

Perfect hot drinks with Labrints and its smart automatic steamer

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Peter Hernou, barista, World Latte Art Champion and CEO of start-up Labrints, has taken up the challenge of bringing perfect drinks to the hospitality sector and thus to the consumer. Peter knows how to prepare a quality drink, but how to get the perfect product into the consumer's cup without the physical presence of the barista? To do so, the company has developed a smart steamer: ‘a?ralab’ stands out from other devices by making the skills of the barista scalable through technology.

A?ralab looks like a professional coffee machine, but it is not. It is rather complementary to coffee machines in the catering industry. The device allows heating and/or frothing of milk, both animal and plant-based, juices and other liquids in a stable, hygienic and high-quality way. It also allows for greater flexibility in handling other recipes and for precise control of critical quantities, such as the process temperature and foam volume. Finally, the device is at the heart of a broader concept to also offer digital services to the various players in the value chain, such as ingredient suppliers, distributors, end users, chains, ...

In a next stage, these digital services will be linked to the device. Think of sharing and improving recipes, guarding and optimising processing conditions, guaranteeing the origin and quality of ingredients used and optimising the supply chain.

To ensure the success of its intelligent steamer, Labrints had to make the right technological, business and development choices. Indeed, developing such a device comes with some

challenges: smart features such as automatic identification of the proposed liquid, improved detection through machine learning (AI) and data exchange through connectivity, as well as the business aspects of setting up and rolling out digital services.

To meet these challenges, Labrints turned to Sirris for advice. Thanks to the support of Sirris and the use of low-threshold subsidy tools, including the Digihub of the Flemish business network VOKA, Labrints was able to take concrete steps in its growth story.

From proof of concept to demonstrator

In order to demonstrate the reliable operation of the smart features, Sirris designed and built a proof of concept. Spectral sensor technology and machine learning algorithms are used to distinguish between different types of beverages, such as dairy products, plant-based milk drinks or juices. As this concept has been seamlessly integrated into the existing machine as a kit, Labrints is able to show customers how this unique concept works by means of a tangible demonstrator.

Support along the development path

Labrints had experienced that the search for support, insight, knowledge and contacts is not always easy and that the multitude of possibilities does not always make it easy for a company to make the right choices. Therefore, Sirris also supported the start-up in the approach, planning, financing of developments and cooperation with industrialisation partners.
Meanwhile, Sirris is also helping Labrints to successfully launch the digital services that will be linked to the device.

Thanks to this cooperation, a?ralab, the world's first smart automatic steamer for perfect temperature and quality foam with microbubbles, is now a fact. The device has been awarded the Host 2021 Smart Label Innovation Award.

Labrints®

aeralab®

Authors