



# **COLORADO HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION**

## **Annual Conference**

### **August 29, 2022**

**Digital Growth & Transformation:  
Future-Proofing Your Organization  
with a User-First Mindset**

**WIPFLI**



**Tina Nazier**

**Director**

**National CRE & Hospitality**

**Organizational Performance Leader**

**[tnazier@wipfli.com](mailto:tnazier@wipfli.com)**



**Zak Dabbas**

**Principal  
Wipfli Digital**

**[zak.dabbas@wipfli.com](mailto:zak.dabbas@wipfli.com)**



**Tom Luersen**

**President**

**CoralTree Hospitality**

**[tluersen@coraltreehospitality.com](mailto:tluersen@coraltreehospitality.com)**



**Cindy Johnson**

**Director**

**National Hospitality Organizational  
Performance & Talent Leader**

**[cindy.johnson@wipfli.com](mailto:cindy.johnson@wipfli.com)**

- **Prime Growth System – Tina Nazier**
- **Digital Mindset – Zak Dabbas**
- **Industry Perspective – Tom Luersen & Cindy Johnson**
- **Q&A**

A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark blazer over a white shirt, is smiling. A woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark blazer, is also smiling and looking towards the man. They are in an office environment with large windows in the background.

Prime

# Growth System

The Journey to Your Ideal Future

**WIPFLI**

# Prime

(noun): A state or time of greatest strength, vigor or success.





# Understanding Prime

**Prime is not an end state – it is a to be state.** A Prime Organization is constantly evolving and adjusting to fluctuating conditions which enables performance gains.

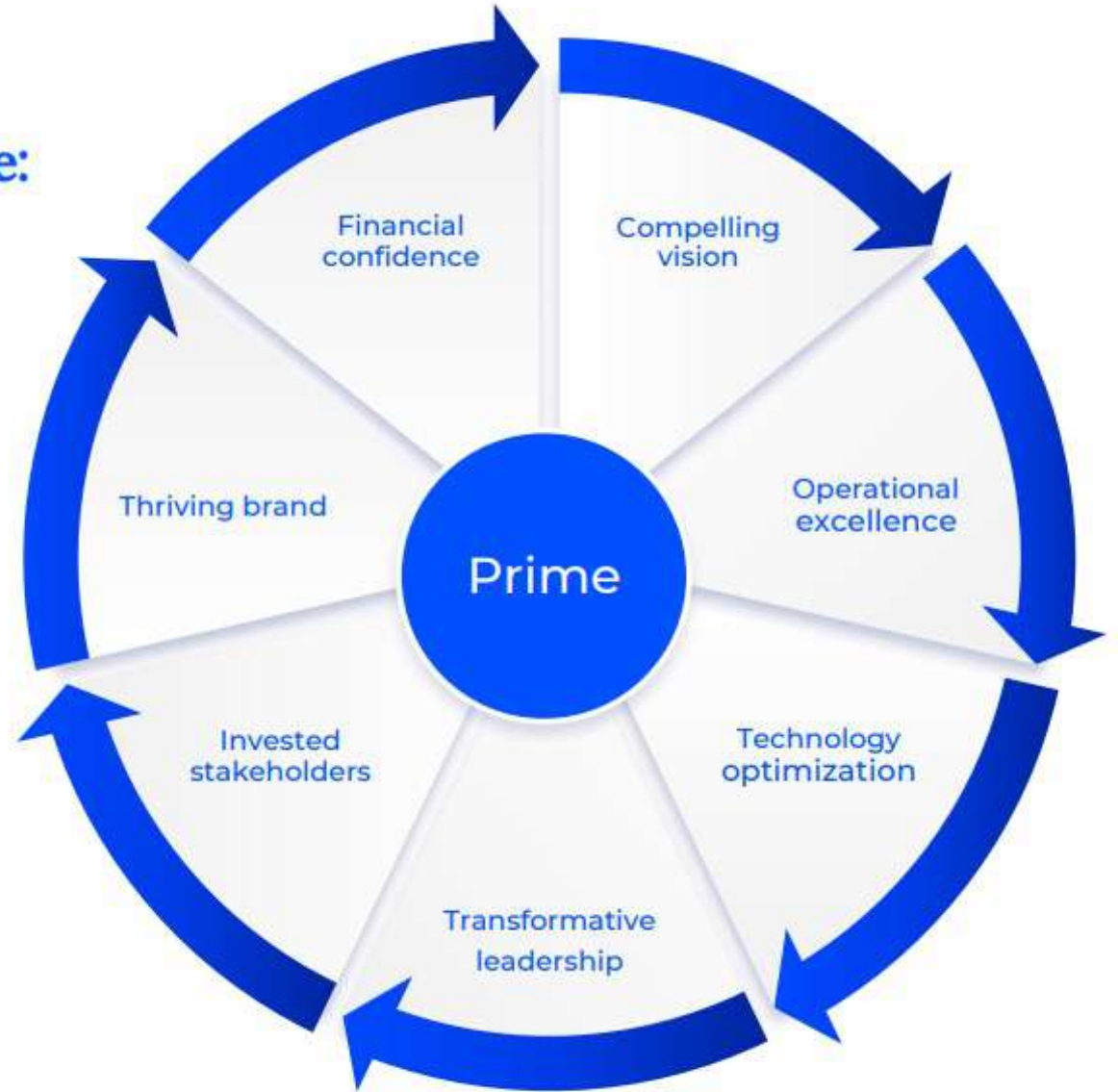
With your [Pathway to Prime](#), you can define where you are now, where you want to go and how you are going to get there. You have a concrete plan that defines every step of the way and is completely customized to you and your business's needs.



# Prime Velocity

Prime isn't a destination, it's a state of **more**:

- Clients
- Revenue
- Profit
- Value
- Talent
- Time
- Flexibility



# Build a high-performing company

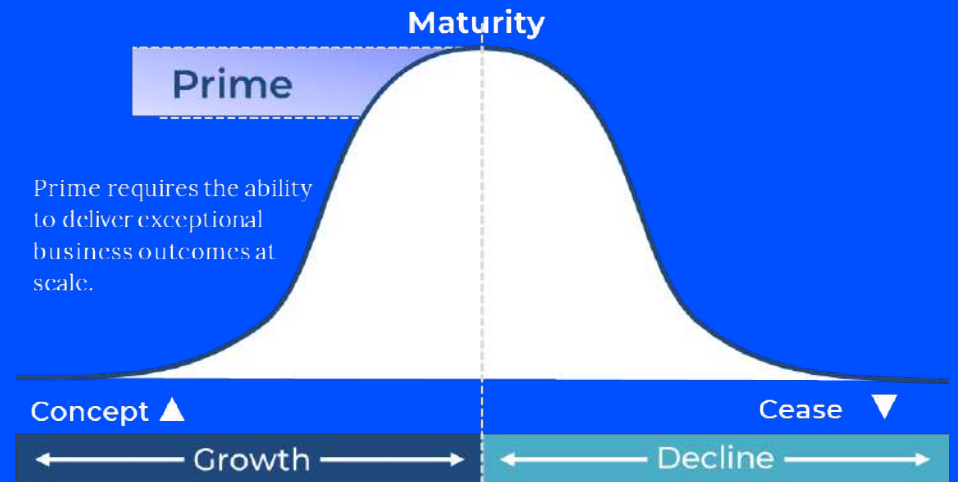
Prime companies share several common themes:

- A thriving brand
- Financial confidence
- A compelling vision
- Operational excellence
- Transformative leadership
- Optimized technology
- Invested stakeholders

The companies in **Prime** see better business outcomes than others, including

- Increased efficiency
- Greater profitability
- Faster speed-to-market
- Better client experience
- Enhanced service innovation
- Improved revenues
- Energized culture
- Improved talent
- Stronger team

## The Prime state



# Future-proofing your organization with a user-first mindset

**WIPFLI**

DIGITAL

---

**Why is user-first  
thinking so important?**

**How to approach  
digital.**



**Why is user-first  
thinking so important?**

**WIPFLI**

DIGITAL



THE PRESENT AND FUTURE ARE DIGITAL.

**Technology is ubiquitous. Look at your phone. Your watch. Your TV. Think about how you've worked this past year. The companies that will thrive in the future are the ones that embrace a **user-centric** digital strategy.**

A close-up, first-person perspective shot from the driver's seat of a car. The driver's hands are on the steering wheel, and they are wearing a green long-sleeved shirt. The car's interior, including the dashboard and a radio displaying '101.0 FM BAND FM', is visible. The background shows a blurred view of a road and trees, suggesting motion. A white text box with a blue border is overlaid on the left side of the image.

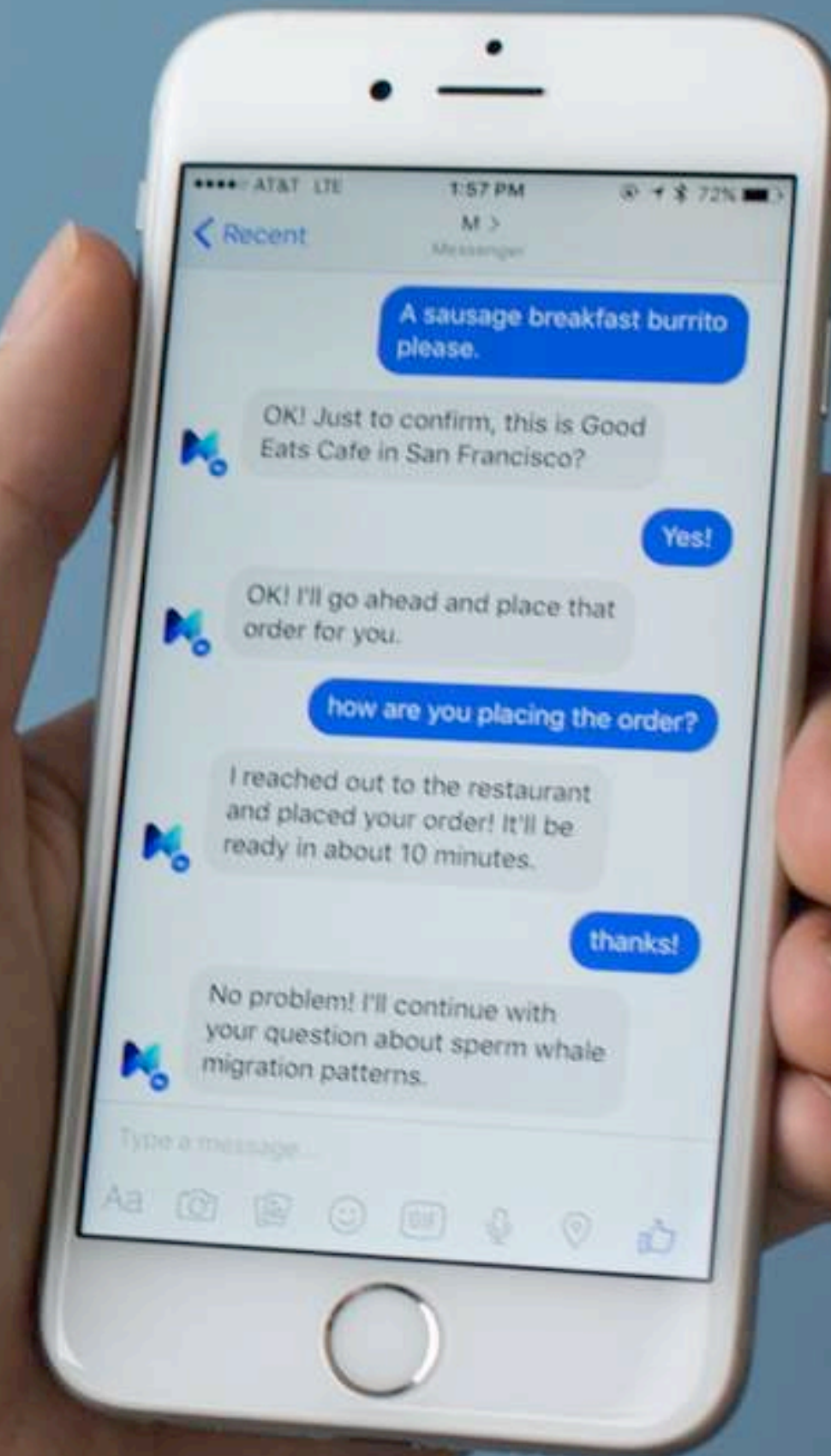
**People don't ride. In today's digital-first economy, they Uber.**





**People don't bank.  
They just Venmo.**

**People don't call.  
They chat.**





**Brands have never faced more pressure to build high-quality digital user experiences than they do today.**

## **Axle-Mockup**

Uploaded on February 28, 2016 by  
ChironDoc



230 Like

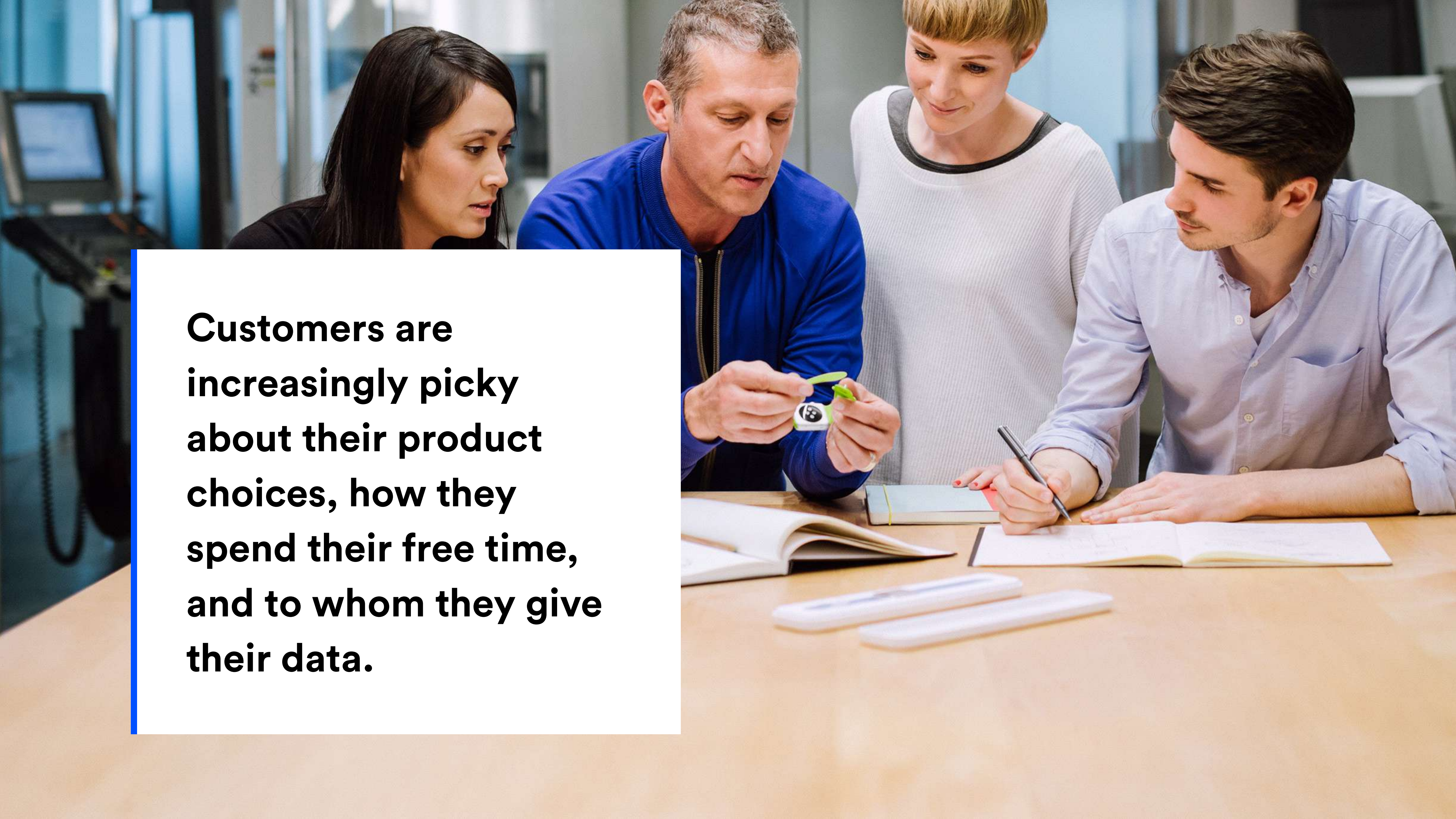


Comment



Share

maker style, less materials. Hoping for



**Customers are increasingly picky about their product choices, how they spend their free time, and to whom they give their data.**



## INVEST IN THE USER

**Organizations that don't put their customers at the center of their business are bound to lose. But those that listen to their users and invest in user-centric digital experiences are poised to grow rapidly through this era of change.**

**4.4% decrease.** 

**For every additional second it takes a mobile webpage to load, businesses experience a 4.4% decrease in visitor conversion.**

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a dark-colored smartphone. The person is wearing a blue shirt. The background is blurred, showing other people in a crowd. On the left side of the image, there is a white rectangular text box with a blue border. The text inside the box is in a bold, sans-serif font. The first part of the text is in black, and the second part is in blue.

**While consumers frequently engage with small and middle market brands, their expectations for a great digital experience are formed by their **interactions with today's most respected enterprise technology brands.****

**Everything starts and ends  
with your guests. There's  
truly no opting out of this  
mindset if you want to be  
future-proof.**





**Winning companies capitalize on evolving consumer behavior by focusing intently on meeting the needs of their audience. Top performers confidently invest 3-6% of their revenue into innovation.**



**What does this mean  
for all of us?**

**It means we have an incredible opportunity in front of us—an opportunity to help our organizations be stronger, healthier, and more competitive than ever—regardless of whether you're a massive chain or a small independent.**

# Crowd Question

**Who is your user? Who are your users?**



## EMBRACE THE EVOLUTION

**For most conversations around digital strategy, the most important factor to identify is whether you **believe** your business should remain relevant or whether you're too comfortable with the **status quo** to make change.**

**User-first thinking is a mindset.**



**Can you imagine the future of an organization that doesn't make evolution a priority?**



**What about an organization that makes digital evolution a top priority?**



**Having a strong digital strategy isn't a luxury anymore. It's table stakes.**

# How to approach digital.



A group of people are gathered around a wooden table in a meeting. On the table, there is a laptop, several notebooks, a pair of glasses, and a glass of iced tea. One person is holding a tablet. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a professional and collaborative environment.

## The best brands in the world recognize these key truths:

- You are not the customer.
- Your client is not the customer.
- The customer is the customer.



GET SMART

**There are lots of ways to get really smart about guests' needs to inform an effective digital strategy.**

# Getting smart about guests



**Customer journey mapping**

**Design analysis**

**Stakeholder interviews**

**User personas**

**Analytics strategy**



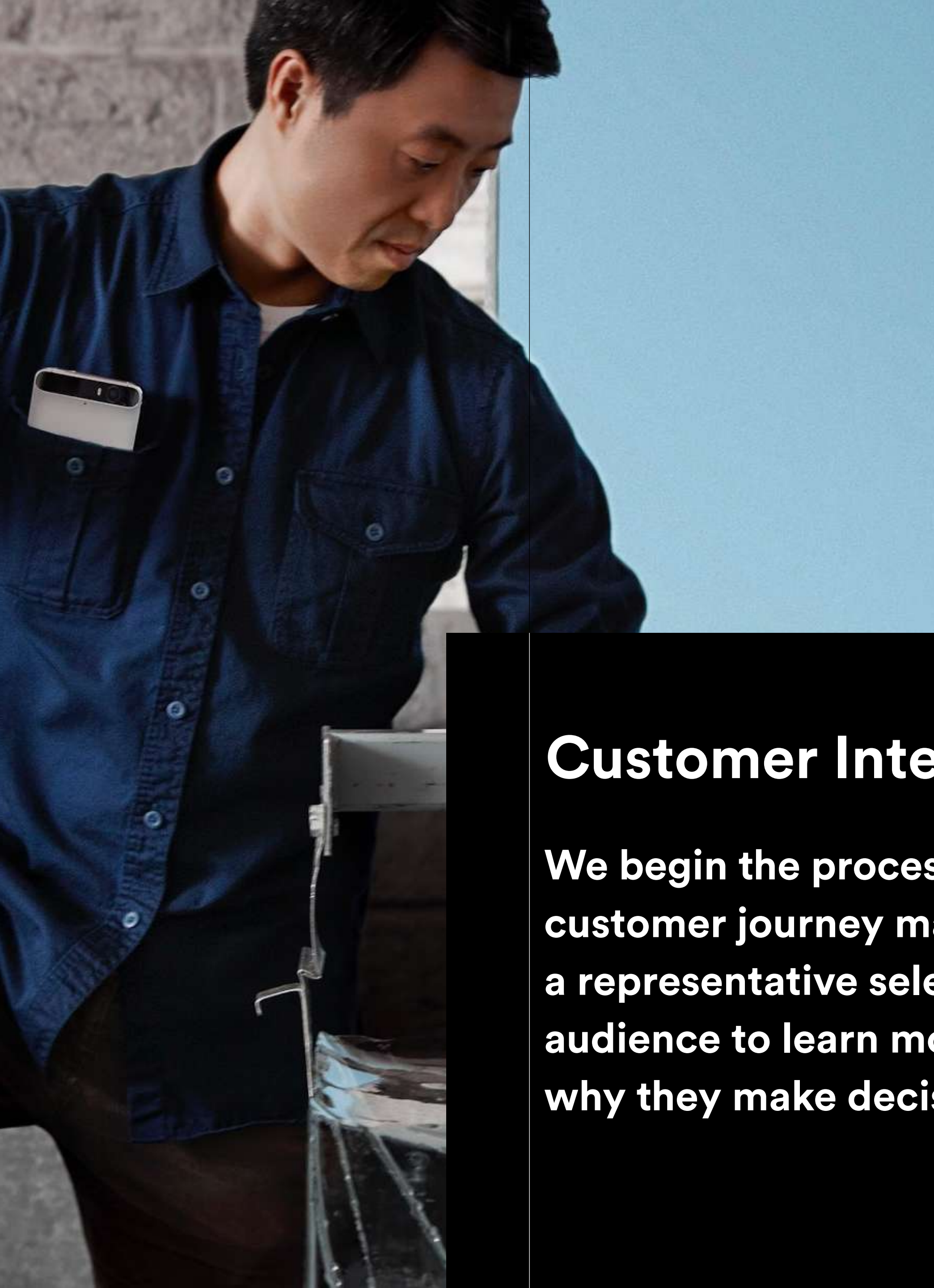
## JOURNEY MAP DEFINED

**A journey map defines how prospective and current guests are transformed into a brand's most loyal followers—giving a company an empathetic look at how their customers think.**

A man and a woman are looking at something together, possibly a device or a map, in an outdoor setting. The man has long hair and is wearing a red plaid shirt. The woman has blonde hair and is wearing a light-colored top. They are standing next to a vehicle with its door open. The background shows a hilly landscape under a bright sky.

## WHY JOURNEY MAPS?

**With a customer journey map, a company can optimize its conversion funnel and grow its business by scaling to a variety of new audiences.**



# Process

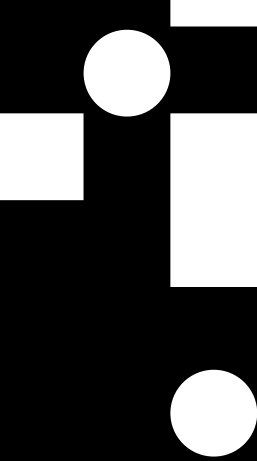
**Journey maps are created by talking to or observing real customer behavior.**

## Customer Interviews

**We begin the process of creating a customer journey map by interviewing a representative selection of your audience to learn more about how and why they make decisions.**

## Observation & Analytics

**We can also observe customers as they conduct business with you and review performance analytics that may be collected through existing digital tools.**





A person wearing a light blue button-down shirt is sitting at a desk, writing in a yellow notebook with a blue pen. A silver laptop is open to the right of the notebook. The background is a solid orange color.

## DESIGN ANALYSIS DEFINED

**A design analysis looks at all aspects of the design of a website or mobile app—architecture and flow, visual design, accessibility—and gives actionable steps to improve.**

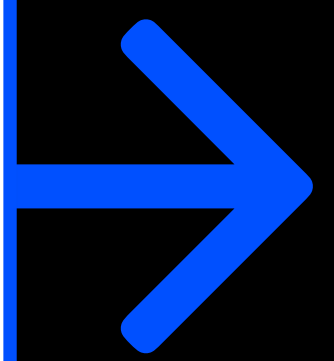
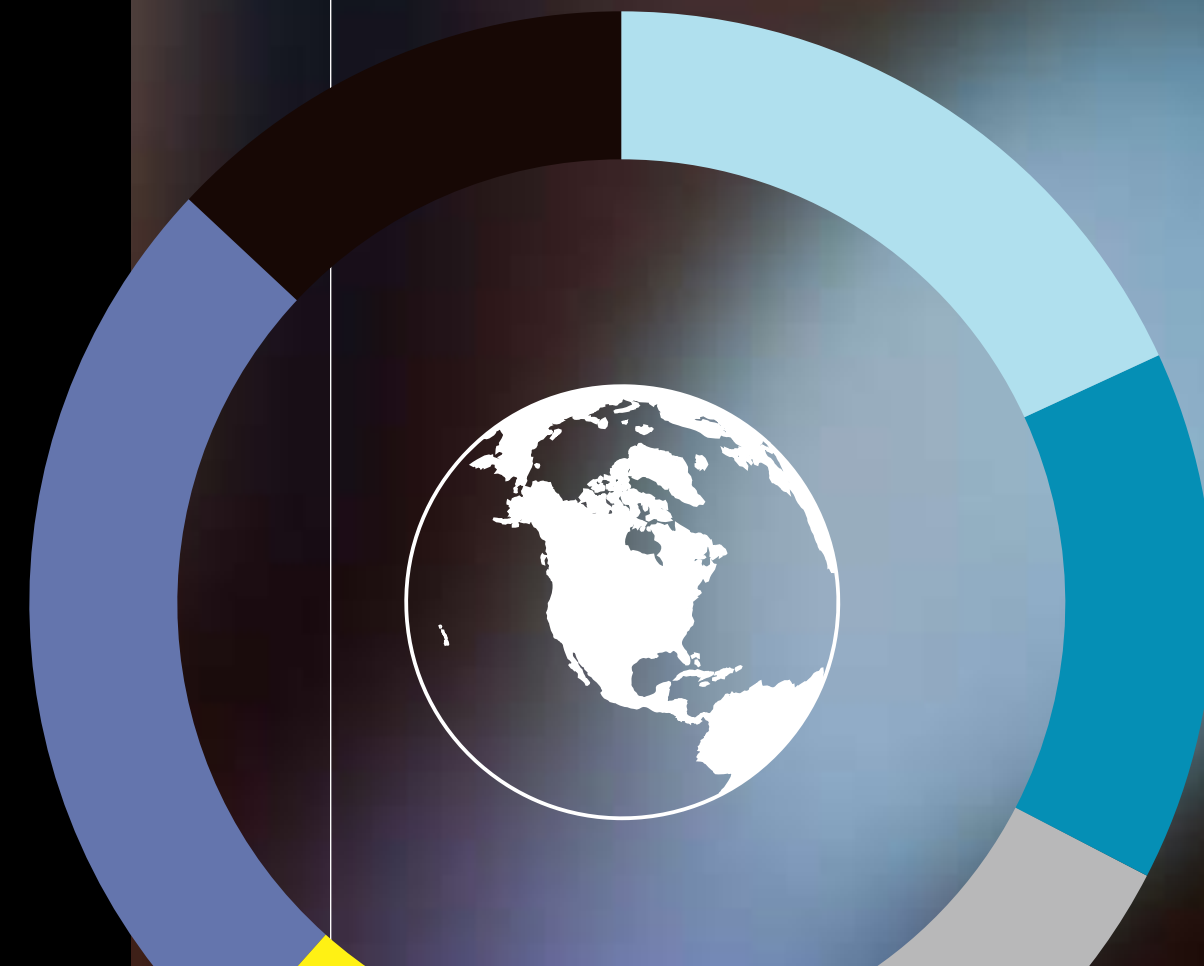


WHY DESIGN ANALYSIS?

**Customers judge businesses by the design and accessibility of their digital experiences. A design analysis is a fast, affordable way to modernize any business.**

## **Crowd Question**

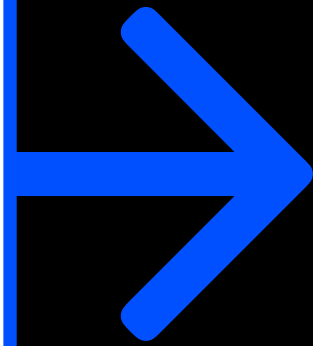
**Is anyone in this room doing something interesting to capture guest insights?**



# Hotel Chain

## Employer Brand Research & Personas

To better communicate and engage Hotel's candidates and employees, Wipfli Digital performed brand research to develop employee personas through 230+ face-to-face interviews across global stakeholder groups.



# Hotel Chain Persona Research

## Employer Brand Research & Personas

### 01 Challenge

Hotel's internal communications teams sought to better connect with a global workforce, spanning hundreds of locations and virtually every region on the planet. In order to better develop communications strategies, digital products, and other HR initiatives that connect with their diverse employer brand audience, Hotel partnered with Wipfli Digital to conduct original research and develop personas for their global team.

### 02 Solution

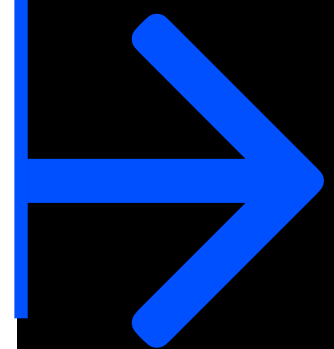
Over the course of eight weeks, Wipfli Digital's team of researchers conducted more than 230 qualitative interviews with members of the Hotel workforce, spanning time zones, regions, roles, and even languages. With this data, the team performed cohort analysis to identify persona segments emergent within the population, and uncovered a number of key behaviors and preferences that set groups within the Hotel team apart. Documenting these insights and segmenting the differences, Wipfli Digital provided Hotel with a comprehensive communications strategy that controlled for these variances and would delight each and every Hotel employee around the globe.

### 03 Outcome

With this research and end-to-end employer brand communications strategy, Wipfli Digital and Hotel began to reinvent how teams within the organization shared critical updates and HR communications internally. Building upon specific insights from within the interview transcripts, our teams ideated, designed, and developed all-new digital products, including an intranet home page and content hub, and a social employer brand engagement portal for HR personnel. Further, Wipfli Digital continued to partner with Hotel to extend this research to new departments and new sub brands in different markets.

- 230+ qualitative employer brand interviews with a global workforce
- More than 8 global regions and interviews on every continent
- 3 major digital initiatives spawned from direct user feedback and insights

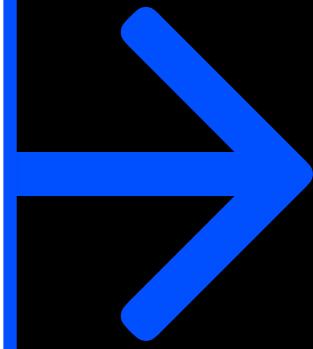




# **Hotel Chain Internal Hub**

## **Internal Communications Platform**

**Wipfli Digital designed and developed a responsive communications platform providing Hotel's HR professionals worldwide access to targeted, relevant, and need-to-know content and updates.**



# Internal Hub

## Internal Communications Platform

### 01 Challenge

After conducting an extensive employer brand research study with Hotel, the Wipfli Digital team uncovered gaps in the existing internal communications strategy and toolset in use by the HR team. The team was focused on ways to connect thousands of international HR teams, foster a community, and increase participation in global HR initiatives demanded a new digital hub for all things Hotel HR.

### 02 Solution

Wipfli Digital designed and developed a fully custom internal communications platform specific to Hotel's needs. Built upon a robust Wordpress backend and integrated with Hotel's corporate authentication system, this platform enabled instant communications and updates across a distributed HR workforce, offered a gorgeous responsive design that worked across any device, and allowed administrators to easily craft and distribute email newsletters and updates to employee distribution lists.

### 03 Outcome

The Hotel team rolled out the tool to its worldwide teams, and within weeks saw massive gains in engagement with its digital content, email open rates, and participation in "open" user-generated content areas. Over the next few years, the tool became a foundational part of how teams at Hotel shared news, company updates, and even fun pictures of team members' anniversaries or birthday parties. With this platform, Hotel delivered on its goal of a more connected, engaged, and community-oriented team, and has continued to iterate upon and enhance its platform across several generations of new ideas.

- 75% higher HR email newsletter open rate
- Over 10,000 unique user-generated posts
- 150% higher engagement with company updates and news content

A woman in a white shirt is pointing at a document on a table during a meeting. She is wearing a black watch on her left wrist. The table is covered with a light-colored, speckled surface. There are several pens and a pair of glasses on the table. The background is a blurred office setting with a window and a white pillar.

## **User-first thinking is guaranteed ROI**

The best brands on earth have figured out that success is quite simply an exercise in understanding your audience. Coupling a transformation mindset with a laser focus on the end-user is as close to a guarantee for success as there is.



## **Crowd Question**

**What are some companies that you can think of that have dialed into a crystal clear need of the audience?**

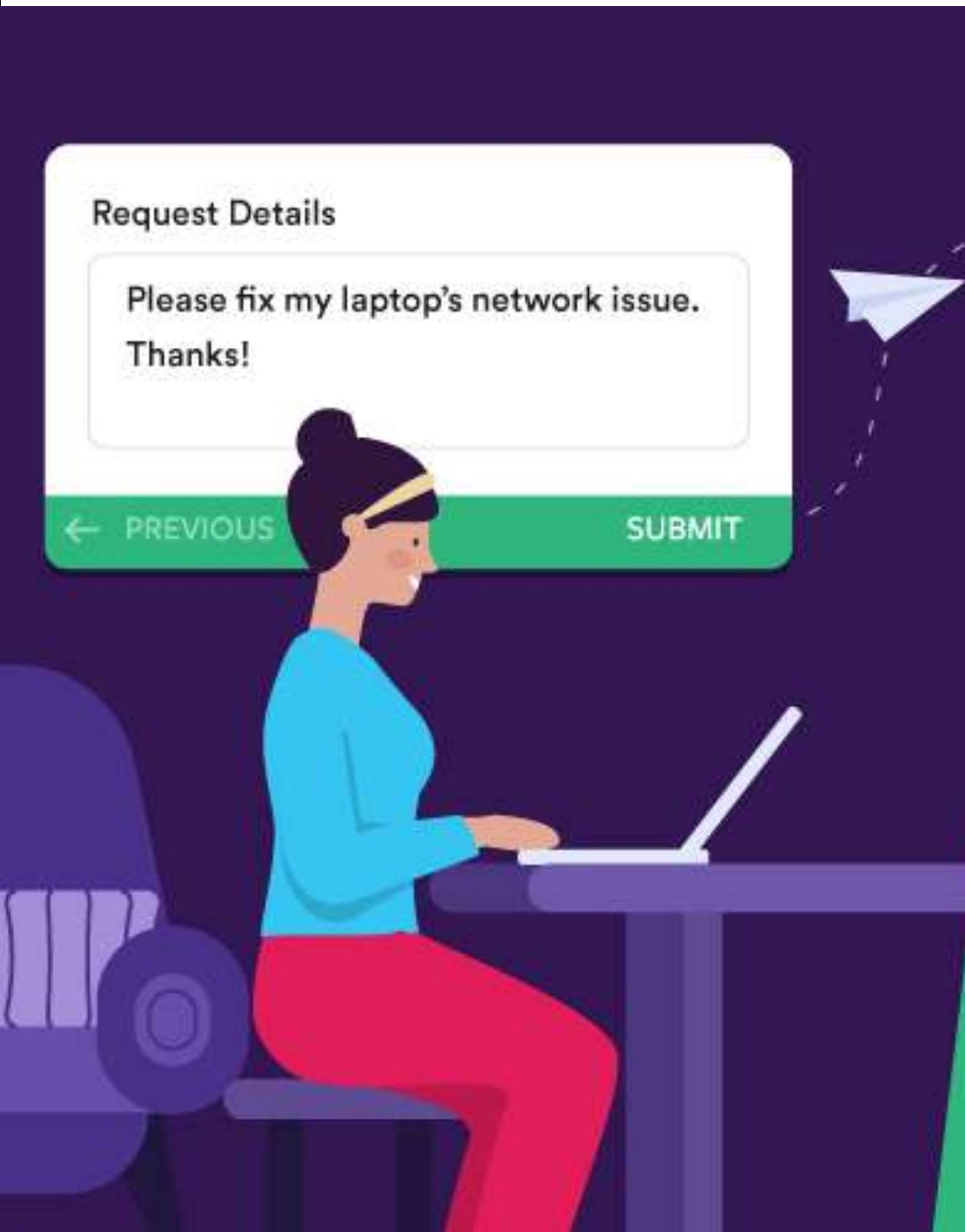
# Casper



# TRADER JOE'S



slack



WARBY PARKER



**What unites all of these companies is a laser focus on the customer's needs. No excuses. No politics. Just delivering to customers what they want.**

## **Crowd Question**

**What's a need of your guests that you might not be meeting today?**

# How to start a (meaningful) digital conversation.

---

# How to start a (meaningful) digital conversation.

---



# How to start a (meaningful) digital conversation.

Joking aside, initiating a conversation with your team is about digging in to the opportunities ahead. Here are a few questions to get you started.

Who owns our digital strategy today?

Do we have a digital roadmap that outlines our strategy?

Is the competition doing something we wish we could do?

What are our guests most frustrated with today?

Where do we see new areas of growth and opportunity?

## **Crowd Question**

**What benefits might an independent hotel have in its ability to execute a world-class digital strategy? What benefits might a large hotel chain have?**



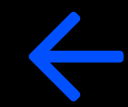
**Regardless of size or budget, you can  
lean into a winning digital strategy.**

**+Digital matters**

**+Understand your guests better than the competition**

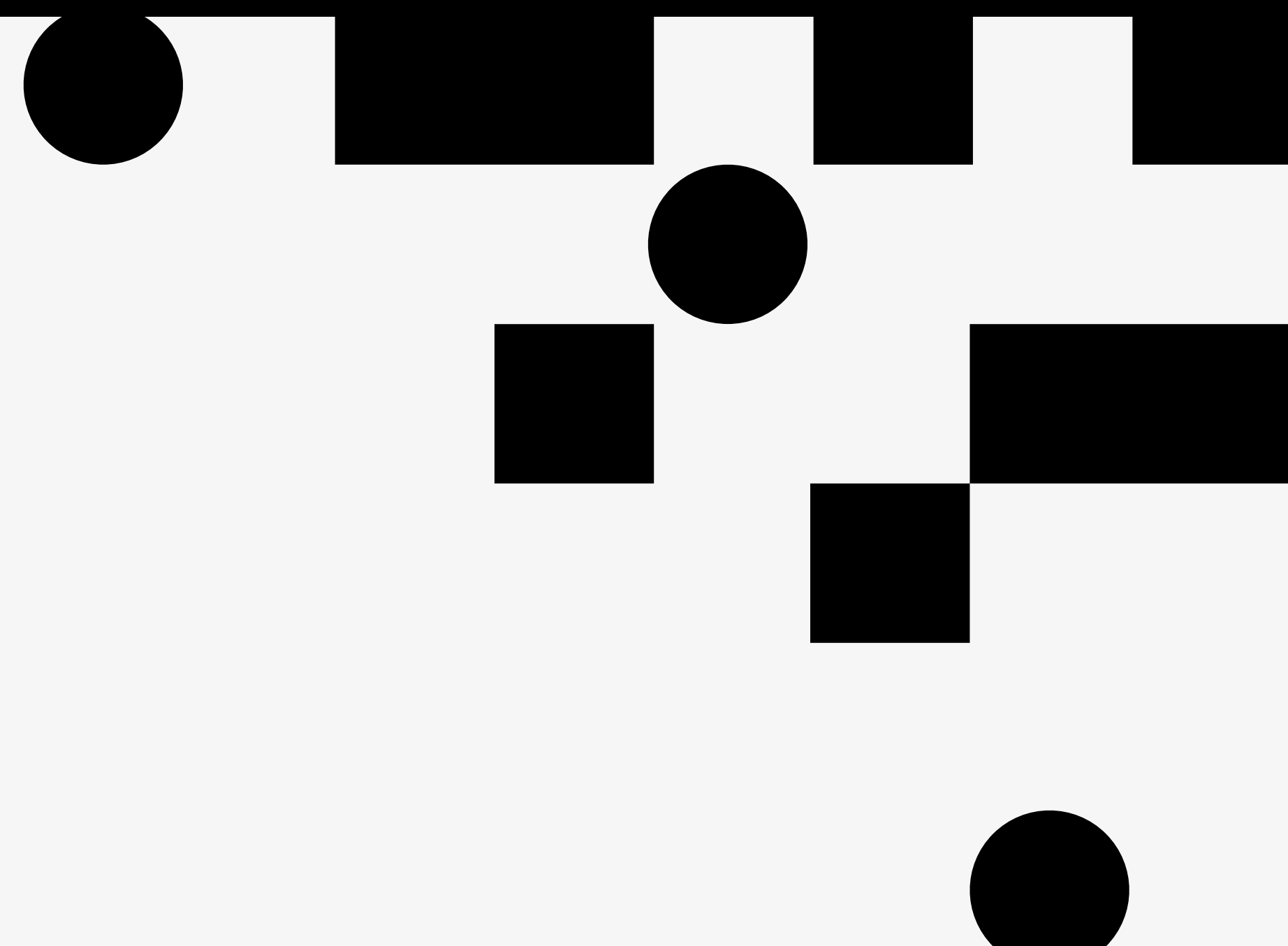
**+Experiment, fail fast, and pivot**

**+Most of all **be bold.****



**Zak Dabbas**

Principal  
[zak.dabbas@wipfli.com](mailto:zak.dabbas@wipfli.com)



# Industry Perspective

**THANK YOU!**

**Q & A**