Here's How AR is Changing the Marketing Industry

In a world plagued by banner blindness, ad blocking and fraud, the marketing industry is quick to jump on new technologies and ad units which promise a deeper, more impactful, memorable, or more verifiable experience for consumers. Just look at video advertising - which has been taking an increasingly larger share of advertising dollars, media time spent and share of voice every year.

With both Apple and Google demonstrating their commitment to AR with ARKit and ARCore respectively, the focus on AR as a potential new vehicle for immersive advertising is heating up. It's an especially compelling advertising proposition because it can theoretically provide some of the 'wow impact of VR without requiring additional accessories like headsets, or forcing users to step out of the flow of normal life for a mixed reality experience. In fact, AR can work seamlessly with real life - that's part of the charm. This might also be why, according to a Deloitte survey, 88% of mid-market companies are already using some form of AR to maximise their marketing efforts.

How AR Ads Fit Into Larger Marketing Strategies

There is much debate as to where AR ads fit in the marketing funnel. Are they best suited to top-of-the-funnel brand awareness, or to more direct performance marketing? The answer of course, is "it depends". It depends on context, on the platform, and on the brand or product itself.

Snapchat, for example, have successfully leveraged AR [brand awareness](#) campaigns for the likes of Netflix and King Games. For well-known brands, AR can play a huge role not only in brand awareness, but in positioning their brand as early tech adopters. Taco Bell famously took advantage of both of these with their Cinco De Mayo taco lens. AR lends itself to spreading awareness of bigger brands, and users generally aren't expected to take any direct action. Contrast this with mobile games, for example, where a well-placed and beautifully designed AR ad can delight a user, and result in direct action being taken – such as the installation of a new game.

Part of this debate, is how AR ads fit into a larger marketing strategy – one that might include TV, video, or static ads. In general, we have seen a shift away from intrusive ads, and a move towards ads that provide value to users. AR continues this trend, providing an ad that is interactive, puts the user at the center of the experience, and is memorable. As users are becoming blind to static ads, technologies like AR provide a whole new outlet benefitting both users and advertisers. The consensus is that AR will not replace these traditional media, but will rather be used within overall campaigns to strengthen and amplify their message.

More than this, AR can be used to breathe new life into some ad formats; a traditional banner ad, when clicked, can open up an interactive AR environment where the user is suddenly inside

a luxury car, peering out at their surroundings. AR therefore has a valuable place in any marketing strategy, and depending on the specific goals, can be a powerful tool to increase awareness, or to drive performance campaigns.

User Control and Immersion

The industry has seen a trend towards more opt-in experiences that give users control. Advertisers are being pushed to use formats which give users choice, power and real value – not to mention an enjoyable experience – as opposed to banners or other more interruptive advertising options.

AR continues this trend, offering new experiences and rich data. Critically, they have an intent check built in – a user has to opt-in to allow access to their camera – so they're not disruptive.

They give total control to the user, and advertisers can get exact engagement metrics in return. Being interactive means that they are "richer" and more memorable. They are also immersive, forming deep connections between brands and the users, and enabling an interaction with brands and products that has never been possible.

Evolution of AdTech Providers

First adopters of AR ads have been tech companies such as the [Osterhout](#) Design Group or niche agencies, both of whom lack critical elements that are key to unlocking the value inherent in this technology (missing either the ad industry know-how, or the access to tech and big data, respectively). But the fact that the technology is going to become mainstream is clear, especially after Facebook's [announcement](#) that the company is investing heavily in this area, with Google and Apple also making clear that they see huge potential in the technology.

We're seeing these ads deployed in many innovative ways, from individual applications, to in-game experiences. In fact, any online real-estate can be used to incorporate AR ads, as Lionsgate's Jigsaw [campaign](#) showed. Currently, these ads either take the form of filters, or regular ads that request camera permissions and then launch an AR experience.

With AR requiring a fusion of traditional advertising with advanced tech, there are not too many providers who are able to give brands, publishers, and of course consumers the best that AR can offer. Companies looking to succeed in AR will have to include these key elements:

1. Access to the right kind of supply. Larger publishers, such as Snapchat, have their own apps running their own specific types of AR ads (filters, for example). If you're not one of these, you need access to ad space and inventory where AR ads could potentially run. As the technology matures, this can be any given app running ad-based monetization.

2. Creative expertise. At the end of the day, just having the right technical know-how isn't enough to create ads that move people. As much as it's about tech, it's about good

advertising too, which will result in the creation of AR ads which delight consumers, and get them to take action.

3. Technological capabilities. Not everyone is ready and able to create immersive AR ads, and you'll need to be able to create and run these ads within ARCore and/or ARKit. Users will immediately be turned off by ads which are half-baked, clunky, or amateurish.

While we will see companies take advantage of AR without necessarily possessing some of these elements, ultimately it's those companies who are able to unite these three, that will succeed.

The Choice Is Yours

AR fosters engaging user experiences and certainly has a huge role to play in the future of marketing. Does this mean the end of the humble banner ad? Not necessarily. A successful marketing strategy will continue to utilize an array of tools and technologies to best achieve results. AR is one of these tools. Marketers should be well aware not to miss out on it, in order to drive results and provide consumers with effective brand experiences.