



# TRENDAWK REPORT 2018

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**INTERNATIONAL**  
LEADERS IN LUXURY & LIFESTYLE  
NEW YORK | LOS ANGELES



*As we kick off 2018, the team at Hawkins International Public Relations reflects on the past year in hospitality and media, and what's in store for the year to come. We always look forward with anticipation to the new movements ahead.*

*As a boutique agency with a world-class global roster of clients, we are uniquely able to take a wide view at what is happening and what will happen in the hospitality industry. Our clients are innovative and clever and always tapped into their local markets; therefore we are able to compile data and transform that into working recommendations for you, but also into story angles for our team to pitch to a wide range of media segments. On a daily basis, we may be pitching a top editor at a travel or fashion magazine, working on a content series with a chic international influencer, or producing our next video shoot on location. Whatever it is, our global perspective makes us a trusted resource for media who are seeking smart and fresh information for their readers.*

*The advantage is twofold – clients who are better prepared to cater to an ever-changing audience and a PR partner who can thoughtfully and strategically tell their story. It makes things interesting, fun and gratifying.*

*Enjoy the TrendHawk Report which includes a recap of news from 2017 with continued relevance, alongside trends we're predicting will garner media attention in 2018. Throughout the report you'll find links to articles that dive deeper into the topics. You can look forward to receiving another TrendHawk report from us this summer.*

*We hope you'll find these timely articles and our insights valuable. Let us know what you think and feel free to email me at [Jennifer@hawkpr.com](mailto:Jennifer@hawkpr.com) or call anytime at 212-255-6541.*

*Here is to an inspired year!*

*- Jennifer Hawkins*



# WHAT'S TRENDING IN 2018

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# SETTING THE STAGE



## 2017 TRAVEL HEADLINES /

Current events and the global economy are affecting the travel industry more than ever.

- Brexit is still a hot topic as London and the UK continue to work out how the separation will affect leisure travel and free movement between states. All eyes are on commercial aviation as UK and EU carriers draw up contingency plans. EasyJet, a UK-based low cost airline, was forced to open up an EU-based headquarters in hopes to mitigate Brexit implications.
- Catalonia officially voted for independence from Spain in November and Spanish officials immediately called Article 155 into action and dissolved the region's government. Travel in the area seems to be largely unaffected, but tourists and officials are monitoring the situation closely.
- The Caribbean was victim to a series of storms: Irma, Jose, and Maria – leaving many islands disconnected and discombobulated. While St. Barths and St. Maarten bore the brunt of the damage, local authorities and communities are hopeful that these destinations will be up and running for the 2018 winter travel season. Some of them already are.



## 2017 TRAVEL HEADLINES /

- International travelers to the United States have decreased by 3.9 percent globally. Tourists from Mexico and the Middle East have dropped significantly, by 10 and 30 percent respectively, as a result of President Trump's travel ban and the current political climate.
- Africa might be getting new rules. The African Union is urging African states to support visa-free travel across the continent – making it much easier for international visitors to travel between countries, and for African countries to share laborers and tourism programs.



## SUPPLY AND DEMAND /

Consumer demands and trends drove investments and developments from major travel and hospitality companies.

- Big brands are buying into wellness. Hyatt bought Miraval and most recently purchased Exhale. WeWork launched its own fitness company, “RisebyWe,” as Equinox prepares to open its first hotel in 2018. Westin Hotels brought personal bikes into your room through a new partnership with Peloton.
- Travelers love home-sharing, and traditional hotel brands are taking note. AccorHotels bought three different luxury home-sharing concepts this year and put them all under one roof – onefinestay – where all three brands fortify a massive global footprint of ultra-luxury homes. Hyatt invested in home meets hotel company Oasis in August, and has plans to integrate the brand into its loyalty program, the first time a home sharing concept has been part of a major loyalty program.
- Almost all major brands tested out Amazon voice controlled products this year, while Amazon launched Alexa for business in hopes to service hospitality and other businesses better. Meanwhile, Hilton plans to offer a smart hotel system as early as this year and Marriott is teaming up with Samsung and Legrand to launch a IoT Guestroom Lab – powered by Marriott’s Innovation Lab – to explore technology concepts that have the potential to enhance the guest experience at Marriott hotels.



# WHAT PUBLIC RELATIONS MEANS IN 2018

## WHAT PUBLIC RELATIONS MEANS IN 2018 /

- **Legacy Publications Are Welcoming New Editorial Leadership /** *Vanity Fair's* longtime editor-in-chief Graydon Carter stepped down last fall, with the *New York Times's* editorial director of the book department, Radhika Jones, set to take over. Jeffries Blackerby stepped in as *Departures's* new editor-in-chief in May 2017, taking over for Richard Story who helmed the title for 17 years. Last June *Time Inc.* announced that *Cooking Light's* editor-in-chief Hunter Lewis would be replacing *Food & Wine's* editor Nilou Motamed and moving the title's headquarters from New York City to Birmingham, Alabama. This January, Condé Nast announced that Samantha Barry of CNN and BBC would be *Glamour Magazine's* new editor-in-chief, marking the first time a person with a background exclusively in digital and television has led a Condé Nast magazine. *T Magazine*, *Time*, and *Elle* also welcomed new editorial leadership in 2017.
- **Like The Travel Industry, Publishing Companies Continue to Change Ownership and Merge /** In November *Time Inc.* sold itself to The Meredith Corporation, backed by the Koch brothers. Hearst is in the process of buying Rodale and *Sunset Magazine* changed hands from *Time Inc.* to a private equity firm in California.



## WHAT PUBLIC RELATIONS MEANS IN 2018 /

- **The Struggle Continues for Both Print and Digital Outlets** / Magazines like Condé Nast Traveler, Bon Appétit, GQ, Architectural Digest, Forbes, Fortune, Sunset, and others will publish fewer issues in 2018 in an effort to save costs. Some digital outlets are also struggling. BuzzFeed and Vice were projected to miss their revenue targets by 20 percent in 2017.
- **It's Not All Bad News, Though!** / Savvy print publications are recognizing an opportunity to attract a wider demographic by launching niche digital offshoots, like Bon Appétit's "Extra Crispy" covering all things breakfast and "Healthyish" covering wellness through the lens of food, Architectural Digest's "Clever" covering affordable home design and DIY, and The Washington Post's The Lily which promotes female empowerment. Digital platforms like GQ.com, Mic.com, and Quartz launched new travel verticals in 2017, while lifestyle and travel start-ups launched their own smart and engaging print magazines, like AirbnbMag, The Wing's No Man's Land, and Away luggage's Here, signaling consumers' growing appetite for travel inspiration.

## WHAT PUBLIC RELATIONS MEANS IN 2018 /

- ***Ephemeral Content Grows in Popularity and Engagement*** / As if implementing impactful social media strategy wasn't complex enough of a task, brands now need to create content for their social channels while implementing a different strategy when it comes to ephemeral content marketing like Instagram Stories to reach its pool of over 300M daily active users. From stickers to boomerangs to polls, Instagram Stories are highly customizable, allowing brands to tailor their messaging to their audience – and it works. One in five organic Stories produced by brands result in a direct message from a consumer! While Instagram profiles should be dedicated to high quality, editorial-inspired content, ephemeral platforms should be the “go-to” platform where audiences experience authentic, real-time and behind the scenes content. And don't worry about posting to your Instagram Stories too much – that's what it's for!
- ***Trust Data, Not Aesthetic for Influencer Collaborations*** / The importance for robust social analytics will only grow further in 2018, especially when it comes to creating personalized content your audience will love. Since three out of four people get frustrated when content doesn't cater to their interests, partnering with influencers whose audiences, aesthetic and key interests align with your brand voice is crucial. Leveraging influencer data and metrics can facilitate the selection of influencers who are most likely to become brand advocates and optimize the ROI of branded content partnerships and social collaborations.

## WHAT PUBLIC RELATIONS MEANS IN 2018 /

- ***There's No Content Strategy Without Smart Targeting*** / As the battle against algorithms continues, brands will need to implement advertising strategies to gain traction in audience and engagement growth in order to enhance the impact of their organic content strategies. Advertising spending increased 74% on Facebook and a staggering 138% on Instagram year over year in 2017, indicating a significant shift towards paid and organic hybrid strategies. Facebook's location targeting is a great example of the way social media metrics can allow brands to reach their ideal customer, down to behavior and demographics, such as income levels, and more.
- ***Age of Autoplay*** / The majority of the content we consume on a daily basis is in video form - in 2017, 90% of all content shared by users on social media was video. Why is video such a popular medium? Because it's versatile – it can be long form for in-depth features or short form for emotional or catchy previews, it can be used across all the major social media platforms, as feed content or profile page headers, and can increase the efficiency of targeted social media advertising strategies. Branded video is 31% more popular than any other type of social media content, and is the number one medium in terms of engagement and shareability. As video's importance solidifies and dominates social channels, creating relevant high-quality video content will become crucial.





# TRENDING IN TRAVEL



## TRENDING IN TRAVEL /

- ***Experiential Travel Is The Norm /***  
While experiential travel is no new trend, hotels are directly incorporating excursion services and exploration companies into their business models. Marriott recently invested in PlacePass, a travel technology solution offering travelers an online platform for finding in-destination experiences and activities. This will bolster the existing Marriott Rewards Experiences Marketplace; last year, guests redeemed points for about 6,000 travel experiences around passion points like music, sports, cuisine and culture on both platforms. AirBnb's Experiences invite travelers to embark on local tours, partake in under-the-radar activities and more – from learning to fly a plane above Los Angeles to going on a live music crawl in Paris.



## TRENDING IN TRAVEL /

• **Co-Everything** / Hospitality and the sharing economy continue to merge – and not just when it comes to home-sharing investments. The co-working and co-living trend is also inspiring hotels. An onslaught of “microhotels” are shrinking rooms, growing public space, and swapping traditional restaurants for buzzy food halls in an effort to serve as a communal hub for guests and locals. Meanwhile, savvy companies like Amsterdam’s Zoku are finding an opportunity to blend hospitality with co-working and co-living to offer extended stay properties that are nothing like the stuffy corporate hotel residences of yesteryear.



## TRENDING IN TRAVEL /

• ***Design Is King*** / Everyone is getting involved in the hotel design game. Black Tomato's Blink program invites travelers to design their own hotel pop-ups in far flung destinations, right down to the rugs on the floor and art on the walls. No strangers to the design world, retailers like West Elm and Restoration Hardware are giving hotel design and development a try. Fueled by the wellness architecture trend that has inspired designers to "build for human health," rather than just design aesthetics, some hotels are tapping health experts for design advice, like the Six Senses' new Douros Valley who worked with a sacred geometrist to design a property that would help guests connect more deeply with the surrounding environment.



Image courtesy of Oasis

## TRENDING IN TRAVEL /

- **Chat It Up** / AOL Instant Messenger closed down last year, however, chat and instant messenger is growing fast in hospitality industry tech, from enhancing the guest experience to making the HR job hunt more seamless. Four Seasons launched Four Seasons Chat which allows guests to send a message before, during, and after their stay to property teams via multiple channels — the Four Seasons App, Facebook Messenger, WeChat, or SMS. Marriott's Aloft brand offers ChatBotlr where guests can text and make any service requests during their stay. On the HR front, Marriott International recently launched Marriott Careers chatbots for Facebook Messenger where jobseekers can instantly find answers to their questions — such as “Do you have event manager job openings in Chicago?” to “What are Marriott’s core values?”





# FOOD FOR THOUGHT IN 2018

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT /

- **Room Service Bites Back /** It might still be a revenue suck, but it's also a major opportunity. Savvy hotels are recognizing an opportunity to surprise and delight with clever and convenient room service and minibar offerings. Think: creative delivery methods, cocktail butler service and even robots!



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT /

### • **Fast-Fine Frontier /**

Diners are flocking to fast-fine restaurants that combine the design aesthetic, vibe, and quality food of high-end restaurants, without the formality (and the operating costs) of actual fine-dining restaurants.



In the photo of the Raspberry & Vanilla Lollipops, the ice cream was poured directly into the glasses after being made, and it was left to freeze until solid. When the shot glasses got frosty and it was difficult to see that there was a red bottom layer. I liked some of the frost effect, but I ended up scraping the glasses every so often to show the different layers.



These Raspberry & Vanilla Lollipops are still in shot glasses, showing frost, to indicate they were frozen. (f3.5, ISO 125, 100mm, Macro L)



When styling this Pineapple Sorbet, I made sure to not let condensation droplets run the linens underneath. (f3.5, ISO 200, 24-70mm, L)

For the photo of Pineapple Sorbet, I did not want to wipe down the glasses because the art director had determined that we already had a frosted or dewy look. Yet I still needed to keep things cool in the studio that day, so I decided to freeze the tray on a towel. The towel underneath the tray was an integral part of the set. I did not want to run the risk of getting water stains on the tray. So I covered this portion of the tray with a layer of paper. It worked very well and held the cold air between the tray and the surface. So keep in mind that you can use a variety of materials as freezing containers and props—to prolong the life of your set.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT /

- ***Ingredients To Watch /*** Prepare to see these items popping up on menus and recipes galore: Middle Eastern flavors, dinner for breakfast, sparkling non-alcoholic beverages, new cuts of meat, and street food-inspired dishes.





# NEW YEAR, NEW WELLNESS TRENDS



## NEW YEAR, NEW WELLNESS TRENDS /

• **“Wellbeing” Is the New Wellness Craze** / The term wellness is coming to embody a more holistic definition that encompasses more than just fitness and nutrition, and includes mental health and creativity. As such, hotels and spas are rounding out their wellness programming with everything from writing and music classes that fuse creativity with stress relief to the addition of psychotherapists and neuroscientists to their in-house teams.



## NEW YEAR, NEW WELLNESS TRENDS /

• **Niche Trends Go Mainstream** / An onslaught of holistic health specialties previously considered niche are going mainstream. Hotels and spas are incorporating treatments like infrared saunas, acupuncture, Reiki massage, meditation, soundbaths, cryotherapy, and crystals into their programming as consumers look beyond fitness and nutrition for wellness solutions.



## NEW YEAR, NEW WELLNESS TRENDS /

### • ***Fitness Gets Fun /***

While working out might not be everyone's definition of fun, fitness studios and spas are offering classes that incorporate childlike play and even a sense of humor. Cycling, boxing and cross fit classes continue to grow in popularity thanks to their communal spirit and competitive nature, while animal-inspired workouts like goat yoga and cat yoga went viral in 2017.





**LET'S GET TOGETHER:  
MEETINGS &  
EVENTS TRENDS**

## LET'S GET TOGETHER: MEETINGS & EVENTS TRENDS /

- **Millennial Meetings** / According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are 83.1 million millennials in the U.S., representing more than one quarter of the nation's population. As millennials continue to grow in the workforce, meeting planners are taking note of what is resonating with this generation, and how it is evolving the meeting industry. It's no surprise that typical boardroom and PowerPoint presentations are “out,” as meeting planners shift toward experiential meeting venues (think: rooms outfitted with ping pong tables, board games, and even swings to inspire creativity and brainstorming) and incorporating the venue's city and community into the meeting experience (think: volunteer and service opportunities and personalized tours).



## LET'S GET TOGETHER: MEETINGS & EVENTS TRENDS /

- **DIY Delights** / The term “DIY” wedding takes on a whole new meaning as couples incorporate over-the-top creative food and drink stations into their receptions that invite guests to create personalized cocktails and dishes. Look out for roll your own sushi bars, taco stations, mini mixology classes, and sundae stations.



## LET'S GET TOGETHER: MEETINGS & EVENTS TRENDS /

- ***Capturing the Moment*** / Photo booths aren't going anywhere, but couples are incorporating new ways to capture memories from the big day, including portrait studios manned by a live photographer who guides guests in posing for live action shots, and live illustrators who paint or sketch the day's biggest moments in real time.





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