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## NEWS RELEASE

# Avolta Next launches an Innovation Hub in Milan – the company’s first physical space for innovation and start-ups

- **Avolta Next opens a physical space dedicated to accelerating tech innovations focused on the food and beverage (F&B) sector.**
- **The five winners of an initial call for ideas have set up their operations at the Milan headquarters of Avolta’s leading F&B operator Autogrill and will develop innovative solutions and tools to improve the traveler experience.**
- **The Avolta Next Hub Milan is a testament to Avolta’s approach to innovation and its role in a major industry transformation.**

Leading global travel experience player, Avolta (SIX: AVOL) launched an innovation hub for startups at its Milan office last week, dedicated to Avolta’s business in F&B and motorways, and with the aim to create a community of creative minds developing projects in close contact with industry experts. Under its innovation and ventures arm, Avolta Next, the company put out a call for ideas dedicated to F&B and motorways in December 2023, attracting more than 100 applications from four continents. From this pool, five start-ups were selected to set up their businesses in the new 220-square-metre hub.

The start-ups will find their new home inside the historical headquarters of Autogrill, now the Avolta office in Milan, located next to the Factory Food Designers, the company’s incubator of ideas where the flavors, products and concepts that Avolta uses in its F&B locations around the world are born – created thanks to a research and development strategy focused on quality, food safety, sustainability and technology. The group of international start-ups will develop innovative solutions to improve the competitiveness of the motorway F&B sector’s services. One example is Hooly! developer of an AI and robotics-based waste bin that automatically separates waste and offers detailed analyzes to improve efficiency and sustainability.

Last week Avolta celebrated the unveiling of Avolta Next Milan, including the opportunities, projects, and key figures, at Avolta’s Milan headquarters. Alongside a tour of the facilities and press Q&A, the event featured a dialogue between Professor Luciano Floridi, Director of the Centre for Digital Ethics at Yale University, Alessandro Benetton, President of Edizione, and Xavier Rossinyol, CEO of Avolta, all moderated by well-known Italian journalist Mia Ceran.

“Every great idea needs a nurturing environment to flourish. Avolta Next Milan is one of the places where Avolta brings the industry’s major transformation to life, fueled by the contributions of innovative start-ups that share our passion for innovation and excellence,” commented Alessandro Benetton, Chairman of Edizione and Honorary Chairman of Avolta. “I am delighted to see how the success of the Innovation Hub at Aeroporti di Roma has inspired Avolta to launch a similar initiative in another sector. This is a testament to our DNA, which we aim to spread further to create new global champions.”

“We are the first to seamlessly unite travel retail, travel convenience, and F&B on a large scale, operating at a unique intersection that sets us apart,” says Xavier Rossinyol, CEO of Avolta. “When we talk about innovation at Avolta, we mean transforming the experience for travelers, using new technologies, global data and AI to accelerate change. Collaboration with start-ups and young entrepreneurs is key to going all the way and doing it fast, like in other companies inspired by Edizione. Avolta Next Milan is proof that we mean innovation in Italy and beyond, just as Autogrill has done for decades.”

## For further information

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### About Avolta

Avolta AG, (SIX: AVOL) is a leading global travel experience player. With the traveler at its strategic core, Avolta maximizes every moment of the traveler's journey through its combination of travel retail and travel food & beverage, passion for innovation and excellent execution. Avolta's well-diversified business across geographical, channel and brand portfolio pillars operates in 73 countries and more than 1,000 locations, with over 5,100 points of sale across three segments – duty-free, food & beverage and convenience – and various channels, including airports, motorways, cruises ferries, railway, border shops and downtown. An inherent element of Avolta's business strategy is found in ESG, aiming for sustainable and profitable growth of the company while fostering high standards of environmental stewardship and social equity – making meaningful impact in the local communities. The company's access to 2.3 billion passengers each year reinforces the power of its more than 76,000 people, committed to surprising guests and delivering solid execution, supporting the company in creating value for all stakeholders.

To learn more about Avolta, please visit [avoltaworld.com](https://avoltaworld.com)