

Message-bearing coffee foam taps printer mechanics

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Ripples combines hardware and software to deliver any image or message onto lattes, cappuccinos, or any foam-topped drink.

If vendors could choose the key marketing rule of thumb for the past decade, you might learn they did it with two words, *Personalize This*. From sneakers to t-shirts to news feeds to music services, marketers believe consumers happily bend to rules of engagement by whatever means feasible as long as the consumers can be made to feel the vendor is looking right at them and their needs.

Now there is something called Ripples, a system for making personalized images on the coffee foam that sits on top of a cup of coffee. The [press release](#) said that key elements of the Ripple Maker experience include a "Wi-Fi enabled device that neatly fits onto counter top with a small 8.5" x 10.5" footprint."

"Essentially acting like a 3D printer, the filament is coffee extract stored in Ripple Pods, which is extruded in just 10 seconds. The barista in charge of the cup simply selects an [image](#) in the concomitant Ripple App," said 3ders.org.

The Ripples system has three components—a machine, the Ripple Maker, a website, and a [mobile app](#). The app comes preloaded with a library of Ripples categorized into themes—greetings, coffee humor, love& happiness, for example. The machine combines patented 3D printer mechanics with Ink-Jet printing technologies, using natural coffee extract, "Ripple Pods."

Customers can customize themes and create their own Ripple design through the web site. They can send a photo, personal image or message to their Ripple Maker through the Ripple app. After an image is uploaded to the app or selected from the library, the printing takes about 10 seconds.

The concept assumes [consumers](#) will be made to feel special and happy through personalized images or words, for "an emotionally caffeinated experience."

"TA DA!" and "Good Morning MATT" are just two of numerous possibilities, or the foam may be used to cheer on a local team or pass on birthday wishes or anything else. The promotional video shows delighted customers clinging to each other to fit into a selfie along with their foam-top message-bearing cup of coffee. Cups for two show one saying Happy

and the other, Anniversary.

The company behind the system hopes that service providers who offer coffee as part of their events and establishments will see the marketing possibilities. Marketing possibilities could include logos. Target buyers include cafes, restaurants, hotels, food service and events producers. The foam images and words present ways to make the coffee-drinking experience special for the consumer and a way to brand a product for the vendor. Vendors could choose a preloaded design or upload their own over Wi-Fi. The Ripple Maker will begin shipping September 2015. The images are printed using 100 percent natural coffee extract and are produced within 10 seconds.

Tel Aviv-based Steam CC is the company behind Ripples. The price of the Ripple Maker machine is \$999. The company said it will be available for commercial businesses serving coffee, with service plans that start at \$75 per month. They get the Pods and access to the content platform and themes. For consumers, meanwhile, the app is free and with no in-app charges.

Selena Larson in *The Daily Dot* predicted: "Where Ripple Maker will truly succeed is likely through business partnerships. What brand wouldn't want to turn a cup of coffee into a [drinkable](#) billboard that almost everyone will surely Instagram?"

Lufthansa will be the first global brand to adopt the technology. The foam-top messages will be part of the [coffee](#) experience for customers in some passenger lounges. The press release said the Ripple Makers will be introduced in Lufthansa's First and Business Class [lounges](#) later this year.

Yossi Meshulam, CEO of Steam CC, said, "We're taking latte art to a whole new level." The messages can be achieved onto lattes,

cappuccinos, or any foam-topped drink.

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