

## **MARKETING IN AUGMENTED AND VIRTUAL REALITY FOR BRANDS AND PRODUCTS**

*This article is about the use of virtual and augmented reality in brand and product marketing. How these technologies allow companies to create unique marketing campaigns and enhance the consumer experience.*

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In today's world, with the explosion of technology, augmented and virtual reality (AR and VR) have become significant aspects of marketing strategies for brands and products. These technologies give companies new ways to engage with consumers, create unique marketing campaigns and improve customer experience. However, the development of AR and VR in marketing also poses many questions and challenges that require specific analyses.

The purpose of this paper is to explore and analyze the use of AR and VR in brand and product marketing. To reveal the essence and potential of augmented and virtual reality technologies in marketing.

To analyze successful examples of using AR and VR in marketing different brands and products.

Virtual reality is a 3D computing environment that looks and feels like the real thing, allowing users to fully become immersed in it and interact with it. Virtual reality headsets for helmets such as Meta Quest 2, PlayStation VR2 and Valve Index VR Kit are used to create this immersion.

Augmented reality is a technology that creates an immersive reality experience by seamlessly integrating virtual information such as text, graphics and sound with real world objects in real time. It integrates the digital and physical worlds, allowing free movement and accurate identification of three-dimensional virtual and real-world objects. Unlike virtual reality, which replaces vision, augmented reality complements it [1].

Virtual and augmented reality (VR and AR) marketing refers to a marketing strategy that utilizes modern technology to create virtual and augmented worlds to promote brands and products. Virtual and augmented reality provides unique opportunities to engage consumers, allowing for a variety of interactive and immersive scenarios that make marketing messages more memorable.

For example, the British mobile company Vodafone used AR to provide technical support to its subscribers, which led to an increase in customer loyalty by 68 %. Apple is also actively promoting the spread of AR technology by providing ARKit tools for application developers and experimenting with Apple Glasses AR glasses.

AR attracts attention and arouses great interest, providing new opportunities and ways to interact with the outside world. Consumers get more sensations and useful information thanks to virtual elements that are built into reality.

Many brands are creating virtual shops where consumers can browse and purchase products in a virtual environment (IKEA Place), creating a unique shopping experience and increasing conversion rates. VR and AR technologies also allow consumers to try on a virtual fitting room (GAP Virtual Try-on, Adidas AR Shoe try-On) or test a product before purchasing (Sephora Virtual Artist, Ray-Ban Virtual Mirror).

VR offers brands the opportunity to strengthen their brand identity and make products more appealing to consumers. With virtual reality, consumers can interact with products in a virtual environment.

For example, The North Face – a company specializing in the production of sportswear, mountain clothing and tourist equipment – offered its customers the opportunity to walk around Yosemite National Park – of course, in virtual reality.

An excellent option – in this case, VR is able to give just the unique experience and strong emotions that consumers of such a highly specialized market are looking for. People could really feel like explorers, and they had additional motivation to buy clothes for adventure.

Virtual reality makes it possible to create interactive advertising campaigns where consumers can interact with products and learn more about them. Brands can participate in virtual events and exhibitions where they can promote their products and interact with potential customers.

More and more brands in various industries are adopting virtual reality technology to train their employees, test new or existing procedures and develop new products. In addition, virtual reality

technology can improve efficiency and operations, enterprises. It is seen as a priceless tool for marketing. Industries such as tourism and retail are using VR to demonstrate their products to consumers in a new, more attractive way. In addition, the entertainment industry is using virtual reality to offer a more engaging, interactive and informative experience to its target audience [2].

With customer needs and expectations constantly evolving, virtual reality or the latest technology can help close the gap and allow brands to have the means to address customer needs.

By using virtual reality marketing, businesses can create custom-branded digital worlds where they can demonstrate their products or services. Brands can offer digital experiences in place of physical ones. This allows consumers to virtually experience a product or service by taking it for a virtual spin in the comfort of their own homes. In a virtual environment, you allow consumers to interact with your brand, which can help with brand recognition and brand retention.

Volvo was one of the first to use the application and branded VR glasses for virtual test drives. This technology was introduced with the release of the new XC90 SUV model. The process is as follows: the client downloads a special application from the company's website to his smartphone, which contains a panoramic video of a trip to Vancouver. Then he inserts his phone into Google Cardboard glasses (a boxed analogue of a virtual headset with lenses), starts the video and enjoys a virtual trip with a view from the car through picturesque places.

Volvo's experiment was a success – customers appreciated the possibilities of a virtual test drive. The result was 173 million impressions in just two weeks, 51,000 inquiries for more information, a whole batch of new cars was sold a couple of days later.

The developer from Perm "Orso Group" has introduced virtual reality technology into its sales process. The company has manufactured special 3D glasses for customers and developed a mobile application Planoplan Go. All this is necessary in order to offer its customers an unusual service - to go on a virtual tour of the future apartment.

An unusual service had a wow effect. There is not a single free living space left in the house in which the company sold apartments using virtual tours.

Augmented reality provides brands with a competitive advantage through experiential marketing that engages all the senses and creates better emotional attachment than traditional advertising methods. By allowing consumers to interact with products and services with improved personalisation, this type of marketing effectively creates lasting memories that drive brand recognition, loyalty and value. Augmented reality solutions are better at attracting and retaining customers, saving time and making purchasing decisions easier. AR can bring in-store experiences into customers' homes, giving them the ability to see how the product they are interested in looks, feels and fits without having to touch and try it physically. AR marketing allows advertising companies to add a personal touch to mobile apps and other content.

For example, shoppers can scan items in a supermarket to access an AR app and see sale prices, discount coupons, and recommended products and combinations for better decision-making. Augmented reality marketing also helps deliver value by offering personalized content that meets customers' unique needs.

IKEA has created the IKEA Place application for Apple and Android, which uses augmented reality (AR). With its help, users can choose furniture from the catalog and visualize it in their own interior, whether it is an apartment, house or office. The application determines the plane and places the selected furniture in the specified place.

As a result, users can see how the new furniture will look in their interior even before buying. Similarly, IKEA helps its customers save time and effort when choosing products.

A designer from Toronto, Adam Picard, developed an augmented reality application for assembling and installing IKEA furniture. This appendix illustrates the instructions that the company attaches to each product. Users simply scan the furniture barcode and see a step-by-step assembly process.

Thus, IKEA has simplified the assembly of its products for its users, providing them with more visual and understandable instructions.

We decided to survey 15–25 year olds about their experiences with virtual and augmented reality technology and their attitudes towards virtual and augmented reality advertising. There were 106 participants in the survey, which was enough to provide a rough estimate, but it may have some degree of uncertainty. Due to the fact that these technologies are new, the study involved individuals between the ages of 15 and 25, which represents a group of potential customers.

According to the results of the survey, 56 % of respondents already have experience with marketing interactions in virtual or augmented reality.

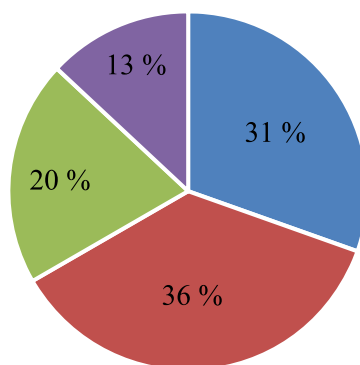
There were 44 % of respondents who had no experience with use, 29 % were satisfied with the results and effectiveness, and 27 % had no significant impression or no experience. Interviewees also answered which marketing campaigns or products using VR or AR they are familiar with, 32 % – advertising campaigns, 28 % – interactive product catalogues, 22 % – virtual shops, 18 % – virtual tours.

The overall assessment of the perception of such marketing initiatives is positive for 50 % of respondents and neutral for 47 %. When asked what factors make marketing in VR and AR more attractive to consumers, 23 % of respondents answered interactivity, 35 % – opportunity to interact with the product before purchase, 25 % – visual appeal, 16 % – unique experience.

When asked which aspects of virtual and augmented reality marketing you find most appealing, 36 % of respondents said increasing audience interaction and engagement, 31 % said creating unique and memorable customer experiences, and 20 % said increasing brand awareness and value (Fig).

Which of the following aspects of marketing in virtual and augmented reality do you find most appealing?

- Creating unique and memorable customer experiences
- Increasing audience interaction and engagement
- Increasing brand awareness and brand value
- Creating personalised marketing campaigns



According to 26 % of respondents, limited audience access to virtual and augmented reality devices hinders the wider use of virtual and augmented reality marketing, 24 % believe that technical limitations and imperfections in existing technologies, 22 % – high cost of development and implementation of VR/AR applications, 21 % – lack of experience and knowledge in the field of virtual and augmented reality marketing.

Also, thanks to the survey, we realised what virtual and augmented reality technologies want to see in the future. About 71 per cent of the interviewees said yes, and only 3 per cent said no, with 26 per cent finding it difficult to answer.

It should be highlighted that more than half of the respondents already have experience of such interactions, which indicates a significant penetration of this technology into everyday life.

Positive acceptance of marketing initiatives in virtual and augmented reality was revealed by half of the respondents, which emphasises their potential attractiveness and prospects.

The survey analysis also identified factors that make virtual and augmented reality marketing more appealing to consumers, such as interactivity, the ability to interact with the product before purchase, visual appeal and the creation of unique experiences.

However, it is also worth looking at the challenges and barriers that may hinder wider adoption of virtual and augmented reality marketing. These challenges include limited audience access to virtual and augmented reality devices, technical limitations, high costs of developing and deploying VR/AR applications, and a lack of expertise and experience in virtual and augmented reality marketing.

The survey revealed potential in virtual and augmented reality, but not all companies have already incorporated these technologies into their marketing strategies. The survey showed that among consumers there is interest in such innovations and openness to new experiences.

As for Belarusian companies, at the moment they are not yet actively using these technologies due to limited resources and lack of experience in innovative marketing.

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