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Transforming the FMCG experience through augmented reality

The channelized audiences can be presented with a surprising tangible experience, via Augmented Reality, making it an easy task to convert sales for a brand or marketer cutting across a plethora of competitive brands.

Augmented reality (AR) has been around for a while, and soon took lead, becoming the buzz word discussed across platforms, since the launch of Pokemon Go. The popular game helped us blur the lines between reality and the computer-generated world.

Recently, many technology giants have been steaming ahead on capitalizing onto future facing products and experiences; examples of these company announcements include Apple's acquisition of Metaio, an AR start-up ; Google's \$500 million investment in AR company – Magic Leap and Microsoft HoloLens' evolution of a holographic computer. These are some of the many examples that give us a peek into the broad horizon of Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality, and how they are soon becoming a part of our very own reality.

Digi-Capitals' trend aptly predicts, Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality could hit \$150B revenue by 2020, with Augmented Reality taking the lion's share around \$120 billion and Virtual Reality at \$30 billion.' In such a scenario, a lot is left to unfold and see how we conduct our businesses and reach out to our customers in an engaging manner, as well as impact the future of the job market.

Current FMCG scenario

A sector that has immense potential to reap benefits of using Augmented Reality, particularly in India is fast moving consumer goods (FMCG). At present, FMCG is a highly cluttered and oversaturated sector.

On the other hand, we have witnessed the sector going through a mammoth of changes in line with the various trends, over the decade. These changes may have to do with product quality, brand choices or marketing the product to consumers. It is thus important for the FMCG sector to keep up with these trends. Currently, consumers are looking for an instant attention grabbing product, or one that stimulates emotion at a deeper level. While brand loyalty still exists, it is deteriorating.

Unboxing Augmented Reality

In order to accommodate the ease of shopping and lack of time in India, shopping today has moved by a percentile from brick-n-mortar to online shopping. The current demonetization is slowly erasing one of the major discomforts of shopping online. The entry of many payment gateways has now nullified that obstacle today. Thus, leaving the only other impediment in purchasing a particular product being how it will look or feel on the customer.

This is where Augmented Reality can step in and play a major role in engaging the consumer with technology, which can lead to brand loyalty. Data plays an important role in showing customers

products to their specific interest, in real time. The channelized audiences can be presented with a surprising tangible experience, via Augmented Reality, making it an easy task to convert sales for a brand or marketer cutting across a plethora of competitive brands.

In India, Augmented Reality is majorly used at a brand or product launch stage, increasing brand value. It is largely used in campaigns, increasing momentary brand recall. However, Augmented Reality can be used beyond this, to not only capture the B2C market, but also the B2B segment.

How do we use Augmented Reality in the Indian FMCG market?

Globally, in the mature retail market, Augmented Reality is currently used to familiarize the consumer with the product such as, knowing its benefits, comparing the product with competitive brands or sub styles, and rating the product. In India, there is a major potential to use Augmented Reality in purchasing, reviewing, and recommending it to other consumers as well.

Augmenting your product with prompting content such as recipes, nutrition facts, how to use, and interactive widgets, is one way to keep the consumer engaged through Augmented Reality. Whether it is personalizing marketing content within wearable technology, or inserting moments of engagement into customer experiences, Augmented Reality can bridge the gap between your real life offering and created content.

With the Smart phones and Tablet usage in India expected to touch 340.2 million, the Augmented reality (AR) and Virtual reality (VR) market in India is projected to register a CAGR of 55.3% during 2016 - 2021.

The rising fascination with heads-up display, head-mounted display, 3D printers etc., among various end users including defence, automotive, healthcare, consumer electronics, etc., is being touted to revolutionize the country's Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality market over the next five years. In addition, the growing consumer electronics applications such as gaming, entertainment, etc. are witnessing increasing adoption of Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality devices in the country.

Integration of Augmented Reality in marketing efforts aims to build a consumer relationship, boost sales, and add value to the shopper experience. More importantly, when Augmented Reality is integrated in a familiar retail setting as part of the shopping experience, people will not only instantly look into the technology, but they will also positively relate to the products. They are more likely to buy them and view Augmented Reality as a convenient tool for shopping, and not just for playing around.

We currently live in a society where the usage of mobile phones has become mandatory to daily living. Thus, gamification of food and beverage experiences, fitness, shopping, and other routine activities in our lives, is slowly taking over and being a norm. It all adds to creating an entertaining experience to grab one's attention. Traditionally, retailers have relied on print advertising campaigns or other mediums, to promote products. At first, every product campaign was segregated into print, media, and in-store marketing efforts. Today, this is being transformed into a comprehensive consumer experience via technologies including Augmented Reality.