When Google Glass ceased production in 2014, the public thought at that moment that Augmented Reality had met its demise. Come 2016, the uproar of virtual reality has brands enamored with this new, innovative experience; yet it’s Pikachu and friends who dominate the mixed reality race for funding and adoption.
The History of Augmented Reality proves that this technology can service several different industries, but there's no doubt that AR's presence in marketing has revolutionized the sport.

There are an abundance of innovative marketing tools, some enabling brands to create experiences that are not only original but highly favored among consumers.

Augmented Reality (AR) is no secret to forward-thinking brands and agencies. AR's proven applications throughout this past year have validated the opportunity in marketing.

PokémonGo and Snapchat are anomalies because of their larger platforms and the resources to drive such a community; nonetheless, their use of AR is producing exponential results: not only driving revenue but addictive engagement too. Both players have a product that revolves around AR experiences and their use of this technology has readied the world for what's to come. In an effort to mimic their results, marketers and agencies are anxious to use augmented reality in their next consumer focused campaign.

Augment has many clients in the marketing realm, both agencies and brands looking to create enticing experiences. Let's dive into how we see the intersection of augmented reality and marketing.
What Marketers Need to Understand About Augmented Reality

Marketers are constantly in search of mobile technologies that wow consumers, so much so that we’ve fallen into the thinking that the next innovation can be implemented just like the last.

Augmented reality is nothing like technology of the past. Though AR has been used to meet the same marketing initiatives, creating an augmented reality experience should be approached with a basic knowledge of how it fits in with your larger business goals.

Augmented reality brings a digital overlay to the physical environment around you, and it’s already shifting how people shop online, try new products before buying, and engage with brands. AR is versatile in its use cases and the verticals it applies to.

Using AR for both B2B sales and direct-to-consumer, Siemens uses Augment to show their products at trade shows. Marketers are trying to find more intuitive ways to use AR to their advantage. Here are a few things every marketer should understand about augmented reality.

**AR differs from other technologies**

Augmented reality is relatively similar to other digital technologies in the sense that it is mainly used through smartphones (at the moment) and it is highly interactive for consumers. However, AR is much different than other marketing tools.

Virtual reality facilitates the creation of real-life simulations, and creates an immersive experience for any user that makes them feel as if they are actually interacting with their digital environment. Augmented reality, on the other hand, layers digital enhancements geared to enrich an existing real life setting by appealing to the senses.

AR uses 3D models rather than just text and images. These 3D models are the content that drives the experience and it’s an area that marketers overlook when chasing augmented reality campaigns.
Augmented Reality allows you to visualize 3D models in real-time and in a real environment. While AR works with 2D images, AR cannot reach its full potential without a 3D model that can be rendered from any angle. Before AR, 3D graphics were limited to gaming environments, architecture visualization, engineering, and Hollywood entertainment. Although 3D computer graphics continued to evolve in quality, 3D models were still used solely in immersive environments or flat print – until augmented reality. AR developed to be the only way to see 3D models as an overlay to the world in front of you. Once these models are obtained, it is a quite simple uploading process through an AR platform to create such an experience.

Given that these models are realistic and able to be manipulated, AR produces a unique interaction between the product and the consumer. The immersiveness of augmented reality is an element that other tech solutions can’t achieve. Much different than simply adding text or image overlays to a static image, AR has proven to provide an immersive experience by allowing users to add these virtual objects in real-time to their environment around them.

"Augmented reality is creating interactive experiences that engage users far beyond many of the mobile technologies we’ve seen in the past."

– Lindsay Boyajian, CMO of Augment

Most organizations already have 3D models on hand for marketers to use in their AR campaigns. For instance, retailers looking to market their products already have 3D models in-house that their design team used to design the products. With 3D product models in hand, retailers can integrate augmented reality through an SDK into their mobile app or websites to allow online shoppers to get a better familiarity with what they want to buy.

Branded marketing campaigns also use 3D models or holograms to create their AR experience, but these 3D models are usually bought or created for the client’s use.

AR is a technology that has been under development for years so it’s important that marketing agencies don’t jump too quickly to launch their own AR experience. Understanding how AR differs is an important first step.
Innovation is important but where it’s used is more important

Augment is in continuous conversation with marketing agencies, and we’ve found that most marketers need a better idea of how consumers would best utilize this technology.

Augmented reality provides a memorable experience when executed correctly but these interactions need to be timely and appropriate. Using AR is most effective when you first establish a strategy for fitting the experience in a way that adds value to the consumer.

Augmented reality can be an attention-grabbing, one-off event but if it’s well integrated into the process, it can greatly impact long-term purchases as well. Either way it has to fulfill a certain purpose for users.

“With Augment, our customers can scan our catalog and try our lamps at home in augmented reality.”

Rudy Wulff, Creative Director
Northern Lighting
Who wants to scan a cereal box just to watch quick animation of the logo? We want to scan your product packaging to find cool discounts on other items or scan a print catalogue to get a better look at your products at scale through augmented reality.

Simply overlaying something virtual on a phone screen can appear gimmicky. Having an ad pop-up on your smartphone after scanning a brand’s logo may make for short-winded entertainment, but it doesn’t provide a real use for the customer at hand. It won’t breed consumer interaction in the long run.

**Live activations?**

AR’s applications in online retail are apparent and (already) impactful but it will soon be seen more as stand-alone, live activations as well. Augmented reality has managed to merge the digital experience with the physical for branded entertainment/gaming one-offs, and in-store retail products to drive sales and engagement.

Much like Snapchat, live activations that leverage AR are effective because consumers are able to be included in the entertainment, whereas in VR we can get a sense of exclusion or often become simply spectator. Branded augmented reality experiences have been approached in a variety of ways. Augment clients, in particular, have enabled posters to be scanned so that consumers can take a picture next to a moving hologram character.

AR in brick-and-mortar stores is where we’ve seen AR technology most used in-person. In-store shoppers can see how a lego set looks when put together before opening the package. Or get a clear view of everything you’re getting in the makeup kit just by scanning the package.

SDKs are becoming a valid way for companies to implement an already built augmented reality solution that they can use in live activations or through online efforts. The Augment SDKs, for example, will allow you to embed augmented reality product visualization into your existing eCommerce app or website. With a simple tap on a mobile device, your customers will be able to see products in their environment, in real time and real size, before purchasing. Reduce friction in consumer adoption and brand your own augmented reality experience from the ground up through an SDK.

Forward-thinking marketers are keen on innovation and augmented reality can truly grow sales and influence when used in the right capacity.
In their adolescence, Millennials had the luxuries of Mapquest, Myspace, and other innovations that were groundbreaking at the time. Now Generation Z stands as the main target demographic for brands. Yet, these digital natives aren’t easily impressed.

Generation Z has grown up in a truly technology savvy society and Millennials are no strangers to new platforms.

With the evolution of technology products, not just the audiences themselves, the way you resonate with them is also evolving. Marketing towards Gen Z has already changed the way companies distribute content and manage user relationships. They aren’t fazed by new technology; they invest their energy in the authenticity of products. The future of marketing towards the younger demographic involves creating experiences that are personalized, valued, and familiar in communication.

**Personalize the Journey**

Millennials like to do thorough research before buying any product; reviews, comparisons, and social validation play important roles in convincing them. They rely on their friends’ opinions and real experiences rather than blindly following an advertisement.

Generation Z has spent their earliest days on the internet dodging ad blockers and finessing age-gated websites. Brands try to sell to them every chance they can get, regardless of the platform. With that said, personalizing the journey specifically to them is where marketers can win over this niche.

Virtual experiences are thriving amongst the Millennial audience and it’s clear that the future is going to be filled with exciting technology used to craft
marketing experiences. These campaigns influence the buying decision, on top of building brand awareness and conversation.

Using Augmented Reality in Marketing

Augmented Reality has greatly increased buyer engagement. Engaging buyers and stimulating their senses through virtual experiences in your real environment, in real-time. This technology is cool, fun and is already creating waves in the millennials’ minds.

A large number of industries are already tapping AR’s power to engage their customers. There are two ways to use augmented reality in marketing: interactive print and augmented commerce.

Interactive Print

AR makes it possible to layer interactive, digital components atop a real life environment. For example, AR-powered apps like Augment allow users to scan an image on a page, screen, or package with their smartphone, and an interactive, associated 3D model will pop up and hover over the printed media. The interaction with these augmented trackers can easily become addictive, used by customers time and time again. Brands can also link the interactive campaigns to a website, directing the consumer to purchase.

Interactive campaigns are designed to respond to user interactions and add depth to any experience. Bring print to life and allow virtual media to create an experience that was once only 2D.
Augmented Commerce

Shop from home without having to envision how it would look in the store. Augmented Commerce is set to engage millennial buyers by allowing them to see virtual products in their physical space before they purchase, all through AR.

Without even leaving their houses, the buyers can virtually try and experience the products they’re looking to buy. AR is a tool that will make the buyer’s journey much more captivating, consumers won’t hesitate because of uncertainty. AR has been instrumental in creating a great interaction environment between buyers and sellers and establishing an emotional connection between product demand and consumers’ desires.
Marketing Benefits of Interactive Media

AR-powered print is not only impressive from the consumer standpoint, but can also have very positive impacts on your marketing efforts and business growth in the following ways:

**Brand recognition and interaction**

Interactive media helps you grow your market presence through emphasized brand recognition and customer loyalty. When you provide your customer with an experience that is personal and immersive, they will remember their experience with you, especially if it provides reasonable value.

**Omnichannel experience**

Connecting offline and online platforms is a major focus for brands and retailers in today's climate. Now that the digital medium and in-store marketing must work in tandem to create a cohesive experience; augmented reality is allowing retailers to offer a more personal and engaging interactions. With AR, shop at home like you would in-
store, and shop in-store with the same perks you'll find online.

**Increased ROI**

Investing in quality interactive media tools will ultimately help you boost your profits and ROI through increased customer engagement. Customers scanning your products to discover cool perks hidden through augmented reality can easily become addictive and used by customers time and time again. Or implementing augmented reality in the eCommerce experience helps shoppers find a better familiarity with products, thus presenting a real value for the retailer. Through that, company's can see the analytical side of their interactive campaigns to chart its success. Brands can also link the interactive campaigns to a website, directing the consumer to purchase.

**Improved marketing materials and strategies**

A huge benefit to utilizing interactive media and augmented reality in your marketing is that you can learn, adjust, and improve based on meaningful interactions your customers are experiencing with your current campaigns.

**Measurable analytics for growth**

Analyzing the success of your marketing materials, campaigns, and customer interactions can help you scale your business successfully, and continue to grow your profits. It’s very important that you track the results of your interactive media campaigns just as you would any other marketing efforts. See where users are engaging with your campaign, how often, and for how long.

Augmented reality is most effective in marketing because it allows users to drive engagement and interactions with your product. Whether you use AR to scan a printed page or to show products in the shopper’s home before buying, consumers will play, adjust, and experience augmented reality well after the first touch point. The next innovation in marketing will consist of engaging campaigns that leverage augmented reality.
ABOUT US

Augment is a venture-backed augmented reality software solution, keen on helping businesses merge our physical and virtual experiences.

Augment works with many marketing agencies and brands with marketing initiatives who are looking to implement augmented reality. Either towards the end consumer or for business-to-business purposes, Augment has helped clients launch both interactive print campaigns, custom trackers, and enable AR through retail. Drop us a line today and see how Augment can work for you.

Start your Free Trial