June 2017 saw Benefit Cosmetics open a drive-through space offering beauty services outside Glastonbury Festival.

‘Glastonbrow’ offered brow waxing and other beauty services along with free products, with a DJ playing while drivers waited. Any festivalgoers who shared a picture of themselves hashtagged with #BenefitBrows could have won a year’s supply of free Benefit products.

In a world of increasing convenience, consumers have high expectations of what they want brands to deliver. This is not only a good PR opportunity, but also shows the brand understands their consumers and what they might want.
**VR water slide window experience**

Topshop transformed the window of its flagship shop on Oxford Street in London into a virtual-reality water slide. The experience named ‘Splash’ was located in the flagship’s store windows as part of the brand’s ‘interactive pool scene’, which has been designed to mark the start of the summer season.

Shoppers started their journey on a giant inflatable, before experiencing a thrilling water-slide ride through London, courtesy of an Oculus headset.

Topshop is also pumping the scent of sunscreen throughout the London store and hosting a number of summer-themed pop-ups, such as soft-serve ice-cream vendor Milk Train.

Experiential retail is becoming bigger and bolder, to attract consumers into stores. It is no longer enough to compete on price and quality, stores must use their physical space and customer experiences to set them apart from online retail.

**Buy-what-you-see hotel decor**

China’s first furniture-experience hotel opened in June 2017, where guests can purchase any furniture they have seen in the hotel that they like upon checkout.

The project is a joint effort between Louvre Furnishings Group and AccorHotels Group, which takes further initiatives by other hotel brands, such as allowing guests to buy items, including their bedding, in order to replicate their in-room comfort at home.

Homeware brands Parachute Home, Ikea and West Elm are progressing this concept further by developing their own hotel properties.

This allows a true try-before-you-buy experience for guests and could provide a new possible income stream for homeware brands.
VR vaccination distraction

In April 2017, Brazil-based health-clinic network Hermes Pardini debuted a virtual-reality experience for children who are afraid of receiving vaccinations. VR headsets are placed on children about to receive vaccines. A character in the virtual world then asks the child to become a 'hero' and places a 'special power' on their arm. At this moment, the clinician injects the child with the vaccine.

This shows how Virtual Reality can be used for practical applications, to help solve problems for consumers, rather than just create experiences.

AMAZON GO ‘store of the future’

‘No lines, no checkout. (No, seriously.)’

Amazon is due to open its new brand of supermarkets offering a new consumer experience with no checkout or queues.

By downloading the Amazon Go app, consumers can freely walk into a store, grab what they want and leave.

The app uses ‘just walk out technology’ to add any items you pick up to your ‘virtual cart’, when you leave the items are charged directly to your Amazon account.

GLOBAL INNOVATION

Starbucks’ first tatami-style cafe in Kyoto

With over 1,200 stores across Japan, Starbucks has initiated a cultural revamp, opening its first tatami-style cafe on the historic Ninenzaka street in Kyoto. Starbucks, along with other brands, has shown remarkable respect for preserving Kyoto’s image.

By adapting to Kyoto’s natural environment, Starbucks has shown the willingness to change and adapt to local culture. Could we see more of this from Starbucks in the future?

GLOBAL INNOVATION

Nudge for Change

Nudge for Change is ‘The app that makes it easy to put your money where your beliefs are.’ Introduced in the US in May 2017, the free mobile app asks users to respond to a series of questions about areas such as the environment, LGBTQ equality, equal pay for women, racial equality, and workers’ rights. Using an algorithm to score all the businesses in its database, Nudge for Change alerts people when they approach a store that clashes with their ‘moral compass’ and suggests nearby alternatives.
GLOBAL INNOVATION

Supermarket checkout system automatically bags groceries

An automated supermarket checkout system which also bags customers’ goods has been trialled in Japan. A collaboration between Panasonic and Japanese grocery-store franchise chain Lawson Inc., the Reji-Robo system uses sensor-equipped shopping baskets. When customers have completed their shopping, the basket is placed into a dedicated checkout counter, where the radio-frequency identification (RFID) tagged items are automatically scanned and moved into a bag below.

GLOBAL INNOVATION

Prices automatically decrease as their expiration date approaches

A platform which uses real-time product tracking to reduce the price of items as their sell-by date approaches has been launched. Wasteless – which aims to reduce the annual food waste generated by the grocery industry – also monitors stock levels, alerting management when supplies are running low. The system uses electronic shelf labelling and RFID sensing; a dynamic pricing engine which considers factors such as supply, demand, location, and holidays.
DYNAMIC PRICING
This practice is not unusual in industries such as travel and hotels. Dynamic, or changeable pricing, is expected to become more prevalent in grocery stores in the future. Prices can be triggered to change (up or down) by factors such as high demand, weather conditions, low product stocks and short product shelf life. The increased affordability of digital shelf-edge labels is also helping to make this practice more widespread.

CONTACTLESS PAYMENTS
In 2016 contactless card payments grew by more than 30%, becoming the UK’s favourite way to pay for goods. With more recent advancements such as Apple Pay and Android Pay allowing people to pay for goods on phones and watches, we can expect to see even more innovation in this area.

PACKAGE HELPING TO TACKLE FOOD WASTE
UK grocer Sainsbury’s is launching a new ‘smart’ label on packets of its own-brand ham in a bid to reduce waste by telling consumers how fresh it is. Ham is Sainsbury’s top-selling cooked meat product, but many customers find it difficult to remember how long it has been open. To help, the new label changes colour from yellow to purple the longer the pack has been open. The move is part of the supermarket’s £10m ‘waste less, save more’ initiative – a five-year investment aiming to help communities in Britain cut the amount of food they throw away.

ARTISTIC FOOD
With figures showing one in five people in the UK have shared a food picture on social media in the last month, it’s no surprise that artistic-looking food creations are on the up. One of the latest trends is the cloud egg. Apparently with only a little effort these impressive-looking meals can be created, which are both healthy and delicious… and guarantee social media likes.

PHASING OUT OF ‘SINGLE-USE’ PLASTIC BAGS
Leading UK grocery retailer Tesco are running a trial where customers will no longer be able to buy 5p single-use plastic bags, with the only alternatives being the more expensive 10p reusable bags.

If successful, Tesco may phase out single-use bags in all their stores, and no doubt other brands will follow suit. This change should inspire more customers to move towards more sustainable reusable bags and help big retailers meet their environmental targets.

RE-SURGENCE OF THE CONVENIENCE SECTOR
Tesco announced its acquisition of Booker wholesale stores in early 2017, followed by Sainsbury’s revealing their plans to buy Nisa, and more surprisingly Amazon acquiring Whole Foods stores in June. These potential deals signify huge possible changes for the sector in the future, creating consolidation and coordination in a sector which has in the past been quite fragmented.

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Resurgence of the convenience sector
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In May 2017, Coca-Cola collaborated with Google Cloud technologies to create personalized adverts on digital supermarket signage in-store. This move is expected to be part of a new evolution in the role of point of sale through the use of cloud technology bringing real-time media to the customer.

The advertising screens placed at the end of soda aisles communicated with cellphones, providing shoppers’ approximate age, gender, and current shopping preoccupations. The screens were piloted in 250 stores with different content displayed to each customer. This could range from brand campaigns, store-specific items to app-guided shopping lists.

POS standout

3D display elements

This flagship cosmetics store in San Diego is themed like a bakery, with products displayed like desserts. Vibrant colours used for the interior match the theme and can help appeal to a young audience. This is a good example of a brand building a strong identity and experience for their customers.
These off-shelf displays may not hold a huge amount of stock, but they certainly create a point of difference through the interesting use of 3D elements.

POS standout
3D floor displays

We know that store brand decisions take the average shopper around two seconds, so impact needs to be immediate. These off-shelf displays in seasonal designs, promoting very different products of food and healthcare, can help customers to envisage themselves using the products and could inspire impulse purchases.

POS standout
Seasonal displays
WANT TO KNOW MORE?

This proactive review of trends in the retail market by our Insights team is just one of the many ways we can help plan your campaign strategy.

We can offer advice on all elements of retail marketing, from market trends, to innovative design, cost savings and production best practice.

If you want to talk through anything further, please get in touch: info@hhglobal.com

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