

An aerial photograph of a swimming pool with several people and colorful inflatable toys. The water is a clear, light blue. A woman in sunglasses is on a blue and white striped inflatable. A man is on a yellow inflatable. A woman is on a large, multi-colored inflatable. Other people are visible in the water, some with their heads above water. The overall scene is bright and summery.

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RFID technology for an enhanced

GUEST EXPERIENCE AT WATER PARKS

Water parks have been around for many years and people of all ages still enjoy the thrill of zipping down a water-filled tube slide, splashing around a wave pool or drifting along a lazy river. The rides themselves have not evolved drastically over the last few decades, but the water park experience certainly has. Today's water park guests are not simply looking for a fast ride or a colorful wave pool – they are tech-savvy consumers who want a frictionless, and personalized, experience that will truly wow them.



“*Guests will pay for high quality experiences and their expectations are growing exponentially.*”



As noted by Glenn O'Connor, Senior Director of water parks for FORREC, “Guests will pay for high quality experiences and their expectations are growing exponentially.”¹ Water park operators are making every effort to ensure their facilities offer a compelling guest experience that will encourage consumers to keep coming back for more. From themed rides to digital solutions for access and payments, park operators are making long-term investments to improve their offerings for guests. “For the ever-growing waterpark industry, 2019 will be another year for robust growth as over \$1 billion in investment is slated for indoor and outdoor waterparks and their related resorts.”²

¹ *Waterparks: The Next Big Splash*. Published in *Attractions Management* 2017 issue 2
<http://www.cladglobal.com/architecture-design-features?codeid=31877&ref=n>

² *Waterparks: Growth Trends in 2019*; By David J. Sangree, MAI, CPA, ISHC (April 2019)
https://www.hotel-online.com/press_releases/release/waterparks-growth-trends-in-2019

THE GUEST EXPERIENCE

In recent years, the focus within the leisure and entertainment industries has shifted towards personalization of the guest experience. Guests appreciate the feeling of being recognized and appreciated by the attraction or event they are attending. By incorporating RFID technology into the guest experience, water parks are able to simplify the guest journey through their park and offer features and services that are more personalized and targeted to each individual consumer.



When purchasing their waterpark pass, guests register an online profile that is associated with their RFID pass/wristband. Each time the guest scans; the system recognizes their profile and the journey becomes more customized for them. From a personalized welcome message at the park entrance, to ride recommendations and discounts on particular activities; the water park can establish a deeper connection with each individual consumer.





Eric Mertz, creative producer in charge of the guest experience at Universal Orlando Resort, highlighted the benefit of technologies such as RFID in an interview with Wharton professors Christian Terwiesch and Nicolaj Siggelkow on the Work of Tomorrow radio show, “(Guests) get into the parks and they’re anonymous to the operators. They’re just people coming through. As much as through customer service and training you try to create those human moments and engage with them, you still don’t know enough about them. That’s where, as an industry, we’re hoping these technologies allow us to know more about the guests as they approach, as they engage in our attractions, as they engage with the team members directly.”³

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RFID technology can be used to streamline access to the park, facilitate cashless payments with on-site vendors and even allow guests to play games, enter contests and take memorable photos during their visit. Waterproof RFID wristbands are a simple solution that can be used and enjoyed by guests of all ages. RFID solutions remove the hassle of carrying wallets and phones, allowing water parks to offer guests a truly frictionless and enjoyable experience.

³ When Fun Goes Digital: Creating the Theme Park of the Future. Wharton, University of Pennsylvania: Technology podcast (April 2018). <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/future-theme-park-innovation/>

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