KAHLA RFID: Smart Porcelain for Catering, Food Service Industry, Vending Machines and Marketing

Dishwasher-safe RFID and NFC transponders on tableware achieve cost savings through optimised processes and create a better customer loyalty through multi-sensory brand communication.

Kahla, April 2018 – Porcelain manufacturer KAHLA supports the digitisation of its customers with smart tableware, once again demonstrating the dedication of the family-owned company in Thuringia to innovation. The patented Magic Grip silicone application seals RFID or NFC transponders, also called chips, on the porcelain and makes them dishwasher-safe.

Tracking of smart tableware: the inventory updates itself

Smart tableware opens many new possibilities for the restaurant sector, the food service industry, catering, cafés and bakeries. Rental companies and caterers can have their RFID porcelain automatically checked out and checked in at the warehouse. The cumbersome task of counting individual articles is no longer required. A tablet or smartphone app documents the current inventory. "RFID and NFC can save time and money", explains Sheila Rietscher, Director Brand & Strategy at KAHLA/Thüringen Porzellan GmbH. "Professional hosts optimise their logistics processes and automate internal processes. And NFC can make the customer experience more individual, informative and entertaining. Marketing experts know the positive impact on brand loyalty when customers are engaged through multimedia and multi-sensory experiences."

Gastronomy 4.0: accurate taring and cash-free payment

The smart tableware allows autonomous weighing and cash-free payment. Unlike conventional tared porcelain, KAHLA RFID does not have a weight range. The weight is stored and scanned on each article with great accuracy to the nearest gram. This benefits the cafeteria operator, who sells several thousand meals a
day, because he avoids financial losses due to tare ranges. If a plate knows what it weighs and which food it holds, the cafeteria guest can weigh his salad himself and pay for his meal without the need for a cashier.

Cups, plates and bowls with transponders can communicate with vending machines that dispense coffee, soup and other food. The drink control menu will remain untouched if the cup already communicates that it is a cappuccino cup. The smart cup can store cash balances, loyalty points, preferences and information about allergies.

A few specific application examples:

- A coffee roaster is linking his cups – equipped with NFC transponders – to a video about the coffee cultivation area. This adds an emotional connection to the taste experience. While the customer is enjoying his coffee, he can see images of the coffee plantation on his smartphone.

- The reusable “cupit” cup of a bakery chain “speaks” to the company's app via a chip. The coffee connoisseur checks the app to see the special offers of the day before he enters the shop and refills his cup. At the counter he collects loyalty points via the transponder. On occasion, he will receive a fresh loaf of bread as a thank you.

- At a hospital, a “connected” cup is paying for the coffee from the vending machine. The staff does not have to worry about having cash or credit cards on hand.

- In a cafeteria, a smart plate knows that today, it is a schnitzel plate. The guest scans his meal and pays on his own. A cashier is not necessary in this process.

- At a rental company or a caterer, porcelain with RFID transponders checks itself out of the warehouse and automatically checks back in upon its return.

- The porcelain of a nursing home cafeteria tends to disappear on the different floors of the building. RFID technology determines the location of the dishes making their collection quick and easy.

- A brand gives away multi-sensory promotional porcelain with a chip that contains information, games, surveys, videos or music.
The path to smart porcelain

Each KAHLA RFID solution is custom-made to suit the specific needs of the client and is implemented in close collaboration with the client and with experts for RFID, programming and design. Together, they define the requirements for the application to be implemented. KAHLA then meets these custom requirements and offers transponders of various designs, sizes and performance. Whether round or square, with special requirements for range, storage space, design or heat resistance: the choice is almost endless. Experts advise the clients about the right transponder for their respective project. The client determines the quantity individually. He also decides whether the transponders should be equipped with logos and brand communication and selects the tableware pieces from the KAHLA product range to which these transponders will be added. Then, the patented silicone application Magic Grip is applied. It provides the transponders with a dishwasher-safe seal on the bottom of the tableware. The RFID chip remains flat and is guaranteed to be unobtrusive. Additional information including a video of the product can be found at www.kahlaporzellan.com/RFID.

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The brand KAHLA stands for multifunctional porcelain “Made in Germany”, which has received over 100 prestigious design awards. Based in Kahla in Thuringia, the family-owned enterprise, which employs around 300 people, exports its products for private homes, the restaurant sector and advertising clients to 60 countries in the world. The innovative product design is guided by the demands and living and life style habits in the society of today. The brand owes its international reputation and its business success to its courage to embrace innovation – from unconventional design concepts over the sustainability strategy “KAHLA pro Eco” to the use of ever new progressive technologies.