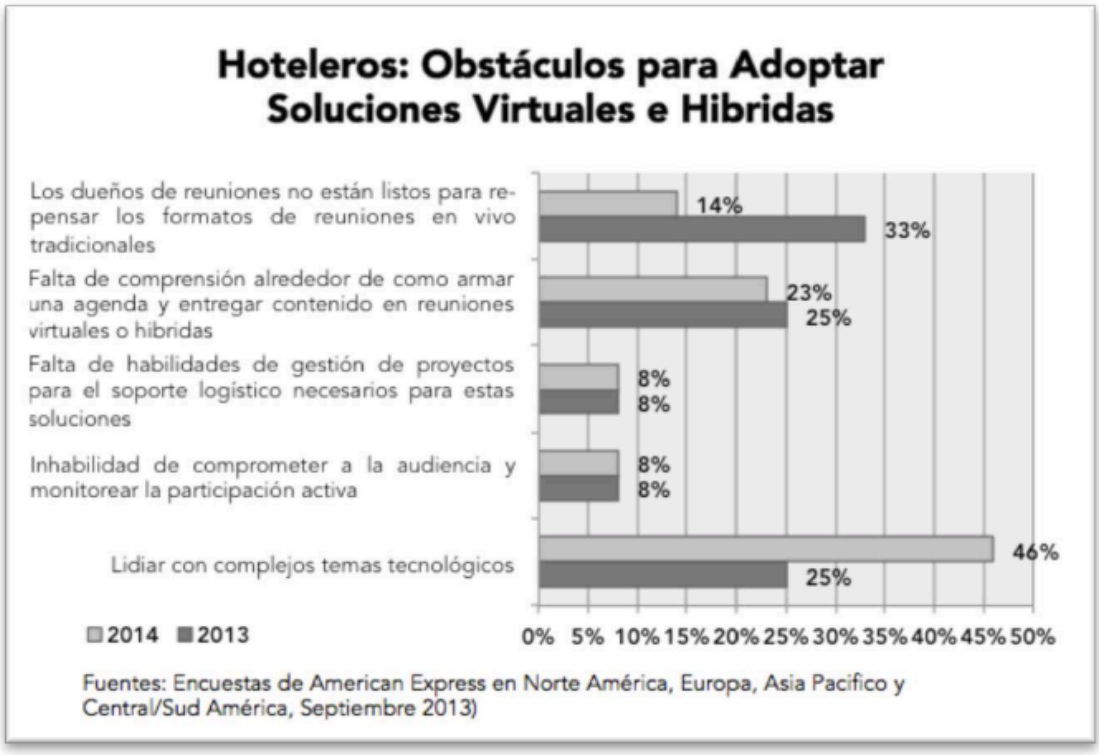


Figure 5. Obstacles to adopting virtual and hybrid solutions / Hoteliers

In my view, perhaps it may change to hybrid or virtual formats when the new generations take over and become the target market. Above all with the millennials, when they begin to occupy the highest posts in companies and organisations, and therefore to make the decisions; in this way, these technology natives will implant their customs and habits, in which, as we know, they are more comfortable with new technologies, thereby replacing the current meeting paradigm.

However, we see that in smaller formats hoteliers have the opportunity to create environments equipped with technologies so that, together with the F&B service and the hotel's service in general, they make these the preferred places for holding work meetings, sales meetings, working breakfasts, etc.; thus exploiting a market in which the habits have already been adopted.

This has meant that some hotel companies are already beginning to set up public telepresence rooms, included within their events offer. These rooms are part of joint ventures with telecommunications companies, as in the case of "the first public room in Singapore"[22] launched by Tata Communications and the Rendezvous Hospitality Group as part of a plan of openings in South-East Asia. Crowne Plaza, the business-segment brand of the IHG group, is also preparing its entry into this area with the self-proclaimed "first"[23] public telepresence room in Europe, at the Crowne Plaza St. James London (Carter-Showell, 2013).

We therefore see that these customs develop in line with technological advances, each time progress is made and they are made more affordable. So which technologies will allow us to create these environments and interactions?

Technologies

Today, technological advances in the field of communications allow us to connect no matter where in the world we are, thanks to the wide coverage of the Internet and telephone networks that we have. Until a few decades ago the telephone was the most effective person-to-person telecommunication, but with the democratisation of the Internet the world has been revolutionised, allowing communication through email, instant messaging and teleconferencing; tools that allow us to communicate instantly from anywhere in the world, needing only access to the network.

In recent years teleconferencing has seen increased use thanks to the improved quality of networks, which brings with it an increase in data transmission speed, and therefore the sound and the image of the video are of better quality and sharper; all these tools are adopted as "normal" among the younger generations, who have grown up with this technology and see it as part of their lives.

On the other hand, there are leading telecommunications companies, such as Avaya[24] and Tata Communications[25], that have researched and developed the equipment and software needed to implement professional communication network systems, including the development of Telepresence and Videoconferencing, which are positioned commercially as a tool for work collaboration among the members of corporations and companies. They offer high-quality software and equipment, which allow images with better resolution, sharpness and sound. But because of the high costs they are aimed at large companies that can afford to invest in these technologies.

Telepresence or videoconferencing allows us to interact "face to face" with other speakers regardless of their location. In this way, in the work setting as in the personal one, this tool can be used to maintain or create a relationship and to create collaborative environments in two or more distant places. Integrating them into the normal operation of a service company, such as a hotel or a restaurant, will therefore give us a new way of interacting with our customers and also of how they interact with the world, the company and our collaborators.

Technological progress evolves from the telephone to teleconferencing and then to telepresence, so today it is possible to have this service from any laptop or mobile phone equipped with the software, a camera and an Internet connection. It is therefore a popular means of communication and is increasingly being used by thousands of users with Internet access around the world.

Videoconferencing

Videoconferencing is the form of communication that, through devices, makes it possible to transmit audio and video simultaneously and in both directions. This technology makes it possible to hold meetings between people or with groups of people located far from one another. In addition, it can be combined with applications that make it possible to share and work online on documents or whiteboards; other kinds of services are also offered, such as the exchange of graphics, images and sending files, among others.

Today, with improvements in networks and equipment, technical limitations such as poor video quality, deficient sound and low reliability have largely been overcome, so that we now have high-quality videoconferencing with audio, video and file transfer, at a cost that is more than affordable for most of those interested.

Its implementation brings important benefits, such as collaborative work between geographically distant individuals and greater integration between work teams.

We can say that videoconferencing today is an accessible solution that meets the need for communication with systems that let us transmit and receive video and sound between different places or areas, thus avoiding the expense and loss of time involved in the physical travel of people.

Telepresence

Unlike videoconferencing, which is based on sending and receiving video and sound simultaneously, which facilitates communication in the sense that it includes paralinguistics and emotions, that is, face-to-face interaction, we could say that it is limited in a pragmatic way to being a means of communicating; telepresence, on the other hand, goes one step further, seeking to let the speakers share an environment and feel that they are doing so.

According to Lichtman (2006), telepresence is the science and art of creating visual-conference environments that address the human factors of the participants and duplicate, as closely as possible, the live or in-person experience, which increases users' acceptance and their final satisfaction.

There are various methods and equipment configurations for creating these environments, which typically offer a combination of factors that differentiate them from videoconferencing and make them emulate the experience of being present in the same space. These factors are:

- Life-size (real) participants,
- Fluid movement,
- Correct skin tones,
- High-quality sound and video, with adequate lighting;
- The absence of visible technological components,
- True eye contact, or an approximation of it in the case of groups;
- Environments with immersive and/or identical decoration, where the participants can feel that they share the same space.
- Consistent quality across disparate locations.

All this allows us to emulate or recreate an interaction as we would in person, so telepresence gives us the possibility of being a viable substitute for travelling, and of being present on more "formal" or "special" occasions.

We can then distinguish two major components that are necessary to make videoconferencing and telepresence possible: software and hardware.

Software

These are the logical components of a computer system that make it possible to carry out tasks. In the case of videoconferencing available to any user, the computer applications that make it possible are of the VoIP[26] type, most of which are available to download free of charge from the Internet. The best-known applications are Skype, Google Hangouts and FaceTime, among others. Most peo-

ple know one of these applications, which can be installed on a computer, smartphone or tablet. They are quite popular; because they offer free voice calls and videoconferences between users, they are used by people in personal settings (family and friends), study and work.

Because they depend on the Internet bandwidth available to the users making the call, and because they use the IP protocol, which is not designed to ensure the stability of communications, they suffer from problems with audio and image quality, which in some situations makes them unreliable for work environments. They mean loss of information or delay in delivering it, and they also lack security and encryption that could prevent "eavesdropping" by a third party not taking part in the communication, with the resulting leak of topics that may be sensitive for the company.

As a result of these problems, companies such as Avaya or Tata Communications, which are network and telecommunications providers, have developed their own applications that work with other security and transmission protocols, using standards other than IP. These applications are part of the package of solutions they offer their customers, allowing better-quality and secure videoconferences within the company's network, as well as providing the software needed to build telepresence environments.

Hardware

Hardware is all the tangible parts of the computer system and, in this case, of the telecommunication system; so for videoconferencing and telepresence to be possible we need basic, indispensable elements (see figure 6) such as: the screen, the video camera, the speakers or headphones, and the terminal or computer connected to the network in order to communicate, where the components and configurations vary according to the budget and needs of each person or organisation.



Figure 6. Basic equipment for a videoconference or video call

With the equipment mentioned above, to communicate it is necessary to be on a network, within which alone communication is possible. As we can see in the diagram (see figure 7), to connect with someone outside it is necessary to go through the Internet; this makes it possible to create collaborative environments where users can communicate with each other regardless of their location.

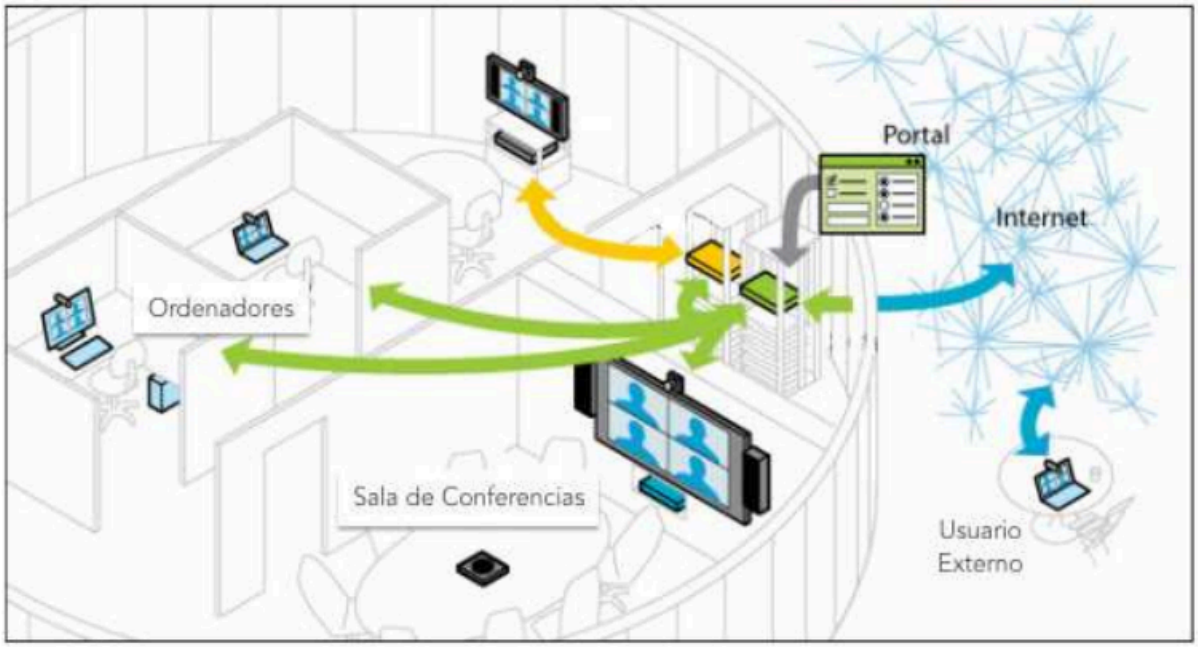


Figure 7. Basic diagram of a network with videoconferencing capability (labels in Spanish: Ordenadores = computers; Sala de Conferencias = conference room; Portal; Internet; Usuario Externo = external user)

Although there are companies that provide the service of setting up the system needed for an advanced telecommunications network, videoconferencing can be used without large investments in specialised equipment; in fact, as I mentioned in the software section, if you have a computer, tablet or smartphone with a video camera, speakers and an Internet connection, it will be possible to download one of the free applications available to make video calls.

Unlike videoconferencing, although it consists of almost the same components, telepresence needs more advanced network and equipment requirements, as well as a layout designed to simulate the "physical" presence of the participants as described in the telepresence section; in this way environments can be recreated where the participants, as in figure 8, can see the other participants seated along the extension of the table, despite being in different countries and time zones.

Figure 8. Meeting room enabled with telepresence [Image omitted in this edition; see the original Spanish document, page 41.]

There are several companies on the market that offer consulting and implementation of telepresence systems providing solutions according to each customer's needs. This makes it difficult to define specific equipment for setting up a telepresence environment, since the equipment improves its performance every year and the development of networks allows better performance.

As regards hardware and software, we already have everything needed to develop and integrate videoconferencing and telepresence solutions in the hospitality world; moreover, the devices that are in the research phase will make it even easier to implement these systems. For example, the glass-based electronic devices developed by the company Corning[27] (see figure 9).

The cost of the devices needed to create these environments is the biggest limitation; although it is considerably lower than a decade ago, it is still high because of the quality of equipment and network speed associated with a good experience. Although the trend shows that the investment will become more affordable with the continuing design, research and development of the technologies.

Figure 9. Corning concept video "A Day Made of Glass" [Image omitted in this edition; see the original Spanish document, page 42.]

Experiences around the hospitality world

There are not many examples of the integration of telepresence in the hospitality world, but some attempts can be found that may have been too far ahead of their time; they are ideas worth trying to apply, even at a very early stage of development, and they show the potential of this application. Below I present some of them.

Teledining

This idea, which has been on my mind for some years, is perhaps what led me to take an interest in the subject of telepresence and videoconferencing and its possible insertion in restaurants.

In this BBC report called "Virtual dining: How China could change the way we eat" (Cellan-Jones, 2012), the reporter shows his virtual dining experience in the private room of one of the restaurants belonging to the Haidilao restaurant chain, which serves the "hotpot" speciality. On this occasion the reporter, who is in Shanghai, dines with 6 people, 2 of whom are in Beijing, taking part in the dinner thanks to another private teleconference room of the chain.

Figure 10. Virtual dining: How China could change the way we eat [Image omitted in this edition; see the original Spanish document, page 43.]

Tele-training

This application of teleconferencing, which is currently used by some universities, is ingeniously put into practice by the American restaurant chain "Fleming's Prime Steakhouse".

Because of the large number of restaurants across the country, it was becoming increasingly difficult for the company to standardise the service and, in turn, to train the service staff; thanks to telepresence, they can manage employee training no matter which city they work in or where the trainer is, thus ensuring that everyone has access to the same training and the same quality of information.

Figure 11. (YouTube video) Fleming's Steakhouse tele-training presentation [Image omitted in this edition; see the original Spanish document, page 44.]

In addition to using the technological equipment for meetings and coordination between teams, they also use it in other areas such as the kitchen, where chefs work with telepresence to develop the menus.

They have also held themed dinners in their different restaurants across the country with simultaneous broadcast, where the diners in the different places can see what is happening in the other restaurants, the challenge being to serve everyone at the same time.

Virtual concierge

The opening of the first Marriott Marquis in Miami brought with it a mix of luxury and the latest technology; they set out to equip it with all the most advanced equipment, above all in communications, so the hotel has touch-screen telephones with videoconferencing, a public telepresence room, and other details that make technology a real experience for the guest.

One of the innovations they implemented is the "virtual concierge", which offers a 24/7 concierge in the centre of the hotel lobby. It is a telepresence system that allows guests to interact with the concierge, who is in a place other than the lobby. This is complemented by the service created by Marriott Hotels, also called "virtual concierge", which is a web page that allows customers to make various requests before arriving at the hotel, requests that were traditionally made to the concierge directly. Although the initiative seems good, comments found on the web indicate that the web page system does not work properly and in some cases the customer has to contact the hotel by telephone.

Figure 12. (YouTube video) Marriott Marquis Hotel Miami [Image omitted in this edition; see the original Spanish document, page 45.]

Skype booth

Figure 13. (YouTube video) Skype Booth [Image omitted in this edition; see the original Spanish document, page 46.]

Although this experience does not take place in a hotel but at Tallinn international airport in Estonia, I think it is important to bear this type of initiative in mind, since it marks a point in the development of videoconferencing technology for public settings. According to the report by Butler (2012), the development of this booth, enabled for use with Skype, is part of a project to create innovation in the e-world, where Estonia positions itself as one of the leaders in Europe and the world.

This booth has a 23" screen and allows the user to connect with their own Skype account to make video calls free of charge; the booths have sensors to detect the user, and thanks to these, to end the session you only need to step down from it. One of its main virtues is that it only needs Internet access and a power source to work, so its installation is simple and uncomplicated; at a cost of €5,000 these booths have great potential, since they can also be used to display advertising while idle, which can help to recoup the investment.

Formulation of the hypotheses

Service in hospitality is influenced by the tastes and preferences of customers, so listening to the customer and understanding that "the customer is always right" will help us adapt the service. Over the years, in this way, the tourism services industry has adapted to customers' habits.

We have witnessed this kind of change; proof of it is that the holidays of the past are very different from those of the present, and we see how experience gives us precedents which, together with new trends and the studies gathered, will allow us to try to work out the changes to come. As is the case today with millennials, whose habits are closely tied to technology, transforming the way of communicating and keeping in touch, this is shaping hotel products and opens up opportunities for innovation.

So part of the evolution of hospitality involves integrating telepresence to connect the customer, seeing technology as a facilitator of the service and, in turn, part of it in the global environment of hotel services. From this reflection I can suppose two paths in which to apply them:

The first is the «customer and staff» relationship, so:

- Telepresence or videoconferencing is a suitable substitute for replacing the physical presence of staff in certain service processes.

And the second relates to the «hotel as a point of social connection between the customer and their social circles»:

- Telepresence makes it possible to share a table in a bar, cafeteria, lobby or restaurant during a meal with people who are physically far away.

Proposed uses of teleconferencing and telepresence in hospitality

The spirit of this research is not only to uncover and understand customers' behaviours and preferences with regard to the viability of introducing telepresence and videoconferencing into hotel processes, but to go further: it is to propose the processes, or the concepts behind them, so as to channel their adoption in hospitality and service.

These technologies allow us to go beyond the square metre of habitual service and, in my view, they allow us to reach the customer from a humanist approach, which connects us at an emotional and personal level with the customer.

I therefore intend below to list applications, services or products that we can develop with these tools:

Service staff via telepresence

As I mentioned earlier, hotels increasingly equip their rooms with the most advanced devices, the luxury sector being where we can find rooms fully controlled through tablets that allow adjusting the temperature, lighting and curtains, among other things, as well as controlling the music and television; in some, these tablets even allow placing Room Service orders and other services.

In this way it is possible to use the available equipment plus a few add-ons to offer the guest communication and interaction with staff from different areas of the hotel via telepresence, using the room's own high-definition television. This would allow closer contact with the guest, making room for face-to-face interaction without forcing the guest to travel to the service points, or the staff either, saving time and improving communication.

Voice recognition and translation technologies could be incorporated so that service staff can understand the customer's requests, since in certain regions where the language is very different from the visitor's, a common language (usually English) is scarcely mastered, as in China, Vietnam and others; this creates communication problems and difficulties for both parties in reaching understanding.

Figure 14. Photograph of telepresence receptionist (CISCO) [Image omitted in this edition; see the original Spanish document, page 49.]

Lastly, this opens up the possibility of having much more information about our interactions with customers, since, being a digital medium, it is possible to record the conversations, building a large database of information about our customers. With the help of voice recognition tools integrated into the CRM[28] software we could have the transcriptions available for analysis. On the one hand this lets us monitor service quality and identify the strengths and weaknesses of our employees; and, through "keywords", identify tastes and preferences that can be stored in the customer's own profile, making it possible to improve future service and to personalise it. All this information could be classified as "Big Data" which, globally, together with satisfaction surveys, would give us information for making the major decisions.

Concierge Anywhere

From my experience in hotels, both as an industry professional and as a traveller, I recognise how valuable the concierge service is; metaphorically speaking one could say they are the keys that help open the doors to a new world to discover; that give us the power to enjoy the city better, and so a good concierge can, by knowing the interests of each guest, prepare the route so that the customer can walk calmly through the city and delight in the good things it has.

In the experience of the Marriott Marquis in Miami, where they have a fixed concierge in the hotel lobby via telepresence, we see that the service is restricted to a physical place and obliges the customer to be present there to receive the service. The concept of "Concierge Anywhere" is therefore to take the concierge service out of the lobby and likewise out of the hotel, to wherever the customer goes, so that the concierge can be there to assist the guest or customer wherever they are.

As we saw, it is possible to make a videoconference call through a tablet, a smartphone or a laptop with an Internet connection; so the same concierge, whom at the moment one can only talk to face to face in the hotel lobby, can now be contacted and be present outside the physical limits of the hotel.

In this way the hotel, and in turn the hotel chain, can offer a personalised 24/7 concierge service to guests; perhaps it would be possible to create an application dedicated to this service, belonging to the hotel brand, to be installed on the customer's devices, offering the functionality only to those who meet certain criteria, such as status in the loyalty programme, room category or others that may be in line with marketing objectives. This would create a complementary service in which the guest has access to assistance in making the arrangements needed to make their trip perfect; the concierge service belonging to a hotel chain could thus not be restricted to one hotel but have a global reach and assist the customer at all destinations, connected with them even before they arrive at the hotel, clearly during, and, why not, also after their departure. This would make it possible to gather information about the customer's tastes, behaviours and preferences, as well as to generate trust and build a closer relationship with them.

Additionally, this could mean an increase in demand for 4G modem rentals to access the Internet outside the hotel, which would be a possible source of extra income.

Telepresence settings in restaurants

In Western culture, sharing the table is something that is part of our culture; mealtime is the place to share with family and friends, so sharing a table virtually is an idea that can serve to generate moments between people who are geographically distant.

Thanks to technology that makes very thin high-definition screens possible, with sensitive microphones and speakers with natural sound, in dimensions that make it possible to equip a table so as to emulate the presence of another diner or other diners, these "telepresence tables" could be included in the restaurant dining room rather than creating isolated booths as a "call centre" or "cybercafé" would.

In this way people, whether or not they are staying at the hotel, could go to the hotel restaurant to share breakfasts, lunches or dinners with another person in another restaurant of the chain on the other side of the world, creating an atmosphere that brings each individual's presence so that they can talk and catch up just as we would in a traditional situation. After all, during a meal the occasions on which we have physical contact are few, and this varies with the cultural origins of the participants, the moments of greeting and saying goodbye being mostly where physical distance would be felt.

As regards the operation of this service, the biggest challenge is synchronisation of service, since food and drinks must be served almost in unison to create the atmosphere of sharing the same table. Also, as in traditional situations, it is necessary to be able to manage payments according to the customer's wishes, since, as we know, sometimes the bill is split among the diners and sometimes one of them is the host. We currently have the supports that would make it possible to meet these requirements.

As with traditional restaurants that have private rooms for groups, equipping rooms with telepresence would allow the hotel to have a public telepresence room that would serve not only as a meeting room but as a dining room depending on the situations for which it is booked. These could be used not only by companies and the business segment, but by individuals who wish to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries or simply share a celebration with a group of people.

One of the drawbacks found is the time difference, which, given the distance between destinations, makes it hard to match schedules, so an adjustment would have to be made between daytime meals and combined moments created, such as a breakfast-lunch, lunch-dinner or dinner-lunch, although between certain places it may be impossible to make the adjustment needed for this type of event.

Staff training and development through telepresence

Human resources, in many hotel brands, are key to delivering the promised service to customers. The success of the customer's experience and satisfaction in the hotel lies in the staff, which is why the big hotel brands devote a lot of time and money to training people, forming them in the brand's philosophy and having them acquire the knowledge needed to carry out the tasks entrusted to them. As we saw in the example of the Fleming's Steakhouse chain, they already use telepresence to standardise the training of their staff across the United States in all their outlets.

This ensures that information and training for employees are delivered correctly and with the desired effectiveness, without losing quality or suffering changes in the information or its essence due to the different interpretation of the trainer, who generally changes in each unit. The latter affects service quality and leads each hotel, despite belonging to the same brand, to be perceived as different in service from another of the same brand.

So, by using the same equipment that is available to guests or customers, the investment can be maximised by using it to train and develop staff. It also serves for the coordination of teams at a regional or global level. This opens up the opportunity, together with universities or training centres, for employees to be able to continue their studies and attend classes from the hotel's own premises, giving workers the chance to grow and keeping them motivated to improve, while also retaining the team's talent.

"Community" lobby/cafeteria

Thinking about the preferences and habits of millennials, it is necessary to create public environments where guests can enjoy themselves, which means providing welcoming, comfortable and communal spaces that make it easier to share and meet other guests; at the same time as receiving friends and customers or simply working on their projects while enjoying a coffee.

Figure 15. Photographs of the lobby of the ACE Hotel New York City [Image omitted in this edition; see the original Spanish document, page 54.]

Such is the case of the ACE Hotel New York City[29], which has a lobby cafeteria with different subspaces such as armchairs and sofas to sit and talk and relax, or its long table where everyone can share that space to set up their laptop and work. The trend of offering a "grab 'n go" option to replace the classic continental or buffet breakfast served at a table is also beginning now. It consists of

offering options for customers who do not have time or are looking for something simpler for breakfast, so that they can take ready-to-go preparations along with a juice or hot drink and have them on the way or in the lobby.

On the other hand, many hotels have dedicated spaces called "Business Center" so that customers can access a computer and the Internet. These places are generally separate from the lobby or other public areas, and are spaces that do not allow much interaction with others or even eating or drinking.

The "CHU" is then the integration of these concepts, where the "Business Center" is integrated into this new type of lobby which, together with a good café in the Starbucks[30] style, will make an ideal "venue" for enjoying the hotel. It would be possible to set up a videoconferencing/telepresence system next to the armchairs for those who wish to communicate with someone while enjoying a good coffee. It could also be useful for business travellers who need to contact collaborators, customers, family or friends during breakfast or in small moments between commitments.

By creating this kind of atmosphere we can go further and integrate gift voucher or remote payment systems so as to be able to treat friends, family or acquaintances from our circle, and in this way encourage people to go to the different cafés around the world and share a moment together with them, similar to what is proposed in the "teledinner" section.

We thus transform the hotel lobby into a point of connection between people, where there are spaces to share inside the hotel as well as outwards, all in a single relaxed space open to the guests and to the individuals of the community where the hotel is.

Web reservation assistance service with videoconferencing

Online sales have revolutionised the way rooms are sold; now all hotels have their own website and their own booking engine. Each customer can thus browse the different pages and choose the option that best fits their preferences. The goal for hotels is to have as many bookings as possible go through their own site and not through intermediaries, to avoid the extra costs this entails. We thus see how many hotel brands offer the best rate on their own website as a hook to attract reservations.

The interest of every hotel company is therefore to have an attractive site so that customers prefer it to an intermediary's. While the best rate may be one of the reasons for choosing a hotel, there are also other reasons for preferring one hotel or another. Several factors therefore come into play, such as location, category, services, room type, etc. The "physical evidence" is thus shown through photographs of the rooms, public areas and smiling staff, suggesting friendly and welcoming treatment.

So the best "physical evidence" of the service we can offer a customer is to let them try the service itself, and so we incorporate a reservations agent through the "Click to Call"[31] tool, which makes it possible to add chat and video-chat to the web page. In this way we incorporate the human factor, increasing conversions and giving the potential customer a proof of the quality of the service. We thus avoid the customer, when in doubt, going to look for that information on external websites, such as travel blogs, review pages and others, and the booking being lost.

There are similar alternatives such as automated robots (see figure 14) that try, through keywords, to understand what the problem is, so they do not always get it right and they do not inspire confidence, giving the feeling of not being understood and of being left alone with the problem.

Figure 16. RENFE virtual assistant [Image omitted in this edition; see the original Spanish document, page 57.]

So, by incorporating into the web a reservations agent via CTC[32] using the concept of telepresence, the website would become an active element and an extension of the hotel itself; the customer could choose whether to make their reservation in the current "classic" way, independently, or to contact this agent, who could guide them through the booking and solve their problems or answer their doubts immediately in order to complete the sale. The customer can thus be certain that the hotel brand really values customer service and knows they can count on another person who will quickly answer their doubts.

Methodology and sample

To gather the information and data that allow us to answer and verify the possibilities of incorporating telepresence or videoconferencing in the areas already announced, it is necessary to consult the market, above all the generation that will hold the greatest purchasing power in a few more years.

To do so it is necessary to know the preferences and habits of the people who use this type of technology during their travels and in their daily lives. In the same way, to be able to record the perception of the different proposals and their possible adoption within a hotel. Consequently, I believe the best way is to try to record the greatest number of responses in order to obtain trends and inclinations and contrast them with the assumptions.

It is therefore necessary to rule out the possibility of carrying out interviews with experts or members of the different generations, individually or in groups, since they would be mere records of their own perceptions and experience, and in this case gathering qualitative information does not give us information representative enough to generalise and extrapolate it to the population of 2.02 billion Gen-Y'ers; it is also necessary to consider analysing factors such as country and/or region of residence.

Because the universe is an infinite population (2.02 bn), it is necessary to conduct this survey on a sample of 400 people. With this number of participants and their responses we can have a confidence level of 95.5%, a sampling error of 5%, and assuming the maximum variance of 0.25. It will, however, only show representativeness of the geographic region from which the greatest number of participants and responses is obtained.

The survey questions will be focused on gathering information in three different areas related to the objectives of the research. These three areas are:

- Preferences regarding carrying out processes and interactions with service staff.
- Motivations and habits regarding the use of videoconferencing and/or telepresence.
- Relationship and contact with social circles during travel.

The survey will consist of 16 questions plus those for basic information for demographic segmentation, namely: name, sex, age, country of residence.

The need to find participants in different geographic areas makes it necessary for the survey to be distributed over the Internet, where participants will respond through a web page provided by the Google Forms tool.

Questionnaire

Demographics

The first part of the survey will contain the demographic questions:

- **01** Are you a woman or a man?
  - Man
  - Woman
- **02** Which of the following categories includes your age?
  - 19 or younger
  - 20 to 24 years
  - 25 to 29 years
  - 30 to 34 years
  - 35 to 37 years
  - 38 years or older
- **03** Which of the following best describes your current marital status?
  - Married
  - Widowed
  - Divorced
  - Single, living with partner
  - Single, but in a formal relationship
  - Single
- **04** In which region is the country in which you currently live?
  - Europe
  - North America
  - Latin America and the Caribbean
  - Africa
  - Middle East
  - Asia Pacific
- **05** What is the highest level of education you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
  - Less than secondary education
  - Secondary education diploma or equivalent
  - Technical/vocational diploma or equivalent
  - University degree
  - Postgraduate (Master's, Doctorate, etc.)

Service preferences

The next phase contains questions aimed at finding out their preferences in situations of interaction with service staff.

- **06** Have you ever stayed in a hotel?
  - No, never. (Go to the next phase)

- Yes, in a hotel of 3 stars or fewer
- Yes, in a 4-star hotel
- Yes, in a 5-star hotel.

- **07** When arriving at the hotel, which registration procedure would you prefer?
  - The classic way, through the hotel receptionist.
  - Independently, through a self-service station located in the hotel lobby.
  - Independently, through an application on your mobile phone (smartphone), tablet or PC while waiting at the airport or on the way to the hotel.
  - Checking in by videoconference (Skype, Hangouts, FaceTime, etc.) with the hotel receptionist or agent while waiting at the airport or on the way to the hotel.

- **08** Which of these statements best defines the function of service staff in a hotel?
  - They are there to attend to the needs and requirements of customers during their stay at the hotel.
  - They are there to take reservations, carry out check-in and check-out of guests, and solve problems in the hotel.
  - They are there to make the guest's stay at the hotel easier and help them enjoy their stay in the city.
  - They are there to attend to the guest during their stay at the hotel and help them do what motivated their visit to the city.

- **09** How do you rate the following qualities of hotel service staff? Please rate from 1 to 5 (where 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important)

Quality	1 Not important at all	2 Slightly important	3 More or less important	4 Important	5 Very important
Speed and efficiency in responding to your requests	○	○	○	○	○
Friendliness and warmth when talking and interacting with them	○	○	○	○	○
Information about places and activities to do at the destination	○	○	○	○	○
Learning, through them, the customs of the local community	○	○	○	○	○
Learning, through them, the local language, expressions or accents of the place	○	○	○	○	○

- **10** As regards information on hotel services or information on the surroundings and activities, in what way would you prefer to obtain that information?
  - Go to the reception or concierge to talk with the service staff and ask the necessary questions.

    - "Chat" with an agent, receptionist or concierge from the room, a public area or outside the hotel through a mobile, tablet or personal computer.
    - Talk by videoconference (Skype, Hangouts, FaceTime) with the agent, receptionist or concierge from the room, a public area or outside the hotel through a mobile, tablet or personal computer.
    - It is not necessary, I prefer to check the hotel's web page or travel recommendation and review websites (e.g. Tripadvisor, Yelp, Foursquare, Google Places)

Communication habits

The next phase contains questions aimed at finding out their preferences and habits of digital communication.

- **11** Are you familiar with videoconferencing (Skype, FaceTime, Hangouts)?
    - Yes
    - No
- **12** If you answered yes to question 10, how often do you use this means of communication?
    - Once a month
    - Twice a month
    - Once a week
    - Twice a week
    - 3 or more times a week
- **13** Related to the previous question, how long does each call last on average?
    - 15 minutes or less
    - between 15 and 30 minutes
    - between 30 and 45 minutes
    - between 45 and 60 minutes
    - more than 60 minutes
- **14** You use videoconferencing to communicate with: (you may select multiple options)
    - Friends
    - Family
    - Study colleagues
    - Work colleagues
    - Customers
    - Suppliers and collaborators
- **15** Have you made a videoconference from any of these places? (you may select multiple options) From:
    - Home

- The office
- A café
- A restaurant
- A waiting room
- Conference or meeting room
- A hotel room
- A hotel lobby
- Other: _____

- **16** Do you usually drink or eat during a videoconference? (you may select multiple options)
  - Water
  - Hot drinks (tea, coffee, etc.)
  - Soft drinks (juices, sodas, etc.)
  - Alcoholic drinks (whisky, rum, wine, beer, etc.)
  - Desserts or sweets (biscuits, cakes, etc.)
  - Light meals (sandwiches, salads, tapas, etc.)
  - Main dishes (pasta, pizza, rice, stews, etc.)
  - Nothing
- **17** When you are travelling, what is the main means by which you keep in contact with your close circle?
  - Messaging (Facebook, Gchat, WhatsApp, WeChat, etc.)
  - Phone calls
  - Sending e-mails
  - Videoconference calls
  - Letters or postcards by traditional mail
- **18** When you are travelling, do you make teleconference calls?
  - Yes
  - No
- **19** If you stayed at a hotel that had a videoconferencing service available in its lobby, would you use it?
  - Yes
  - No
- **20** If you were invited to a "teledinner" (a dinner held with the help of teleconferencing where the diners are in places distant from one another), would you attend?
  - Yes
  - No

- **21** If you answered NO to question 20, what would be the reason?

With these 21 questions I believe I can obtain the information needed to conclude on the viability of using videoconferencing and telepresence technology in the service of the customer to improve the experience of the stay.

Results and discussion

The results are a reflection of how people experience today's hotels; the answers are clearly influenced by their past experiences and can be considered a snapshot of what habits and acquired behaviours currently are.

Demographics

The questionnaire was carried out over the Internet, contacting a database of around 800 people by e-mailing, Facebook and other messaging media. These messages were sent without distinguishing gender, profession, place of residence or age; the participants were not prepared, nor given any information about the subject of study, so the participants answered the survey according to their own understanding of the questions and their own appreciation of the subject.

The survey was open for responses for 5 days, recording the responses of 193 participants, in which for every woman (97) who responded a man (96) did too, which makes for a gender balance. Next we can identify that the majority of participants are residents of Latin America and the Caribbean (62%), followed by residents of Europe (31%), which makes these areas the most represented; I regret not having obtained more responses from Asia Pacific (2%), where the adoption of these technologies seems to be stronger.

Table 3: Participants, ages and residence

	20–24 years	25–29 years	30–34 years	35–37 years	38 years or older	Grand total
Men	2.59%	11.40%	12.95%	5.70%	17.10%	49.74%
North America	0.00%	1.04%	0.52%	0.00%	1.04%	2.59%
Latin America and the Caribbean	0.52%	3.11%	8.81%	4.15%	15.03%	31.61%
Asia Pacific	0.00%	0.52%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.52%
Europe	2.07%	6.74%	3.63%	1.55%	1.04%	15.03%
Women	9.84%	11.92%	11.40%	4.15%	12.95%	50.26%
North America	0.52%	1.55%	0.52%	0.00%	0.52%	3.11%
Latin America and the Caribbean	2.59%	5.70%	8.81%	3.63%	9.33%	30.05%
Asia Pacific	1.04%	0.52%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.55%
Europe	5.70%	4.15%	2.07%	0.52%	3.11%	15.54%
Total	12.44%	23.32%	24.35%	9.84%	30.05%	100.00%

As regards level of education, we see that almost 73% of respondents have university studies or higher and 20% a technical or professional degree. This makes up a majority of people with a level of training and education that allows them to understand the questions and concepts, ensuring to a certain extent the validity of the answers.

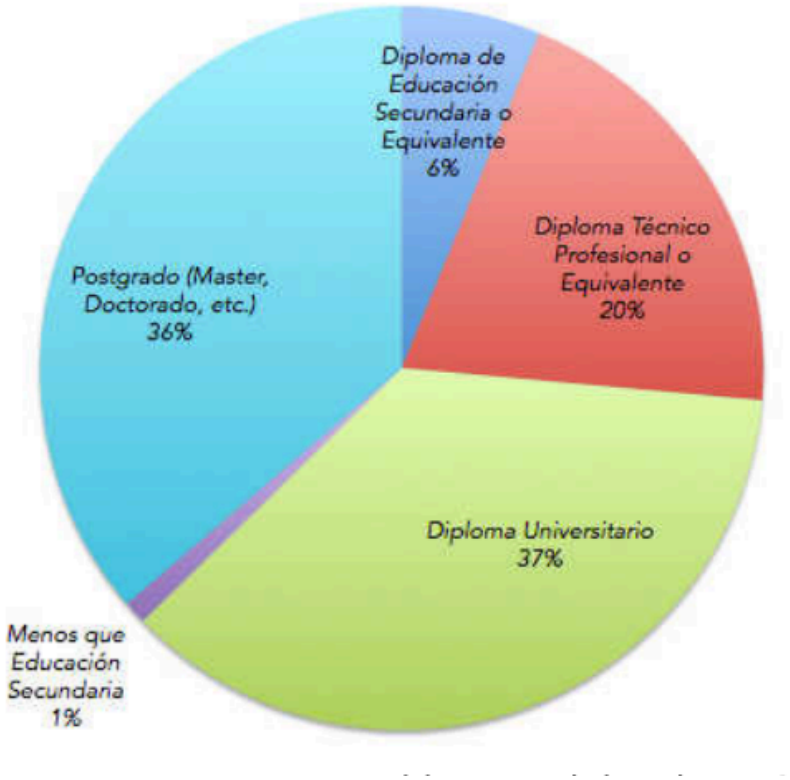


Table 4. Level of education (pie chart; values as shown in the original: Postgraduate (Master's, Doctorate, etc.) 36%; University degree 37%; Technical/professional diploma or equivalent 20%; Secondary education diploma or equivalent 6%; Less than secondary education 1%)

Also, 67% of people declared being married or in a formal romantic relationship, from which we could deduce that these are travellers who, when travelling, will do so with family or with their partner.

Lastly, we can see that the survey was answered by 67% millennials (that is, 135 participants), where the most participative bracket is the one between 25 and 35 years (92). This will give us important information about the preferences of Gen-Y'ers.

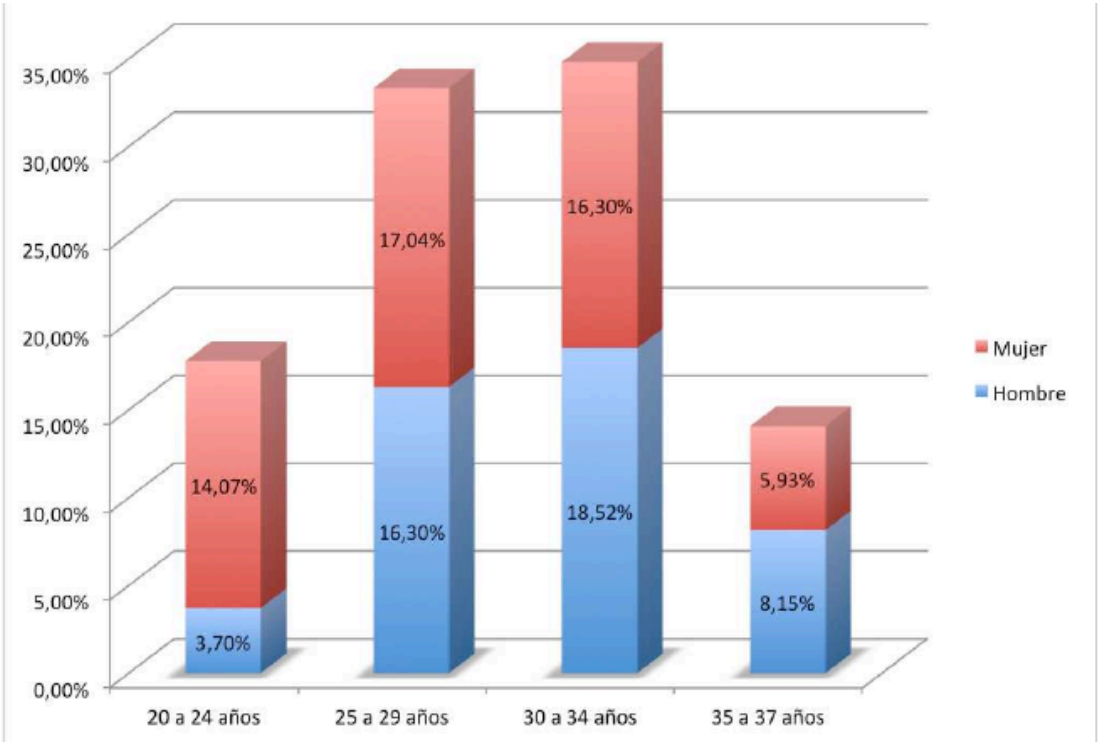


Table 5. Millennial participants (stacked bar chart; values as shown in the original, as percentages by age bracket and gender — 20–24 years: men 3.70%, women 14.07%; 25–29 years: men 16.30%, women 17.04%; 30–34 years: men 18.52%, women 16.30%; 35–37 years: men 8.15%, women 5.93%)

Results on hotel preferences

According to the responses, we see that both men and women, when staying in hotels, prefer 4-star hotels, followed by a trend and 3 stars.

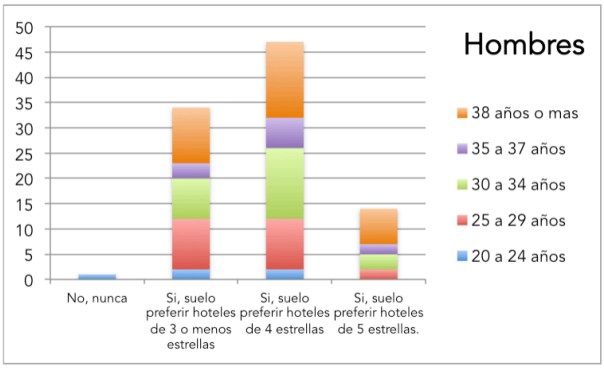


Table 6 Preferencia de Hoteles - Hombres (Todas las Generaciones)

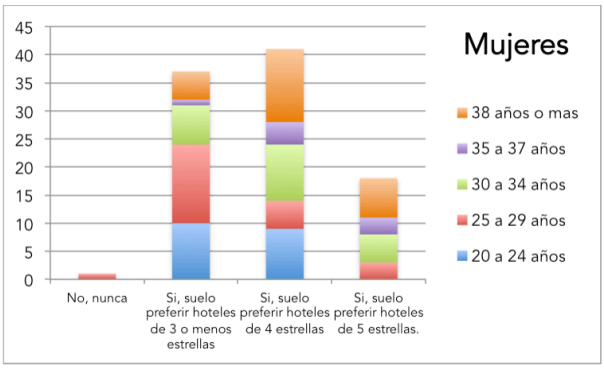


Table 7 Preferencia de Hoteles - Mujeres (Todas las Generaciones)

Table 6. Hotel preference – Men (all generations) (stacked bar chart by age group; categories: No, never / Yes, I usually prefer hotels of 3 stars or fewer / Yes, I usually prefer 4-star hotels / Yes, I usually prefer 5-star hotels)

Table 7. Hotel preference – Women (all generations) (same categories and age groups)

Also, if we isolate the millennial group, we find that in the age brackets above 30 years they prefer 4-star hotels, while those between 20 and 29 years have a preference for 3-star hotels, which I infer is due to the difference in purchasing power given by age and by entry into the working world.

Service staff – function

As regards their view of the staff and their function, we see that opinions are divided between option 1 and option 3, where we find the majority of the responses, at 37% and 43% respectively. Looking only at the responses of the millennial generation we find almost the same figures: 43.5% of the men and women of "generation Y" selected statement 3, so they give a more active role to the hotel's service staff, one that makes them participants in the final result of their experience both in the hotel and in the city. However, there is 37% of Gen-Y'ers who see the functions of service staff in a more pragmatic way and who only expect responses from them to satisfy specific needs and requirements during the stay at the hotel. From this last point we can infer that the presence of service staff is not necessary except when required to resolve a specific need or requirement of the customer.

Table 8: Responses on the function of a hotel's service staff

	1	2	3	4
Men	21.47%	1.57%	21.99%	4.71%
20–24 years	1.05%	0.00%	1.05%	0.00%
25–29 years	6.28%	1.05%	4.19%	0.00%
30–34 years	6.28%	0.00%	5.76%	1.05%
35–37 years	2.09%	0.00%	3.14%	0.52%
38 years or older	5.76%	0.52%	7.85%	3.14%
Women	15.18%	4.71%	21.47%	8.90%
20–24 years	4.19%	1.05%	3.66%	1.05%
25–29 years	3.66%	2.09%	3.66%	2.09%
30–34 years	2.62%	1.05%	6.81%	1.05%
35–37 years	1.57%	0.00%	1.57%	1.05%
38 years or older	3.14%	0.52%	5.76%	3.66%
Total	36.65%	6.28%	43.46%	13.61%

1. They are there to attend to the needs and requirements of customers during their stay at the hotel.
2. They are there to take reservations, carry out check-in and check-out of guests, and solve problems in the hotel.
3. They are there to make the guest's stay at the hotel easier and help them enjoy their stay in the city.
4. They are there to attend to the guest during their stay at the hotel and help them do what motivated their visit to the city.

Check-in – preferences

In these responses we find surprises that in some way contradict the experts on the preference of the younger generations for self-service terminals. Here, however, all age groups regardless of gender prefer the traditional or classic method for checking in. It may be influenced by the culture of the participants, but we see that they value interaction with service staff, in this case the receptionist, on arrival and registration at the hotel.

We then see that, if it were possible to check in independently, 1 in 4 participants would prefer to do so by means of their mobile device before arriving at the hotel, thereby saving time in the waiting moments at the airport or on the way to the hotel.

Table 9: Responses on check-in preferences (all generations)

	1	2	3	4
Men	35.08%	1.57%	10.99%	2.09%
20–24 years	1.05%	0.00%	1.05%	0.00%
25–29 years	7.33%	1.05%	2.62%	0.52%
30–34 years	9.42%	0.00%	3.14%	0.52%
35–37 years	4.19%	0.52%	0.52%	0.52%
38 years or older	13.09%	0.00%	3.66%	0.52%
Women	31.41%	4.19%	13.09%	1.57%
20–24 years	6.28%	2.09%	1.57%	0.00%
25–29 years	8.38%	1.57%	1.57%	0.00%
30–34 years	6.81%	0.00%	4.71%	0.00%
35–37 years	2.62%	0.00%	1.05%	0.52%
38 years or older	7.33%	0.52%	4.19%	1.05%
Total	66.49%	5.76%	24.08%	3.66%

1. The classic way, through the hotel receptionist.
2. Independently, through a self-service station located in the hotel lobby.
3. Before arriving, independently, through an application on your mobile phone (smartphone), tablet or PC while waiting at the airport or on the way to the hotel.
4. Before arriving, checking in by videoconference (Skype, Hangouts, FaceTime, etc.) with the hotel receptionist or agent while waiting at the airport or on the way to the hotel.

Rating of service staff qualities

In this battery of Likert-type questions the participant had to rate 5 statements or judgements directly related to service staff. This rating was made on a scale that runs from very important to not important at all; below I detail the results:

When asked to rate speed and efficiency in responding to their requests, we find that 91% of participants gave a rating equal to or higher than "Important". In the same way, we find that 71% declared friendliness and warmth when talking and interacting with them to be very important and 24% important. This is not surprising and is in fact the expected result, since men and women regardless of age have, among their travel expectations, being served quickly and at the same time cordially. These questions prepare the participant to answer the next 3 statements or judgements.

When asked to rate information about places and activities to do at the destination, among millennials we see that the women give it a positive rating: 50% consider it important and 41% very important. By contrast, among the men the rating is distributed as follows: 28% more or less important, 47% consider it important and only 16% very important. This suggests that men might prefer

to obtain the information by means other than service staff, unlike women, 9 out of 10 of whom find it a valid way of learning about activities. The sale of tourist services and packages by staff might therefore be better received by female customers.

Continuing, we see that regarding learning the customs of the local community through service staff, millennials, as with the previous statement, show a disparity between men and women: among men 70% consider it from more or less important down to slightly important (that is: 23% SI, 47% +/- I and 18% I) against 85% of women who consider it from more or less important up to very important (that is: 16% SI, 33% +/- I, 36% I and 17% VI) (table 10). Also, if we consider the age factor among the Gen-Y'ers (30+) and include the generations older than 37 (table 11), we see a slight increase in the ratings towards very important. From this I could estimate that the possible explanation for these results, beyond the difference given by gender, is that younger travellers prefer to get to know local customs outside the hotel, in the encounter with the city and its people, different from the hotel environment; and also that experience and years give maturity to appreciate the cultural exchange that takes place through the simple interaction with service staff.

Table 10: Rating of customs – Millennials

	1 Not important at all	2 Slightly important	3 More or less important	4 Important	5 Very important
Men	3.23%	22.58%	46.77%	17.74%	9.68%
20–24 years	0.00%	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%
25–29 years	4.55%	27.27%	36.36%	22.73%	9.09%
30–34 years	4.00%	12.00%	52.00%	16.00%	16.00%
35–37 years	0.00%	36.36%	54.55%	9.09%	0.00%
Women	0.00%	15.49%	32.39%	35.21%	16.90%
20–24 years	0.00%	5.26%	47.37%	31.58%	15.79%
25–29 years	0.00%	13.64%	22.73%	40.91%	22.73%
30–34 years	0.00%	22.73%	31.82%	27.27%	18.18%
35–37 years	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Total	1.50%	18.80%	39.10%	27.07%	13.53%

Table 11: Rating of customs – All ages

	1 Not important at all	2 Slightly important	3 More or less important	4 Important	5 Very important
Men	3.16%	21.05%	38.95%	23.16%	13.68%
20–24 years	0.00%	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%
25–29 years	4.55%	27.27%	36.36%	22.73%	9.09%
30–34 years	4.00%	12.00%	52.00%	16.00%	16.00%
35–37 years	0.00%	36.36%	54.55%	9.09%	0.00%
38 years or older	3.03%	18.18%	24.24%	33.33%	21.21%
Women	0.00%	13.54%	34.38%	33.33%	18.75%
20–24 years	0.00%	5.26%	47.37%	31.58%	15.79%
25–29 years	0.00%	13.64%	22.73%	40.91%	22.73%
30–34 years	0.00%	22.73%	31.82%	27.27%	18.18%
35–37 years	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%
38 years or older	0.00%	8.00%	40.00%	28.00%	24.00%
Total	1.57%	17.28%	36.65%	28.27%	16.23%

Next, regarding learning the local language, expressions or accents through service staff, we see that considering only millennials or all respondents the trend is the same. We again find that women give greater importance than men, as in the previous statement. But in this case the "slightly important" rating reaches 26% among Gen-Y, with the great majority giving a rating of more or less important at 34% and only 35% between important and very important. This can be interpreted as follows: since a barrier of formality exists in the relationship between guest and worker, this frames conversations at a certain level that does not allow the use of the local language itself but rather a neutral language that makes communication possible; moreover, acquiring new words and concepts to integrate into one's vocabulary is not an easy task, so unless the tourist is set on learning the language, it will not be among the most valued things on their trip.

Table 12: Knowing the local language, expressions or accents through service staff (Millennials)

	1 Not important at all	2 Slightly important	3 More or less important	4 Important	5 Very important
Men	8.06%	29.03%	32.26%	27.42%	3.23%
20–24 years	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%
25–29 years	13.64%	31.82%	27.27%	22.73%	4.55%
30–34 years	8.00%	20.00%	36.00%	32.00%	4.00%
35–37 years	0.00%	45.45%	36.36%	18.18%	0.00%
Women	2.82%	22.54%	35.21%	23.94%	15.49%
20–24 years	5.26%	21.05%	31.58%	26.32%	15.79%
25–29 years	0.00%	22.73%	31.82%	22.73%	22.73%
30–34 years	4.55%	22.73%	31.82%	27.27%	13.64%
35–37 years	0.00%	25.00%	62.50%	12.50%	0.00%
Total	5.26%	25.56%	33.83%	25.56%	9.77%

Table 13: Knowing the local language, expressions or accents through service staff (All ages)

	1 Not important at all	2 Slightly important	3 More or less important	4 Important	5 Very important
Men	8.42%	26.32%	30.53%	29.47%	5.26%
20–24 years	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%
25–29 years	13.64%	31.82%	27.27%	22.73%	4.55%
30–34 years	8.00%	20.00%	36.00%	32.00%	4.00%
35–37 years	0.00%	45.45%	36.36%	18.18%	0.00%
38 years or older	9.09%	21.21%	27.27%	33.33%	9.09%
Women	3.13%	19.79%	39.58%	23.96%	13.54%
20–24 years	5.26%	21.05%	31.58%	26.32%	15.79%
25–29 years	0.00%	22.73%	31.82%	22.73%	22.73%
30–34 years	4.55%	22.73%	31.82%	27.27%	13.64%
35–37 years	0.00%	25.00%	62.50%	12.50%	0.00%
38 years or older	4.00%	12.00%	52.00%	24.00%	8.00%
Total	5.76%	23.04%	35.08%	26.70%	9.42%

In summary, with these 5 questions we see that there is no indifference to the different statements put to respondents; rather, there is a tendency to rate each of them as important. In the case of information, customs and language, the results show opportunities to exploit and strengthen these qualities in the service team, since for an individual who does not belong to the local culture or community they are part of the novelty of the experience of immersion in the destination. This corroborates my assumption that people look for and value interaction in some way with local individuals and that this is part of the travel experience, which I had drawn from the data reviewed from the survey carried out by Bashar Aref & Al-Haj (2010); we see that in general the trend goes that way.

Preferred contact with the service team

This question puts forward 4 options as a means of communication for obtaining information on hotel services or information on the hotel's surroundings. Here the responses, considering both the millennials separately and the whole sample, show us that 60% of respondents prefer to do it directly, approaching the service team in person to talk and ask the necessary questions; next we see that 1 in 4 does not need to approach the staff but prefers to use websites to find the information they need, which is in line with what the experts and studies state.

Table 14: Preferences for communicating with service staff to obtain information

	1	2	3	4
Men	29.84%	4.19%	2.09%	13.61%
20–24 years	1.57%	0.00%	0.00%	0.52%
25–29 years	5.76%	2.09%	0.52%	3.14%
30–34 years	6.81%	1.57%	1.57%	3.14%
35–37 years	3.66%	0.00%	0.00%	2.09%
38 years or older	12.04%	0.52%	0.00%	4.71%
Women	31.41%	7.85%	1.57%	9.42%
20–24 years	6.28%	2.09%	0.52%	1.05%
25–29 years	9.42%	0.00%	0.00%	2.09%
30–34 years	5.76%	3.14%	0.00%	2.62%
35–37 years	2.09%	0.00%	0.00%	2.09%
38 years or older	7.85%	2.62%	1.05%	1.57%
Total	61.26%	12.04%	3.66%	23.04%

1. Go to the reception or concierge to talk with the service staff and ask the necessary questions.
2. "Chat" with an agent, receptionist or concierge from the room, a public area or outside the hotel through a mobile, tablet or personal computer.
3. Talk by videoconference (Skype, Hangouts, FaceTime) with the agent, receptionist or concierge from the room, a public area or outside the hotel through a mobile, tablet or personal computer.
4. It is not necessary, I prefer to check the hotel's web page or travel recommendation and review websites (e.g. Tripadvisor, Yelp, Foursquare, Google Places)

Chat, which is preferred more by women, and making a video call are also found with few preferences; the latter is in last place, a fact explained further on, since this type of communication is more associated with closer circles.

Use of technologies

This part of the survey was answered only by the participants who answered yes to the question on whether they used or were familiar with teleconferencing.

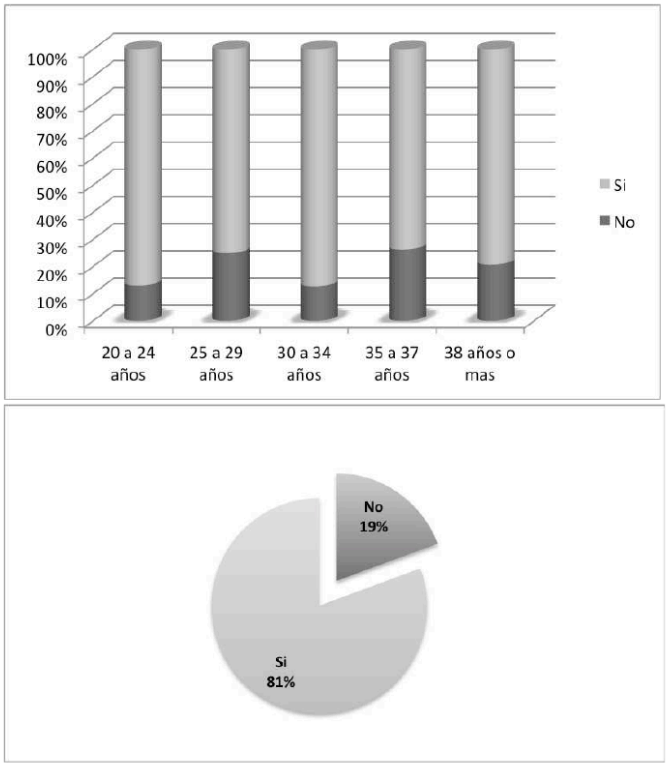


Table 15. Responses to "Are you familiar with videoconferencing?" (chart; 81% answered yes, as stated in the text)

81% of the participants answered this question affirmatively and were able to answer the last part of the questionnaire, which sought to gather information on preferences and habits when making videoconferences.

Teleconferencing – frequency

With this question we see that the use of this communication tool is very widespread. Thus 1 in 2 participants uses it at least once a week to talk, which is proof of good popularity in the use of this instrument and that it is part of everyday life, setting doubts aside and confirming that it is a valid tool for communicating with other people.

Table 16: Frequency of videoconference sessions (all generations)

	Once a month	Twice a month	Once a week	Twice a week	3 or more times a week
20–24 years	33%	24%	24%	10%	10%
25–29 years	32%	24%	9%	15%	21%
30–34 years	17%	24%	20%	12%	27%
35–37 years	36%	14%	14%	14%	21%
38 years or older	43%	24%	7%	13%	13%
General %	32%	23%	13%	13%	19%

We also see that 1 in 5 participants makes heavy use, reaching 3 or more times a week, especially if we isolate the responses of the millennial group.

Table 17: Frequency of videoconference sessions (Millennials)

	Once a month	Twice a month	Once a week	Twice a week	3 or more times a week
20–24 years	33%	24%	24%	10%	10%
25–29 years	32%	24%	9%	15%	21%
30–34 years	17%	24%	20%	12%	27%
35–37 years	36%	14%	14%	14%	21%
General %	27%	23%	16%	13%	21%

Teleconferencing – length of calls

Next we see that for most people the length of these calls falls within the limit of half an hour: 3 in 10 declared making calls of up to 15 minutes, which in the case of men is 36%; then we find 3 in 10 who said they make calls of between 15 and 30 minutes, a bracket in which women reach almost 40%. These two groups thus make up 60% of the total who responded. (see table 18)

Table 18: Length of video calls (All)

	15 minutes or less	between 15 and 30 minutes	between 30 and 45 minutes	between 45 and 60 minutes	more than 60 minutes
Men	35.9%	26.9%	23.1%	14.1%	0.0%
20–24 years	50.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%
25–29 years	20.0%	15.0%	40.0%	25.0%	0.0%
30–34 years	35.0%	35.0%	15.0%	15.0%	0.0%
35–37 years	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%
38 years or older	46.2%	30.8%	19.2%	3.8%	0.0%
Women	26.9%	38.5%	20.5%	11.5%	2.6%
20–24 years	11.8%	35.3%	29.4%	17.6%	5.9%
25–29 years	21.4%	35.7%	14.3%	21.4%	7.1%
30–34 years	28.6%	38.1%	28.6%	4.8%	0.0%
35–37 years	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
38 years or older	40.0%	35.0%	15.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Total %	31.4%	32.7%	21.8%	12.8%	1.3%

Within this half hour, and taking into account the differences given by gender, it suggests these are short conversations to update news and catch up on events during the week. This therefore reaffirms the data presented by McMurchy (2014) and indicates the margins of the time window that most people will devote to this type of communication. This is important to bear in mind when designing a service or product that incorporates the provision of videoconferencing terminals.

Table 19: Length of video calls (Millennials)

	15 minutes or less	between 15 and 30 minutes	between 30 and 45 minutes	between 45 and 60 minutes	more than 60 minutes
Men	30.8%	25.0%	25.0%	19.2%	0.0%
20–24 years	50.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%
25–29 years	20.0%	15.0%	40.0%	25.0%	0.0%
30–34 years	35.0%	35.0%	15.0%	15.0%	0.0%
35–37 years	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%
Women	22.4%	39.7%	22.4%	12.1%	3.4%
20–24 years	11.8%	35.3%	29.4%	17.6%	5.9%
25–29 years	21.4%	35.7%	14.3%	21.4%	7.1%
30–34 years	28.6%	38.1%	28.6%	4.8%	0.0%
35–37 years	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total %	26.4%	32.7%	23.6%	15.5%	1.8%

Teleconferencing – who do they communicate with?

As we had seen in the data provided by McMurchy (2014), which says that videoconferencing, especially in the millennial group, was used more to share with a closer and more intimate core made up of friends and family. In this question the responses confirm that information, finding that 71% use it to communicate with family and 60% to communicate with their friends. (See table 20)

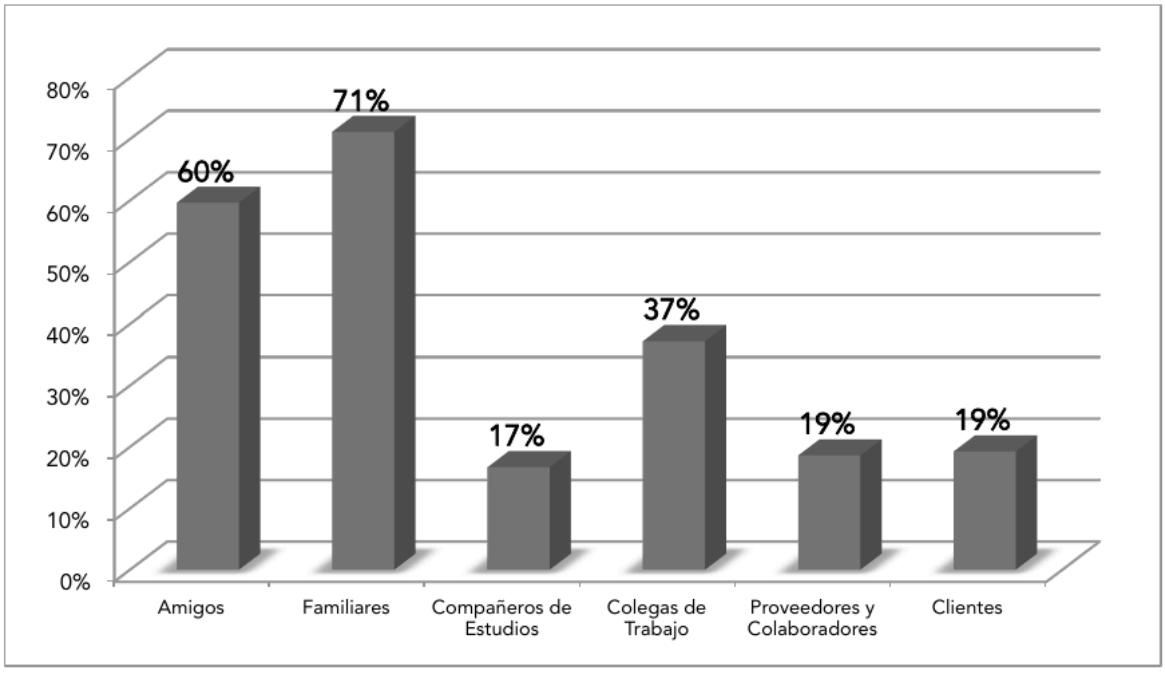


Table 20. Results: You use videoconferencing to communicate with: (bar chart; Friends 60%; Family 71%; Study colleagues 17%; Work colleagues 37%; Suppliers and collaborators 19%; Customers 19%)

So we see that face-to-face relationship through technology is reserved for people who belong to our circle of trust; since we allow ourselves this type of communication to maintain the bonds of affection with the people who matter in our lives and with whom we share our presence.

On the other hand, we see that in 4 out of 10 cases videoconferences are used to communicate with work colleagues, which also proves that it is a tool that allows collaboration.

Teleconferencing – what is the most used place?

This question shows us that the places where users of video calls use them most often are private environments; we see that 9 in 10 make calls from home. Next we see that the office and conference rooms are the work spaces most used to make a connection, with 61% and 24% respectively. On the side of more personal conversations, after the already mentioned "home", we find hotel rooms (51%) and cafeterias (31%) as places chosen to hold a face-to-face conversation through videoconferencing.

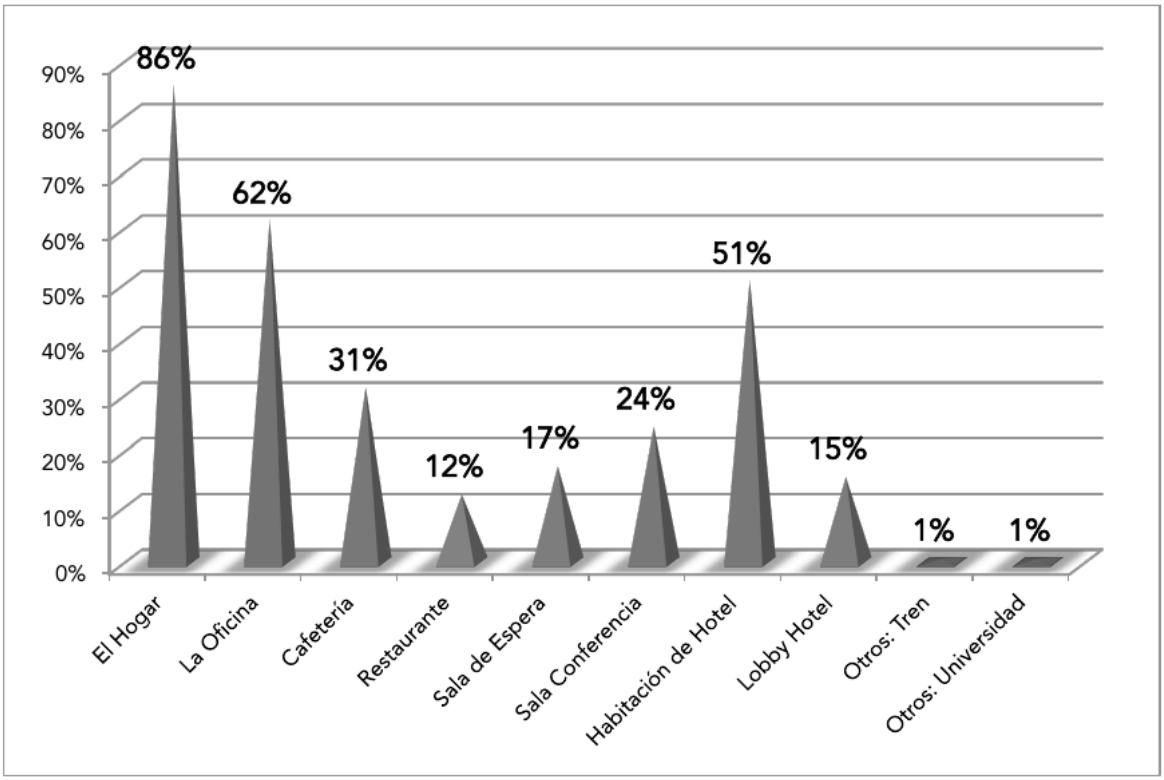


Table 21. Responses: Places from which you have made a video call? (bar chart; Home 86%; The office 62%; Cafeteria 31%; Restaurant 12%; Waiting room 17%; Conference room 24%; Hotel room 51%; Hotel lobby 15%; Other: Train 1%; Other: University 1%)

We see that the quietest places, where the user has control of the environment, are the most used. This allows people to talk calmly without distractions and noise. However, public spaces such as cafeterias, lobbies or waiting rooms and restaurants are places with significant use and could grow if the environments can improve Internet access, a fact that affects the quality and fluency of the conversation; they are also complicated because they do not have environments that allow a comfortable arrangement of the devices, and it is sometimes difficult to get good sound and lighting. All these factors can be improved without needing very complicated solutions or difficult implementations.

Teleconferencing – eating and drinking

When making a video call we see that preferences go towards drinks, with water, hot drinks and soft drinks heading the list; if we relate this to the length of calls we see they complement each other perfectly. As for the edible part, light meals such as sandwiches, salads, tapas, etc. and desserts or sweets such as biscuits, cakes, etc. are among the most frequent preferences, although they hover around 10%.

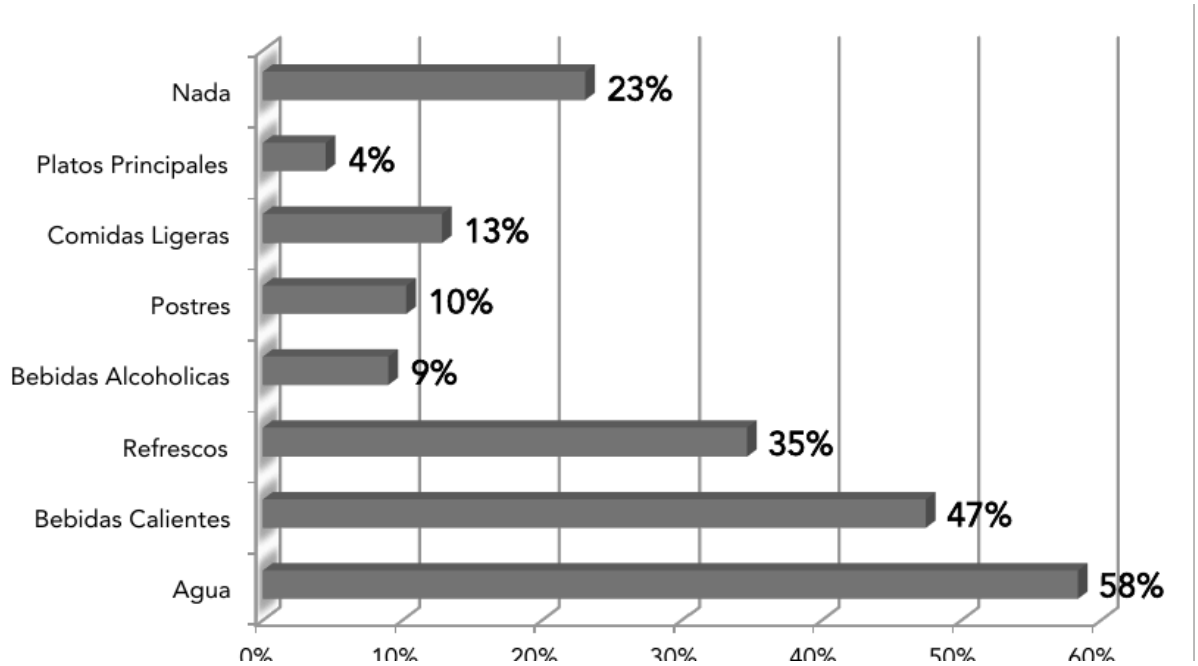


Table 22. Responses: Eating and drinking (bar chart; Water 58%; Hot drinks 47%; Soft drinks 35%; Alcoholic drinks 9%; Desserts 10%; Light meals 13%; Main dishes 4%; Nothing 23%)

These figures show us that there is a range of products that customers might prefer to consume during the conversation. We can thus suppose that a teleconference setting in cafeterias or lobbies, where food and drinks of this range are on offer, can be good places.

However, we see a 23% of "nothing" that is above the food items and the alcoholic drinks. There can be 2 readings here, since some respondents answered "nothing" together with other options, a fact that can be read as meaning that on some occasions they do not drink anything during the conversation; the other reading may be that they do not like consuming food during a conversation, as participant no. 147 expresses it: "*it is not my habit to talk while I am eating…*"

Preferred means of communication while travelling

In these responses we see a resounding preference for CMC, in particular for chat through the messaging applications available on all mobile devices. Here they answered about their main means of communication, and the fact of considering themselves in a holiday trip or short-stay situation necessarily makes this type of communication the preferred one, since the time is devoted to visiting, enjoying and discovering the place where the tourist is.

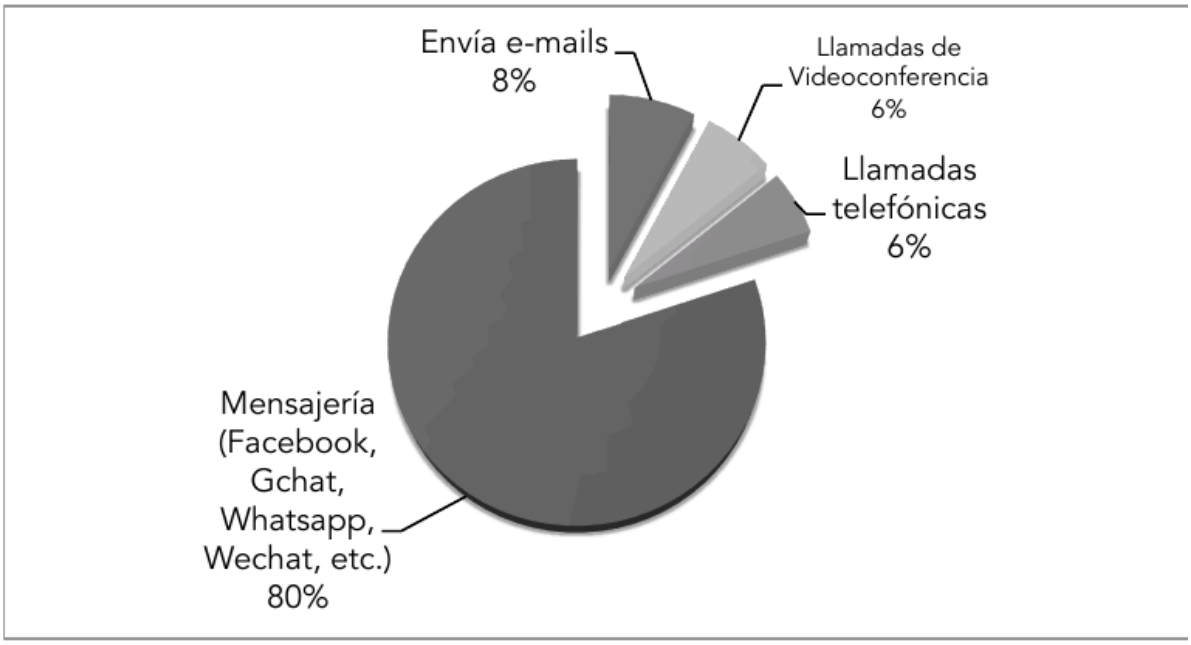


Table 23. Communication preferences during the trip (pie chart; Messaging (Facebook, Gchat, WhatsApp, WeChat, etc.) 80%; Sending e-mails 8%; Videoconference calls 6%; Phone calls 6%)

Moreover, sharing a photo or video through a social network makes it easy to keep the "audience" informed, so this is clearly the easiest and simplest way to satisfy the need to share with others.

Use of videoconferencing while travelling

Although in the previous answer we saw a great dominance of chat for communicating during the trip, leaving the other means proposed relegated to a low 20%, when asked whether they use videoconferencing during the trip, we find that 6 in 10 participants say they use it (see table 24). So this tells us that although it is not the preferred one, it is something they use during the trip.

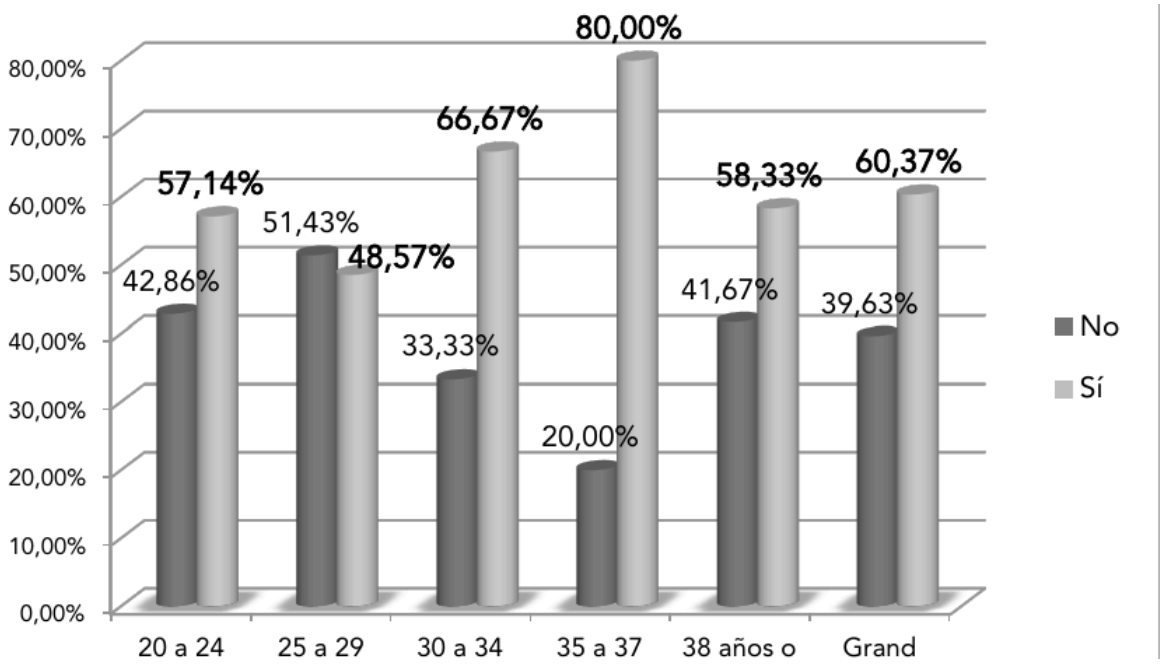


Table 24: Responses: When you are travelling, do you make teleconference calls?

	No	Yes
20–24 years	42.86%	57.14%
25–29 years	51.43%	48.57%
30–34 years	33.33%	66.67%
35–37 years	20.00%	80.00%
38 years or older	41.67%	58.33%
Grand total	39.63%	60.37%

Moreover, if the hotel had videoconferencing terminals, we find that 6 in 10 would use them at some point during their stay. (See table 25)

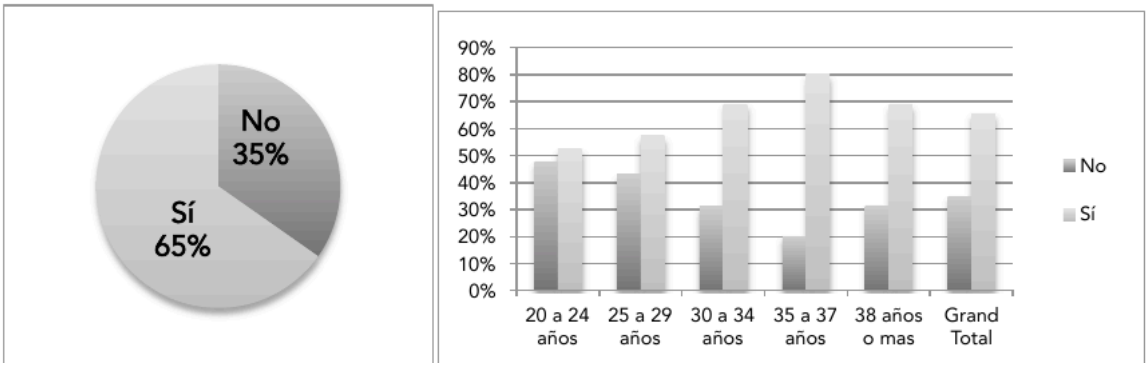


Table 25. Would you use the videoconferencing service? (pie chart: Yes 65%, No 35%; bar chart by age group, Yes/No, with no data labels in the original)

Acceptance of teledining

Although I thought this idea would be totally rejected, we find almost 80% acceptance of attending a teledinner if invited. In table 26 we see that women are more willing to attend, although both are above the 70% line, which presents an opportunity to develop this event format.

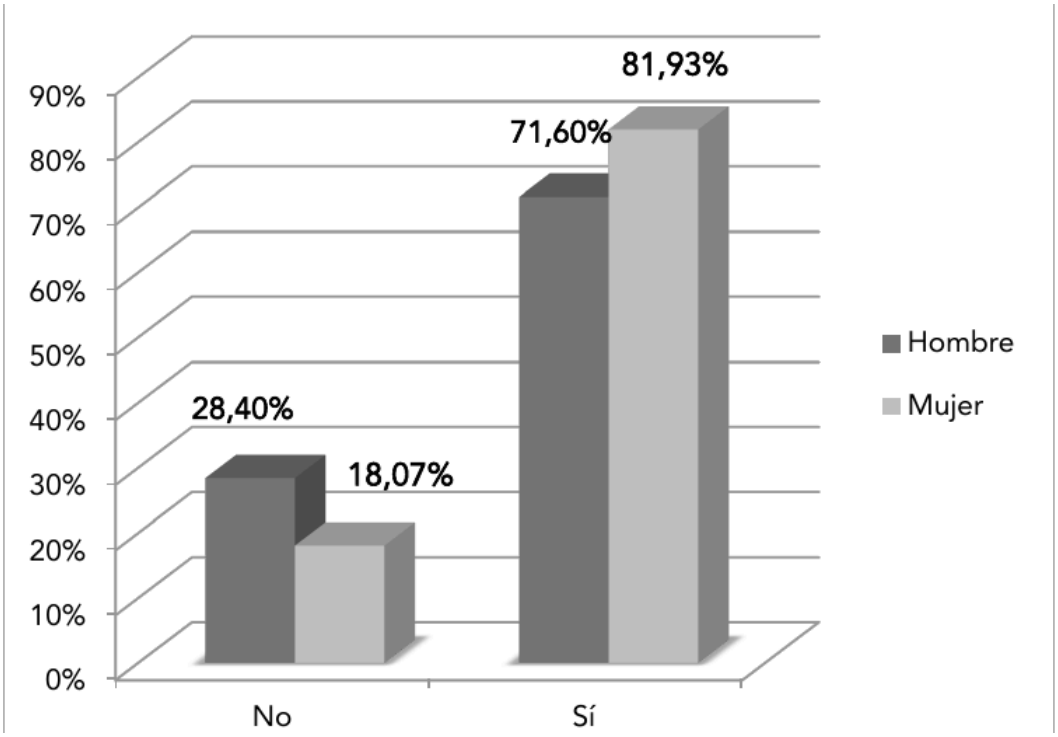


Table 26: Responses: Invitation to teledining

	No	Yes
Men	28.40%	71.60%
Women	18.07%	81.93%

Those who answered "no" were asked to give the reason why for this decision. They gave a variety of reasons, many of which are valid and useful, and necessary to take into account during the development phase of the service. The great majority are based on their own imagination and experience with these technologies, which in certain cases are mistaken presumptions or come from a lack of information about them. Many are understood as simple prejudices and clearly show us that, just as there are "early adopters", there are also "laggards" in the innovation adoption cycle.

Below I present a selection of those I consider most relevant:

- "For me videoconferencing has an end in itself, which is communicating between 2 or several people. Eating is an appendix; I find it strange as the objective of the remote meeting."
- "In fact, it depends on who with. If it is with friends or family, of course my answer is YES. If it is with work or strangers, the answer is NO."
- "The difficulty arises when the teleconference is across different latitudes. That is, you cannot call a teledinner held at 9 pm in NY with diners in LA, because there is a difference of 5 or even 6 hours."
- "If it is a business meeting, there are cultures in which it is not well regarded to talk about « biz and eating », so a videoconference would not help to overcome that custom either."
- "A teledinner between friends who live in different parts of the world and have not seen each other in years can be an absolute success. Likewise a conference of executives of the same

company who know each other but are in different parts of the world can be a very good formula for executive integration."

- "Not very personal. I would never sacrifice physical contact, especially for business."
- "Internet signals are generally poor when travelling, and videoconferences break up. Messaging is more efficient, and that is enough."
- "I don't see the point, I prefer direct interaction between people."
- "I prefer to interact physically with the other diners and not do it virtually."
- "I would do it for work only. The diners do not take part naturally, and the glamour that accompanies a dinner is lost."
- "Little real interaction with the participants."
- "Dinners are for getting together and talking, interacting directly."
- "Why not? But I don't know when or in what situation one would do this."

All these comments give us a representation of the image an ordinary individual may have when faced with the idea of a "teledinner". During the survey 40 comments were recorded, of which, in my perception, fewer than 15% were truly negative; the others show apprehension or rejection because the teledinner is not part of current social conventions. These therefore serve to identify some of the fears or apprehensions that this type of product/service would face when going to market. On the other hand, we have examples of innovation that have revolutionised the world and that in their time were considered ideas with no future, as was the case of the "walkman" or the digital camera.

Conclusions

At the beginning of this study I started by discussing the origins of the idea of videoconferencing and the concept of telepresence; for more than 100 years the idea and its conceptualisation have been taken up again, depending on the historical context. Now, at the start of the 21st century, we see that the conditions needed to introduce telepresence as an element that contributes to the hotel world are favourable and promising.

We thus find factors such as the development of technological devices and the new generational habits among the Y and Z generations which, together with unstoppable globalisation, converge and create good conditions for adopting it, what we could call a good social momentum. So if these ideas could once only be dreams, now is the moment when it is possible to make them reality.

First of all, we have the great advantage of an adequate technological development that makes it possible to produce the equipment and devices needed to generate telepresence environments, all in the service of customers and the hotel team. We also know that the possibilities increase as new devices come onto the market from the laboratories of private companies or of universities all over the world. To the technological factor are added the millions of users belonging to the new generations who already know the technology and, more importantly still, have already integrated it into their lives. In fact, among the survey participants, 8 out of 10 use videoconferencing and half of them use it at least once a week. We thus see that this current predisposition towards technology and knowledge of it make it easier to develop services that include telepresence in the everyday life of the hotel.

Despite this background, it is hard to think the first hypothesis is valid, and to think that it is possible to use this technology to replace the physical presence of staff before familiarising customers with its use. This opposition is given by the 62% of participants who prefer to contact the service staff directly to obtain information, which indicates that in most individuals there is the "innate" habit of going to another person physically for help. From this, however, we can infer that they will always prefer the "presence of an expert" before searching on their own among the thousands of web pages, a fact that gives possibilities for making use of telepresence if it is approached in that sense.

What stops its adoption? Participants indicated that for the most part they used videoconferencing to communicate with friends and family, at 60% and 71% respectively, so this type of communication medium is seen as belonging to a more intimate sphere. Although we find that almost 40% also use it to communicate with work colleagues, this happens within a collaborative framework and within the work team. This explains why it is difficult for individuals to picture using it with someone they have not previously met.

The above adds to the concept of the value of the "physical body" versus "presence per se"; the human being as a communicating individual, for whom face-to-face is the basic and primary means of communication, is tied to physical presence, resulting in the perception, for many, that without a physical body there is no presence. In addition, the concept of "exporting presence" or "telepresence" is still not fully understood by people, and even though they know videoconferencing, which

in a certain way provides the service of exporting presence to a distant place, they do not see the usefulness of being able to be in another place without their physical body. This makes it even harder, when it comes to using telepresence, for people to abstract the concept of the "presence of the individual" without the need for the physical body, since some expressed that, in the context of receiving a service through telepresence, it is classified as "impersonal" or "cold". Changing this perception is therefore the greatest challenge when developing services in this field.

On the other hand, in the second hypothesis, if we continue with the analysis of the survey results we see that it has better prospects, since data was obtained that presents good signs. First we see that the majority use videoconferencing to communicate with people with whom they already have some kind of relationship, so they share their "presence" with those other people. This habit occurs at least once a week among 5 in 10 people, and in each session there is the habit of consuming drinks during video calls, with 50% preferring a hot drink, and as alternatives water (60%) and soft drinks (35%). With these preferences and with calls whose length is within 30 minutes, the idea becomes plausible for adapting to the operation of a cafeteria. We also see that the places where they are most often made are the home, the office and hotel rooms, environments that offer the comfort and calm for holding an adequate conversation. So the idea that, with telepresence, one can share a table in a restaurant, cafeteria or bar has a good opportunity in settings such as cafeterias; here we find the starting point where customers can become familiar with using it outside the traditional sphere.

In the case of "teledining", 8 out of 10 respondents would be willing to take part, which also raises a possibility for restaurants to develop this service. Although there are some reservations about it, the first is that people tend to think that during the interactions between the participants there is a lot of physical contact, when objectively this physical contact is relegated to the moment of greeting or saying goodbye (excluding couples, who tend to increase physical contact). Secondly, people have difficulty visualising the occasions or opportunities to hold one and how to hold it. It is therefore necessary to develop formats so that organising a "teledining" within family and friend circles is simple and quick, putting a value on the presence of the guests as they enjoy the pleasure of the table.

All the previous limitations, both those relating to staff through telepresence and to telepresence settings in restaurants, cafeterias and bars, will be resolved as people begin to use these services; so that this experimentation allows them to shed the bad perceptions given by contact with earlier technologies and to replace prejudices born of unfamiliarity; the gradual start of these interactions will generate an evolution in the way of using it, allowing people to become familiar with it and creating better perceptions and impressions of it; a fact that will give rise to new strands in its use. The adoption of these technologies must therefore come about gradually so that users learn and find out about its potential.

On the internal side of the hotel organisation there are also more opportunities and benefits in its adoption, since it will allow hotel chains to maximise the presence of their best talents, to serve their customers better without thinking about borders or physical limits, reaching all places in the world. This helps us strengthen the brand and get closer to the customer, opening a channel to talk to them directly. This electronic medium will thus make it possible, with the support of CRM and voice recognition tools, to increase the amount of information obtained from customers, also mak-

ing it possible to record a large part of the interactions for later analysis, such as of the service, gathering preferences, personalisation, etc. Knowing our customers better is what allows us to be more competitive and to perpetuate the company over time, so telepresence and the tools generated from it can make that task easier for us. They will also transform hotels into a space that allows not only sleeping but communicating and connecting with others who are far away, positioning the hotel as a centre of social connection that breaks down current physical barriers, enabling collaboration at a distance and favouring the mobility of the "citizens of the world".

It is therefore necessary to begin the changes in order to effectively introduce this type of technology into the hotel world. Before thinking of implementing it with customer-facing services, it is necessary to start using this tool in the training of work teams; in this way a team familiar with this technology is prepared at the same time as knowledge of the brands' philosophy is reinforced, taking the opportunity to train team members to improve service and processes; allowing a global standardisation of knowledge and at the same time a dialogue of the same scale, allowing the exchange of ideas and experiences from the cultural richness that diversity has; services with better performance and of world level will thus be provided.

This last point is in line with how communications companies present teleconferencing, taking a professional approach with the aim of creating more productive collaboration and work environments. With this work I intend to move away from that line, putting forward different alternative uses of telepresence. Building on the potential of the basic form of communication that is face-to-face and improving it together with this technological tool, to create services and in this way change the way in which we relate to others socially and consume services.

Being a relatively new technology, we find little information on its specific use in our industry; this work therefore serves as a reference point to help understand the concept and to provide the foundations for shaping alternatives to apply in hospitality and the world of service in general.

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Footnotes

1. World Tourism Organization (2013), UNWTO Annual Report 2013, UNWTO, Madrid (World… ↩
2. English word, used to refer to state-of-the-art electronic devices. ↩
3. "Face to Face", in Spanish, is the term used for the human relationship in which both interlocutors can, besides verbal language, communicate using the non-verbal language conveyed by facial expressions and body postures or gestures. ↩
4. 91% of the Americans surveyed think that being away from home for long periods can cause problems with their partner or marriage. ↩
5. According to studies carried out by medical insurers, the wives of frequent travellers showed twice as many psychological disorders. They also claimed more treatments for intestinal complaints or skin problems. ↩
6. A neologism that comes from the moment a product acquires the status of a commodity, and is therefore "a valuable economic good that is used in trade and is interchangeable with other products of the same kind". ↩
7. Alexander Graham Bell. Editorial and Articles: On The Possibility Of Seeing By Electricity, plus document images, April 10, 1891, then recorded in the "Beinn Bhreagh Recorder", March 22, 1910. Retrieved 2009-04-05 from the Library of Congress from their Alexander Graham Bell Family Papers. ↩
8. 2001: A Space Odyssey (Kubrick, 1968) ↩
9. "Back to the Future II" (Zemeckis, 1989) ↩
10. Source: Generations (Wikipedia). ↩
11. ibid. ↩

12. Source: World Population (U.S. Census Bureau). ↩

13. multi-tasking. ↩

14. Buzz: in English slang it means the noise of "word of mouth" generated on social networks when a piece of news starts to move quickly. ↩

15. "Isolate togetherness". ↩

16. That is, 24% of the 300 million registered Skype users are young people aged 18–24. Source: Dec 2012 – Dec 2013, comScore Mobile Metrix, January 2014, United States. ↩

17. Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (US building certification). ↩

18. 6 emotions are those that make up the base families from which sub-emotions are recognised that are transmitted via facial and body expressions. There is therefore a large number of recognisable variations of the emotions. ↩

19. Source: Bashar Aref & Al-Haj (2010), An Analysis of Push and Pull Travel Motivations of Foreign Tourists to Jordan, International Journal of Business and Management Vol. 5, No. 12; December 2010, p. 48 – Table 4. ↩

20. The study was carried out by TNS Global in August 2013. It involved 2,170 participants, surveyed across the UK, USA, India, China and UAE. ↩

21. Computer-Mediated Communication. ↩

22. Hee, 2010; Tata Communications and Rendezvous Hospitality Group Open Singapore's First Public Room Telepresence Facility; Singapore Hardware Zone. ↩

23. Because other hotels have meeting rooms with telepresence, for example the German hotel chain L!NDNER, which has teleconference rooms from €99 per half hour in Düsseldorf, Frankfurt and Nürburgring, developed with the support of CISCO. More information on public rooms and other developments can be found at http://www.tpex.com/ ↩

24. http://www.avaya.com ↩

25. http://www.tatacommunications.com ↩

26. Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is a group of resources that make it possible for the voice signal to travel over the Internet using an IP (Internet Protocol) protocol. Wikipedia ↩

27. www.corning.com ↩

28. CRM: Customer Relationship Management. ↩

29. http://www.acehotel.com/newyork ↩

30. © 2014 Starbucks Corporation. All rights reserved. ↩

31. Click to call, which is actually "click to request a call". Technology that makes it possible to enable real-time interaction by chat or video-chat on web pages. ↩

32. Ibid. ↩