

AUGMENTED REALTY AND ADVERTISING: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract: Almost all of us are aware of the mobile game Pokémon Go. This has happened because of the new buzzword in the advertising and marketing industry named Augmented Reality. In the recent past, digital advertising has evolved so much that it has become a necessity for all kinds of businesses. We can sense it by observing its rapid growth throughout all social media and search engines. Today we are observing another technological shift, spatial computing which is dragging consumers to interact with the brands even more.

The main purpose of this paper is to create awareness about Augmented Reality and the possibility of AR in the Advertising Industry. Another objective of this study is to examine how strongly it enhances the primary model of Advertising, AIDA. Through this paper, we will investigate how consumers' interactions with the brands are changing and how directly or indirectly it's pushing sales and brand recall factor. In short, the primary intention of this paper is to shed light upon how this new technological invention is changing the advertising landscape throughout the world.

Keywords: Advertising, Augmented Reality, Smart Phone, Consumer, Immersive Technology

Introduction

Imagine instead of going to any shopping mall or retail shop just with the help of the Smartphone, consumers are trying out accessories at their home. They can check whether the watch they are selecting suits perfectly in their hand or not, through this virtual trial they can also ensure whether the earring they are fond of goes well with their personality or not! Isn't it fascinating? This is now possible because of the new exciting technology in the market Augmented Reality (AR).

The prospect of Augmented Reality is reshaping the advertising landscape throughout the world by making the advertising interactive. By embracing this cutting-edge technology advertising agencies are making print and magazine ads come alive. Marketers and advertisers are reaching out to their consumers in totally new ways. Different well-known brands like IKEA, Gucci, Lacoste, Toyota, Deluxe, Burger King, Tanishq, PCJ, MTV, Cadbury, Converse, Walmart, Timberland

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and Rolex, Tata, Hewlett Packard, Home Depot are using augmented reality as an advertising tool for their promotional activities.

It can be stated that Augmented Reality is a vehicle through which advertisers and marketers develop, promote and improve consumer interaction with different products and services. Similar to the function of communication Augmented Reality is also used to transmit information to the audience which elicits a response. Strengthening the power in advertising Augmented Reality actually coordinates exciting response between brands and its consumers. It makes print advertisement interesting by animating life into the ads.

The term Augmented reality was first coined by Thomas Caudell and David Mizell in 1990s at Boeing. It is a technology that combines the real world and the virtual world to provide an interactive experience to the user. As per the Augmented Reality development platform unity, "Augmented reality is the overlaying of digitally-created content on top of the real world. Augmented reality - or 'AR' - allows the user to interact with both the real world and digital elements or augmentations. AR can be offered to users via headsets like Microsoft's HoloLens, or through the video camera of a Smartphone." According to Vallio (1998), AR is the combination of virtual objects and the real-world and the users are given a chance to interact with these objects in real-time. AR can provide users with sub immersive feeling by allowing interactions to occur between the real and

virtual worlds (Uematsu & Saito, 2008). The First Augmented Reality system was developed by Ivan Sutherland (Sutherland, 1965). Since that time there has been a large amount of research done to explore Augmented Reality (AR)."

Thus the characteristics of Augmented Reality device systems can be further understood from three classical and widely used criteria for AR systems (Azuma, 1997):

- 1- Combine Virtual and Real
- 2- Registered in 3D
- 3- Interactive in Real-Time

According to Industrial Expert Tiffany Kelly "Augmented reality allows digital information to be displayed on top of real-world items when viewed through the lens of a smartphone or other digital devices. It's powered by computer vision which helps cameras understand a user's surroundings. There are two major types of augmented reality: marker-based (target images) and location-based (overlays)."

Marker-based (Target image) AR ads: It requires an image that gets embedded as a target within the Augmented Reality Project. This target image can be any picture or print ad which when scanned by the customer through their phone camera then they experience the trigger which is virtual content over the real world.

Location-based AR ads: These types of Augmented Reality Ads don't require any target or marker image. By using location services such as GPS they simply overlay virtual content.

There's no doubt that Augmented Reality is changing consumers' perception towards different sectors and this technological approach will provide an immense hike to the advertising world.

The Classic Model of Advertising - AIDA

The well-known acronym AIDA, which stands for Attention, Interest, Desire and Action, is considered to be one of the longest serving advertising and marketing communication model. The development of this model can be traced back to the American Advertising advocate E. St. Elmo Lewis in the year 1898. The main concept of AIDA is to attract attention, maintain interest, create desire and get action.

If we look into the different steps of AIDA model, then we will observe grabbing the attention of the consumer is the first basic step of this model. Thus making the consumer aware of the brand is the very first step of this model.

The next step of the model is to generate interest among audience regarding your product or brands. Thus to maintain interest advertiser have to deliver the information in a way that is entertaining, memorable and enjoyable.

The third step of this model is to create desire about the brand. In this step advertiser makes complete effort to bring a change in the consumers' mindset from "I like it" to "I want it".

Last step of the model talks about the ultimate goal of the advertiser that is forcing them to initiate their action towards the marketing campaign that is to purchase the product.

Research Question

1. How consumption of advertising content is becoming interesting because of Augmented Reality?
2. How easily consumers' behavior is changing towards the brands because of Augmented Reality?
3. How Augmented Reality get connected to the different phases of AIDA model and pushing sales and brand recall factors for different brands?

Method Followed

To find answers to the above questions, a qualitative research approach has been used. Two methods, in-Depth Interview and Case Study have been used.

Few semi structured in-depth interviews of working professionals were conducted who are associated with both regional and national advertising agencies, which are developing Augmented Reality Projects. To know more from the marketer's point of view another set of in depth interviews have been used of representatives of different brands who have used Augmented Reality as a tool for their advertising and promotional activities. Based on purposive sampling all the respondents were selected.

A few Augmented Reality advertising Campaigns which have produced effective results in terms of increasing sales and customer engagement have been used in the Case Study method. A few of the campaigns have also won several awards in different national and international award show for its innovative nature.

Case Study

ADIDAS TRY-ON

On November 2019, Adidas launched a state-of-the-art try on solutions i.e., an augmented reality (AR) based footwear app naming try-on in its iOS app. The main purpose of this App is to allow customers try on its most iconic models virtually. One of main focus point was to let the customers virtually try on Alphaedge 4D running shoes, which was a much anticipated release then. To launch this App Adidas had partnered with Vyking. Vyking is known for its meaning innovation in technology specialized in Augmented Reality based solutions for the digital retail and e-commerce platforms. The AR try-on experience for the Alphaedge 4D Star Wars model even features a live Death Star circling the shoes. One can download the Adidas app and go to any of the product pages of the Alphaedge shoes, after pointing the smartphone camera towards the feet consumer will see the virtual models appear. Vyking's software tracks consumers foot movements, making the virtual try-on experience run in real-time with or without the shoes on.

(Ref:- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MobLNuXiOU8>)

IKEA: The new IKEA Catalogue App: Create your space

A major concern while shopping for furniture is whether it gets best fitted within the room/office space or not. Even when people get to know the dimension, they are unable to judge the space on their own home/office. Also there's another

concern whether the look and feel of the furniture which was looking so nice in the showroom perfectly matches in their room/office environment or not!

Before 2013 a study was conducted which showed that up to 14% of the customers who takes home the furniture that is of the wrong size for the space it was supposed to occupy. Keeping in mind this problem popular furniture retailer IKEA launched their catalogue AR app in 2013. This augmented reality app allows the customer to scan selected pages and pictures from the printed catalogue to access extended rich content, which would bring life to each furniture. The function of the app is when user will scan a printed image of furniture from the catalogue then a 3D model of the desired furniture will appear on the screen. Customer can explore a room with 360 degrees using the app in their mobile device and they can place the furniture just where they intend it to be to judge the dimension, placement, look and & feel of the furniture in a particular environment.

(Ref:- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_yXEluXLbU)

BURGER KING

One of the most innovative Augmented Reality Ad campaign was done by Burger King titled "People are setting Ads on fire". In their much popular "Burn the ad" Augmented Reality campaign they encouraged their consumers to 'burn' their rival's billboards and print ads. In exchange consumers could get a free meal at burger king.

This campaign for Burger King was developed, conceived & executed by David Sao Paulo agency for the Burger King Brazil. In this campaign mobile users of the Burger King app can scan ads which are there in the billboard of other major Burger King chains and after opening the app it shown "burn the ad" banner on the mobile, with the help of augmented reality users could interact with the ad, i.e., pointing their Smartphone camera at the billboard, coupon and print ads they could 'burn' that ad through their mobile screen revealing a coupon which in return encourage them to grab a free whopper at the Burger King.

In addition to being a major hit worldwide, the campaign earned VZLab the Grand Prix of WAVE Festival 2019 in the mobile category, nine Cannes Lions, and three Clio Awards.

(Ref: - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UADGoJmaFJU>)

DUTCH LADY: FLYING FARM (2016)

The Dutch Lady is a trusted leading dairy brand in Asia through many generations. Given the rise in mobile penetration, Dutch Lady aimed to further promote their range of milk products through a campaign which involves flying toy gimmick promotions. Thus moving from traditional brand storytelling to moving towards a new dynamic interactive brand story telling they decided to launch an Augmented Reality app that, when scanning the Dutch Lady milk pack, the app will trigger a pop up animation of the character matt which then transport

kids to the world of Matt Truitman, the Dutch farm boy, and Bella the cow. User can even take picture together with Matt and Bolla and can post on their individual social media handles. This interactive and immersive storytelling eventually forced user to be more engaging with the brand while create brand awareness. This campaign was ideated and executed by AR&Co and Leo Burnett (Vietnam).

The app achieved over 40,000 downloads and a 19% increase in product sales during its launch, as well as winning multiple awards.

(Ref: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0ki1OSuUvE>)

VOLVO

To promote its S60 model, the giant big brand Volvo also implemented Augmented Reality into its marketing. With the support of this immersive technology Volvo allowed people to drive a virtual car. They made an agreement with the YouTube and activated a game, where user had to start the game by scanning the video on YouTube and later they could drive that virtual car wherever they wanted by moving their smartphones from side to side.

Through this ingenious augmented reality campaign, Volvo increased its interactive ration to 9.6% with 192,319 clicks. Because of this campaign there was also **increase of 239% on its website traffic**, and an impressive non-paid presence in media, not only within its sector, but in general media as well.

(Ref:- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDxOJ3gL-dk>)

L'OREAL AND PERFECT CORP'S YOUCAM MAKEUP

In the year 2017, to promote its brand makeup collection L'Oreal partnered with Perfect Corp to integrate brand's makeup collection in the augmented Reality (AR) beauty App, YouCam makeup. This App provides an interactive makeover experience to its customer.

Through this App user can explore, discover and try out different beauty products and can see their look and also can have additional information about the product before committing to purchasing it.

(Ref:- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBJfrkZRDI>)

Findings from In-depth Interviews

1) In this global village flooded with millions of brands in different sectors, everyday consumer gets bombarded with enormous number of messages. This is where brand experience plays a vital role. Augmented Reality tackles this problem in many ways. Being an immersive technology it forces the customer to get into an environment which is provided by the brand itself, which develops an emotional connection with the brands, leading a successful communication leaves a long lasting effect on consumers' minds.

2) Augmented Reality perfectly suits with the classic model of advertising i.e, AIDA. Along with the same it also extends another points with the classic model, i.e., after sales. Augmented Reality easily drags consumers' attentions and forces

them immerse themselves into the brands story. Through its interactive marketing it brings out best suits among the trial lot and triggers the desire in the consumers mind which push the sales of a brand. As we know the more time spent on the brand, the higher the ROI is. Thus it can be stated that Augmented Reality allows marketers and advertisers to easily reach consumers in innovative new ways while driving higher engagement rates and brand recall.

3) The scope and power of Augmented Reality is limitless. Starting from creating interactive advertising content to developing a 3D virtual salesperson one can do whatever they want. By simplifying the act of buying, Augmented Reality shortens the sales cycle.

Discussion

Augmented reality is such a medium which is trying to create an impact into the consumers' minds in a fresh way. Brands have already started playing into this new digital space. Because of its immersive nature it turns digital into a living and breathing experience. Everyone knows that because of the immersive technologies things, places, objects and creatures come alive. Augmented Reality creates a bridge between the digital and the physical worlds.

One of the biggest advantages of Augmented Reality is, it only requires a usual smartphone to experience this immersive technology and both apple and android provide this feature to experience the high quality content of AR by putting

the phone camera in everyday surroundings.

Considering the campaigns of Ikea, L'Oréal and Adidas try-one one can easily understand how these technologies are going to redefine the lifestyle at home. AR campaign in automobile industries such as Volvo, BMW, and Toyota helps audiences to become more knowledgeable about the products. With the help of 3D model Augmented Reality allows consumer to check the inside parts of the cars even before using it. Campaign like Burger King makes the audience more engaged towards the brands by forcing them to initiate action towards the interactive campaign and campaigns like Dutch Lady and Absolute Trust try to build a strong relationship with the audience by flooding them with additional background information about the brands.

Even during this pandemic when everything is under lockdown, everyone is talking about maintaining social distance then it is the augmented reality solution which is sustaining during this digital shift. It is because consumers are still looking for more emotional connections with the product and the services of different brands. Augmented Reality Apps and contents do not care about lockdowns. They just bring the same experience for their consumer no matter where they are.

Conclusion

Augmented Reality has become a new media itself and it is opening up more advertising opportunities to numerous

brands, where they are using social media platforms like Snapchat and Instagram as one of their leading marketing platforms recent times.

With its innovative nature, augmented Reality Campaigns draws the attention of the customer quite easily and with its immersive nature it forces the consumer to get involved in the campaign actively by increasing their attention towards the same. Advertising contents are becoming more interesting and with the concepts of 'try before you buy', Augmented Reality Campaigns are making the products more desirable for their consumer which is directly or indirectly leaving an impact on their buying decision.

Therefore, it won't be too exaggerated to say that augmented reality brings a new Renaissance in the advertisement and marketing field and Augmented Reality campaigns are ideal for promoting sales and building a brand's reputation.

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