

HOW TO REVOLUTIONISE YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY WITH AUGMENTED REALITY

A GUIDE BY POPLAR

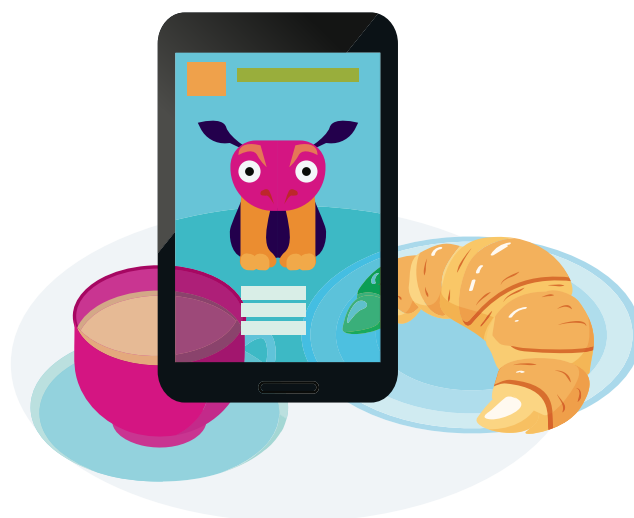
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WHAT CAN AR DO FOR MY BRAND?

AR is all the rage right now, grabbing headlines worldwide and invading our social media feeds.

From education to online shopping, we are seeing a lot of innovations in the AR space and all the major tech players investing massively into AR, including Apple, Facebook and Google. In fact,

Google has just released Augmented Reality navigation for Google Maps, while Facebook recently opened up AR to brands on Instagram. Meanwhile, Apple is heavily investing into their own AR development kit.



However, there are two issues that are making it difficult to bridge the gap between AR technology and adoption by brands. First, a lot of brands are still not very clear about how AR can exactly help them. Second, there is still a shortage of AR content available, or an inability to produce it affordably, even if the technology is already there.

Some of the people we speak to don't even understand what AR is, how AR can help them or even just the basics of the technology, such as how they can activate AR experiences.

If you're on the same plate, not to worry, in this guide we cover all the basics you need to know about the benefits of AR and how you can use AR in your marketing strategies.

WHAT IS AR?

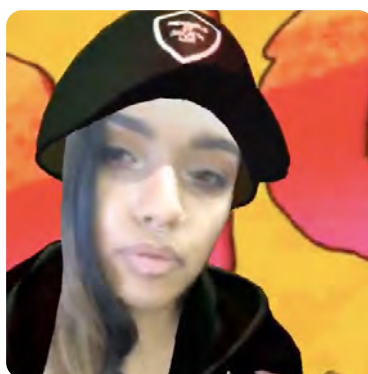
Augmented reality (AR) places interactive virtual objects within our world, via a mobile phone. This might be a face filter that adds layers of content to your face, or a world effect that places objects in the real world through your phone camera. Other interesting types of AR content include portals, which transport you to a location that you can explore in 360°, and mini-games, which are gamified face filters or world effects.



World effect by Poplar



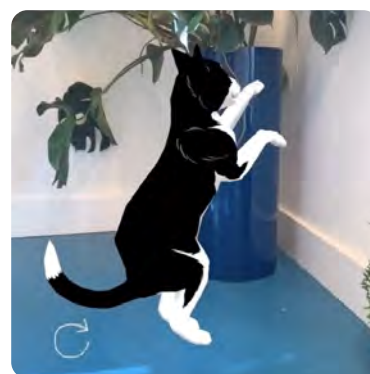
Try it now!



Face filter by Poplar



Watch it now!



World effect by Poplar



Try it now!

What's really interesting about AR is that it allows marketers to involve consumers in a narrative in a way that wasn't possible before. With everyone owning a smartphone, it is becoming a highly effective means to reach consumers.

The numbers really speak for themselves: **Digi-capital projects a 3.5BN user base for mobile augmented reality by 2022**, 44% of the world's population. Likewise, **ad spend is projected at \$2.4 billion by 2022 yielding \$15 billion in revenue**.

When looking at these figures, the impact and potential of AR is hard to deny. It's going to be huge.

DATA SHOWS THAT AR IS THE FUTURE OF MEDIA & MARKETING

What we're also seeing is that media and marketing are increasingly trending from video towards more immersive content, such as AR. In fact, **more than 4/5 of brands consider AR marketing a differentiated way to engage with customers, and 9 out of 10 plan on using AR in their campaigns.**

4/5

Brands consider AR marketing a differentiated way to engage with customers.

9/10

Brands consider using AR in their campaigns

This trend is a direct response to the data on engagement for AR vs non-AR experiences: **AR provides average dwell times of 75 seconds**, a whopping 4 times longer than video. Moreover, **AR experiences generate a 70% higher memory response compared to non-AR experiences**, meaning that these kinds of experiences make brands much more memorable to consumers and directly affect purchasing behaviour. Simply put: the more they remember you, the more likely they are to buy your products.

75

seconds

dwell times for AR experiences,
4 times longer than video

70%

higher memory response for AR
vs non-AR experiences

Higher engagement from AR experiences has other side benefits too. Due to the nature of AR, a lot of effects are distributed on social media, allowing brands to amass large followings by providing users with fun effects that they want to share. Moreover, users themselves will share this AR content with their followers, simply because they like it, making AR a much more effective way to generate word-of-mouth compared to video. This leads to even more positive brand awareness!

WHAT CAN BRANDS ACHIEVE WITH AR?

Contrary to common belief, AR is not just about bunny ear face filters. There are actually many ways in which brands can leverage AR to increase engagement and sales. We have identified four major ways:



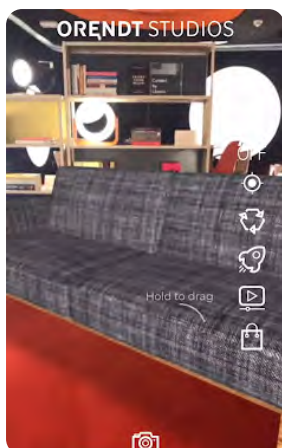
Try it now!

INFORM

AR is a great way to tell a story and educate consumers, because it allows you to directly immerse them within your narrative.

We recently worked with Jack Daniels to develop an AR effect that educated their customers about the production process of their famous whiskey. Customers visiting Slug & Lettuce restaurants in the UK and ordering the Jack Daniels-based Lynchburg Lemonade were given a special card containing a QR code, which they could scan to access the AR effect. This redirected them to a mobile website where they could access a fun face filter, as well as three portals that transported them to the Jack Daniels distillery.

This was a great way of educating customers about the production process of their whiskey, while showing them that they deeply care about the quality of their product.



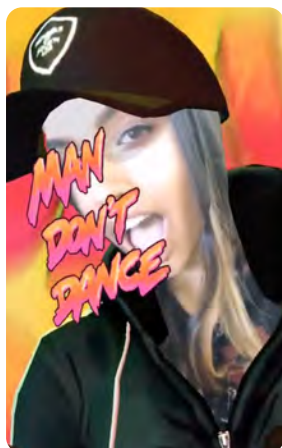
Try it now!

VISUALISE

If you've ever used the IKEA Place app, you will know how handy it is when it comes to visualising furniture in your home. We worked on a similar project recently with Orendt, creating a product visualisation AR effect that allows users to virtually place furniture in their home and observe its look and functionality, as well as whether it physically fits.

This is part of a wider trend of AR use in Retail, allowing retailers to sell more by reassuring customers that they are making the right purchasing choices through visualisation. It also has the added benefit of reducing product returns.

For example, our effect for Speedo (covered later in this guide) helped the company sell more swimming goggles online and avoid customers tearing multiple boxes in-store in order to try goggles on. So a single AR effect has benefited the company in multiple ways.



PERSONALISE

Everyone wants to be involved, which is why immersive content is all the rage. Indeed, wanting to be involved is the biggest drive behind social media activity. Enter branded AR effects and you can now actively involve your following in your effects and encourage them to share your brand.

This was the case in our project with Big Shaq. The AR effect allowed fans to sing along to his latest track, as well as to place a model figure of him within their physical environment. The effect led to more than 20 million impressions, with no media spending behind it. It was all organic!

At the end of the day, because of the shareable nature of AR, as long as users like your AR effect they will share it. It's really the perfect word-of-mouth sharing tool.



Try it now!

GAMIFY

Finally, gamification is a unique feature of immersive technologies such as AR which shouldn't be underestimated! Providing users with a fun experience is a great way to cultivate a positive brand image.

We worked with industry royalty King, the makers behind the Candy Crush Saga games, to develop a Snapchat mini-game. The game is based on a face filter and requires you to open your mouth in order to "catch" falling candy, then turning your head into one of the candy. The mini-game was hugely popular and led to very positive user engagement and ROI.

IN CONCLUSION: WHAT CAN AR DO FOR MY BRAND?

To recap, here's a summary of everything we have covered so far:


- AR can help you create a personalised immersive brand experience that delights and leaves a lasting brand memory.
- AR is a great way of gaining high engagement on social platforms, with the right targeted audience.
- Social media-based AR effects will lead to an increase in social media followers.
- Social media AR also encourages users to share your effect, generating a world of brand ambassadors for you, who use this branded experience to live and tell their own story.

WHAT AR PLATFORM SHOULD YOU USE?

Augmented Reality has become a core element of marketing strategies. However, a lot of brands are still struggling to find their footing and get started creating AR content. AR is a relatively new technology and choosing from among every augmented reality platform available can be daunting.

It doesn't help that with each augmented reality platform come not only different benefits, but also features and use cases. Each platform also comes with its own way of activating AR content for the end-user.

If you're feeling unsure where to get started with AR, we've come up with a handy infographic to summarise the main platforms available to you, and what you can and can't achieve with each of them.

	MAXIMUM ORGANIC REACH & SHARING THROUGH SOCIAL 			EASE OF USE & PHYSICAL ACTIVATION WebAR	INTEGRATION OF AR WITHIN CUSTOM APP WITH RICH PRODUCT INVENTORY Native app
	Requires social media app			Only requires browser	Requires designated app
Organic discovery	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Paid promotion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Quick to build	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Low barrier of entry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Photo capture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Video capture	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
# impressions, captures & shares	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other analytics	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
No content restrictions (alcohol, tobacco, pharmaceuticals, etc)	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓

There are three main types of Augmented Reality platforms available to you: social media apps, browser-based AR (WebAR) and native mobile apps. Each of these comes with its own set of benefits and will be best suited to different types of AR campaigns.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



When people hear the word 'AR' most will probably think of Snapchat. Social media is still overwhelmingly dominant in AR, with platforms such as Snapchat and Facebook making it really easy to access and share AR-powered effects.

Social media AR is in fact so big that it is projected that, by 2022, AR will generate \$15 billion in revenue.

It's not just about advertising, though. Social media platforms are fantastic tools for organic reach and sharing, and can result in more followers, better engagement and higher brand recognition. This is because of the inherent shareable nature of AR content such as face filters. As long as you create a good filter that people love, you can be certain it will be shared.

Social media is therefore great for AR campaigns that have the goal of maximising a brand's reach organically. Additionally, social platforms such as Snapchat and Facebook allow you to promote your content, meaning that you can put ad spend behind your filters and maximise your reach even further. This can be targeted to very specific audiences, making them very powerful tools for reaching the right people.

Why Instagram will be huge



One thing to note about social media is that Instagram recently opened up AR to brands. **This means that any company in the world can now reach Instagram's user base of 1 billion monthly active users.**

Instagram is a particularly powerful if your goal is to increase your following and expand your reach. **This is for two reasons: 80% of Instagram users currently follow a brand** and users will often follow your profile in order to access your Instagram effects from their camera carousel. This means that not only is Instagram already proving to be an effective tool for brand promotion, but AR content is making it even more so. As long as you publish a cool effect, you can be sure your followers list will increase significantly.

Downsides of social media platforms

On the downside, two things to be aware of with social media platforms is that, unlike other augmented reality platforms, their analytics are quite limited. Currently these platforms provide basic performance data for AR effects, including impressions, captures and shares, but that's about it.



Another downside of social platforms is that they come with their own content restrictions. For example, companies in the alcohol, tobacco and pharmaceutical sectors may not be able to promote themselves on social, so other options such as WebAR will be better suited to these brands.



How do I share social media AR effects?

On Facebook, users who follow your page will be able to access your branded AR effects on their camera carousel. On Instagram, they will need to go to your profile and tap on the 'Effect Gallery' tab to access your effects. On Snapchat, you will need to put ad spend behind your lenses to reach specific people within your target audience.

You can also share links to your AR effects via your usual digital channels and social media profiles.

WEB AR

WebAR is revolutionary in just how accessible it is, making it the augmented reality platform with the lowest barrier of entry for end-users. This is because all WebAR experiences require is a web browser, so anyone with a mobile device can easily access them, even if they don't have any social media apps installed.

WebAR is ideal for AR campaigns that wish to prioritise ease of use. Users will just need a QR code, which they can scan using their phone cameras to open the effect's URL.

For this reason, WebAR is very effective for physical activation experiences, such as event-based or in-store AR campaigns. For example, we recently worked with Jack Daniels to create a WebAR effect that customers can access when they order a Lynchburg lemonade at one of the Slug and Lettuce restaurants across the UK. The drinks come with a physical card that has a QR code printed on it, which customers can scan to access the WebAR experience on their mobile browser. It's that simple.



Try it now!

Downsides of Web AR

There are some downsides to WebAR, most notably the fact that it does not currently support video capture. Moreover, WebAR experiences may require a wider marketing campaign around them, as they are not in and of themselves organic content.

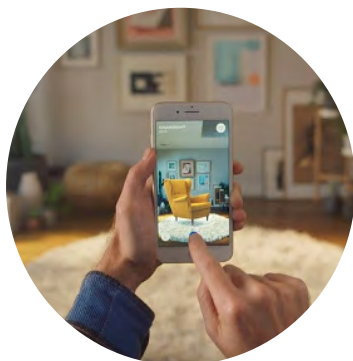


How do I share WebAR effects?

For WebAR, you will need a QR code that your users can scan. You can create a custom QR code on websites such as QR Code Monkey, which requires you to enter your effect's link in order to generate the code. Once the code is ready, users can simply scan it using their phone's camera.

Alternatively, you can simply share the link to the experience as a URL.

NATIVE APP



Finally, AR experiences can be delivered within a custom app. This might be part of a wider app built by a brand for their customers. For example, the app may include AR-powered mini-games or face filters as one of its many other features.

Probably the most compelling use case for AR within a native app is virtual try-on in shopping apps.

We have written at length about how powerful the use of AR in retail can be, especially as **customers are 11 times more likely to buy a product when try-on is available**. Brands that already have a native shopping app might consider incorporating an AR-powered virtual try-on element into them, so that customers can “try on” products using their phone's camera before buying them.

Downsides of native apps

Native apps can be really expensive to build, so some brands may not find them within their budget. However, WebAR is a great alternative for virtual try-on experiences.



The other downside of native apps is that they have a very high barrier of entry, because they require every user to individually download the brand's mobile app in order to access the AR features. This can significantly decrease engagement.

FINAL WORDS ON AR PLATFORMS

Each augmented reality platform we covered in this article is best for specific use cases and goals, so you shouldn't consider them at odds with each other.

When thinking about what augmented reality platform to choose, we recommend that you consider what the goal of your AR strategy is. Do you want to reach more followers? Create an effect that is physically activated at a particular place and time? Sell more on your mobile app by allowing users to try on your products?

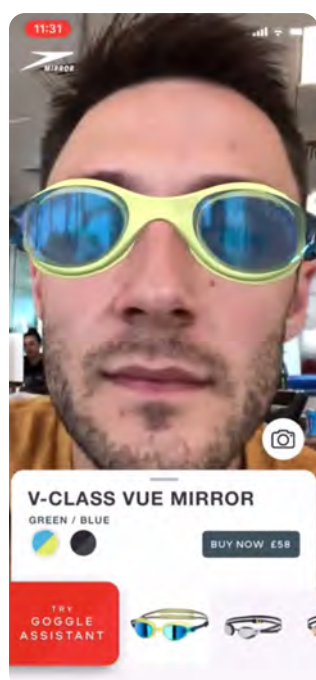
Or you might choose a platform based on the specific features that are available. For example, if you wish to create an AR face filter that allows users to capture video, WebAR won't be able to support that.

Ultimately, the most important thing to take into consideration is how AR fits within your wider marketing strategy.

CASE STUDY: SPEEDO VIRTUAL TRY-ON

Speedo, the swimwear and swimming accessories brand and subsidiary of the British Pentland Group, recently announced the launch of a virtual try-on feature in three of their UK stores and on their website, which allows customers to visualise swimming goggles on their face before purchase. This augmented reality (AR) experience was developed in collaboration with Poplar, the augmented reality creative platform that makes AR content creation agile and affordable.

The aim of the campaign was to solve common issues swimmers face when trying to find the right goggles for them. The shopping experience is often inconvenient, as customers try on products one by one to find goggles that match their style and are comfortable on their face. This is also inconvenient for Speedo stores, as they need to replace products in packaging. The AR feature instead allows customers to virtually try on 35 separate swimming goggles. This offers them an easy way to visualise the goggles on their face when shopping in-store or online, empowering them to save time and make smarter purchasing choices.



Of the company's launch of the AR effect, Pentland Solutions Lead Matt Kennedy said, "The web-based and in-store AR experiences are really part of the same concerted effort to make shopping for Speedo goggles much more convenient and enjoyable than our competitors. We find that customers tend to research goggles online, but 80% of the time they will end up buying in-store because they would like to try the model on first. We expect this AR experience to increase both in-store and online shopping intent, as customers feel more confident that their model of choice really suits them."

As part of the project, Poplar were responsible for developing the custom-built AR visualisation element, which was then displayed on a screen mounted onto a unit in-store. Poplar also developed the web-based virtual try-on experience, which allows customers to access it on Speedo's website, without the need to install any apps on their phone.

With this AR feature, Speedo is joining the ranks of pioneers of virtual try-on technology, a trend that is set to revolutionise online shopping across retail brands. Through AR, retailers can now improve the buying experience for their customers, helping them make purchasing choices that they feel more confident about and, overall, increasing customer satisfaction.

"AR shopping is set to become the norm in the retail industry, with more than 50% of smartphone users already using AR when making a purchase," said David Ripert, CEO of Poplar. "We are seeing this benefit brands immensely, as consumers are 11 times more likely to make a purchase when AR is available. This is why Speedo partnered with Poplar's creative platform to build their AR try-on experience, which makes goggle purchases intuitive and useful for the consumer and helps to decrease product returns."

The in-store experience is currently live at Speedo's London Aquatic Centre, Sheffield and York stores, with the intention to roll it out to the rest of the UK and international markets soon.

7 WAYS YOU CAN PROMOTE YOUR AR EXPERIENCE

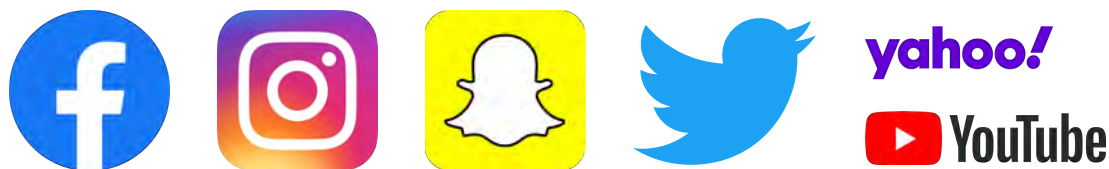
You've created an amazing AR experience and are excited to share it with the world, but what's next?

One of the questions we hear the most from our customers is how they can effectively share their effects to make the most of their augmented marketing strategies. However, a lot of brands are still struggling to bridge the gap between the AR experience and their target audience.

Relying solely on organic reach, although very effective when it comes to social media-based AR, may not be the best or only option for a lot of brands. Promotion strategies will also be dependent on the type of AR experience itself, and the goal of the campaign.

In this section we look at some of the best practices and tips to help you make the most of your AR effect, augment its reach and hit your marketing targets.

1. SHARE IT VIA YOUR USUAL DIGITAL CHANNELS



This one seems obvious, and yet so many brands fail to promote their own AR effects! Make sure that you post about your effect via your usual digital channels, just like you would with any other Marketing campaign.

This might include social channels such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, email channels such as your newsletter and content marketing channels such as your blog.

2. RUN A PAID ADS CAMPAIGN

Running a paid campaign is the next obvious step. Platforms such as Facebook are great places to share your effects, via post boosting and audience targeting. This can ensure that your effect can reach the right people at the right times in the right platforms.

If you're trying to drive people to a web-based AR experience, Google Ads might be the way to go. Here you can run ads showing a video of your AR effect and encourage users to click through in order to access it.

An exciting thing about AR-focused advertising is that we are beginning to see platforms such as Facebook support AR ads, whereby users can engage directly with an AR effect within the ad itself. This is opening up a new and very interesting horizon in digital advertising.

3. GET INFLUENCERS INVOLVED



If you have access to influential people related to your campaign, why not ask them to capture the experience and share it with their own social media channels? This will both add credence to your campaign and also maximise its reach exponentially.

For example, we previously worked with the English National Ballet to produce an AR effect around their production of Swan Lake. They then asked Angela Wood, one of the performers, to take a video using the AR effect and post it on her social media channels.

Similarly, we worked with Aladdin the Musical in London to produce a fun portal. The team got Matthew Croke, the star of the show, involved in taking a video using the effect, which was then distributed across their digital channels.

Users are naturally drawn to influencers and, what's more, the desired target audiences are often already followers of the influencers in question. It's really a no-brainer.

4. PUBLISH IT ON PRINT MEDIA

When people think about AR, they generally think about social media platforms. But in reality, AR effects can be shared via any channel, including physically. How? With a QR code.



Having a QR code means that you can share your AR experience in printed media, such as magazines, newspapers and billboards. By scanning the code with their smartphone, users can instantly access the experience. This also makes it a great option for promoting AR effects at events.

Pro tip: whenever you are printing a QR code, make sure to also generate a short URL and to include this underneath! That way, users who are unable to scan QR codes will still be able to access the experience.

5. PROMOTE IT AT AN EVENT



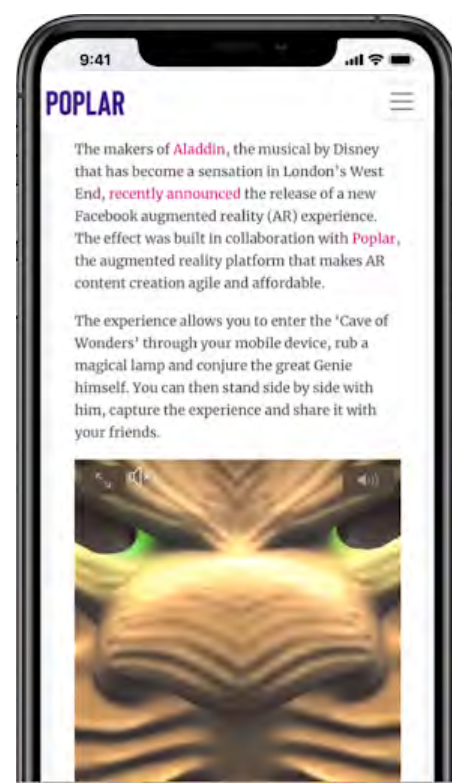
As mentioned earlier, events are great opportunities to share your AR experience. At the same time, why not hold an event specifically to demo the experience?

You can set up a pop-up stall, whether at a shopping centre or at an expo, and directly demo the experience to passersby. This can really help break down the barriers to adoption, by bringing the experience to people who might not already be engaging with AR.

6. DO SOME PR AROUND IT

The great thing about AR is that it's new, innovative and cool. This makes it pretty viral-worthy, particularly when it comes to brands. By promoting your AR experience through PR, you might even drive users who weren't previously aware of your brand.

The most obvious way to do this is through a press release. Here you can talk about how AR fits within your industry and business and what the drive was behind creating the effect. You could even pitch it to AR publications such as NextReality, TechCrunch and The Next Web, to amplify your exposure even further.



Or if you are unable to publish it in other publications, you can simply post it in your own blog, share it on social media and include it in your next newsletter.

7. RUN A UGC CONTEST

Finally, User Generated Content contests are particularly effective ways to promote your AR experience because they encourage users to actually capture it and share it with their friends. In other words, if you make the contest prize appealing enough, you might just go viral.

Simply share your contest on social media and ask users to get creative! The most creative use of your AR experience can take the prize.



FINAL WORDS

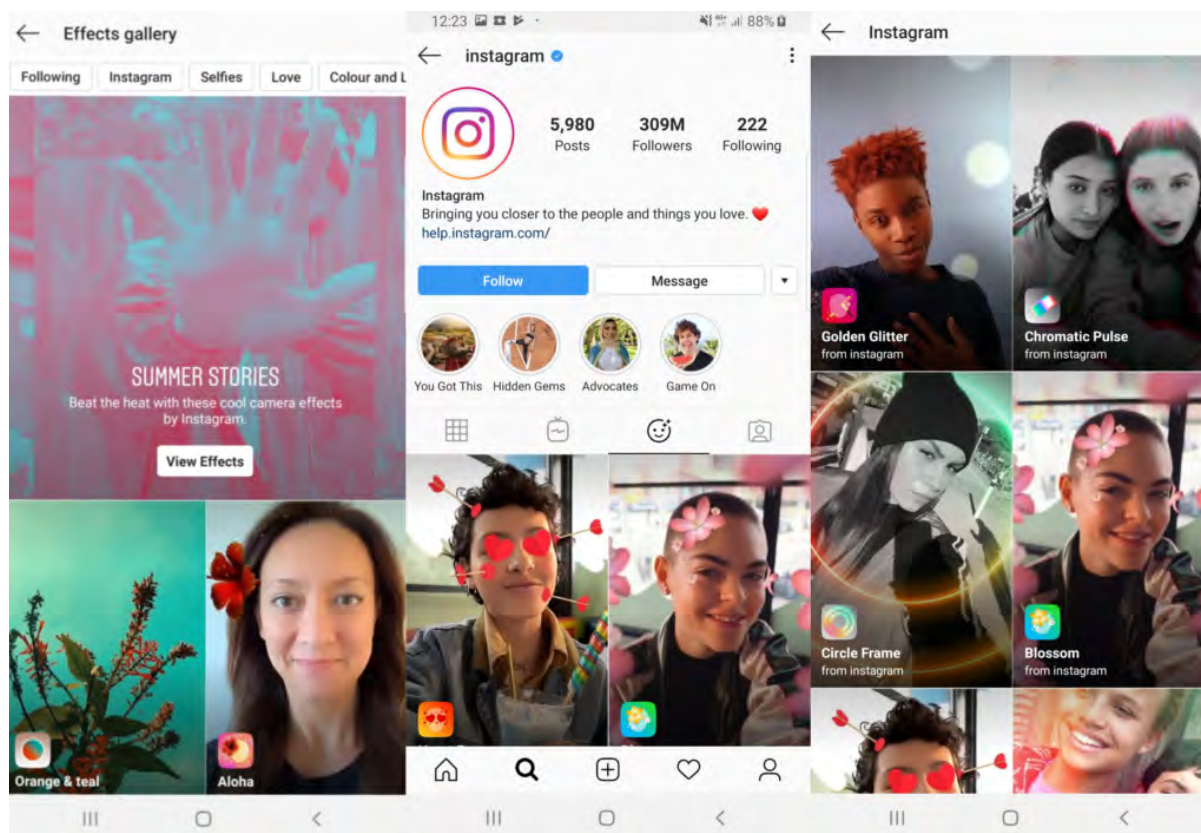
There are many ways you can successfully promote your AR experience, and in fact AR is particularly well predisposed to promotion, because of its inherently shareable nature. In this section we covered some of the basic ways you can share your AR content, but there are many more!

The key is to think of your AR experience as an extension of your augmented marketing strategy. Just as you would share other Marketing campaigns via the channels outlined above, so should you with AR.

WHY INSTAGRAM AR WILL BE A GAME-CHANGER FOR BRANDS

Facebook recently announced the launch of Spark AR's public beta on Instagram, giving the entire world the ability to publish their own AR effects on the social media platform.

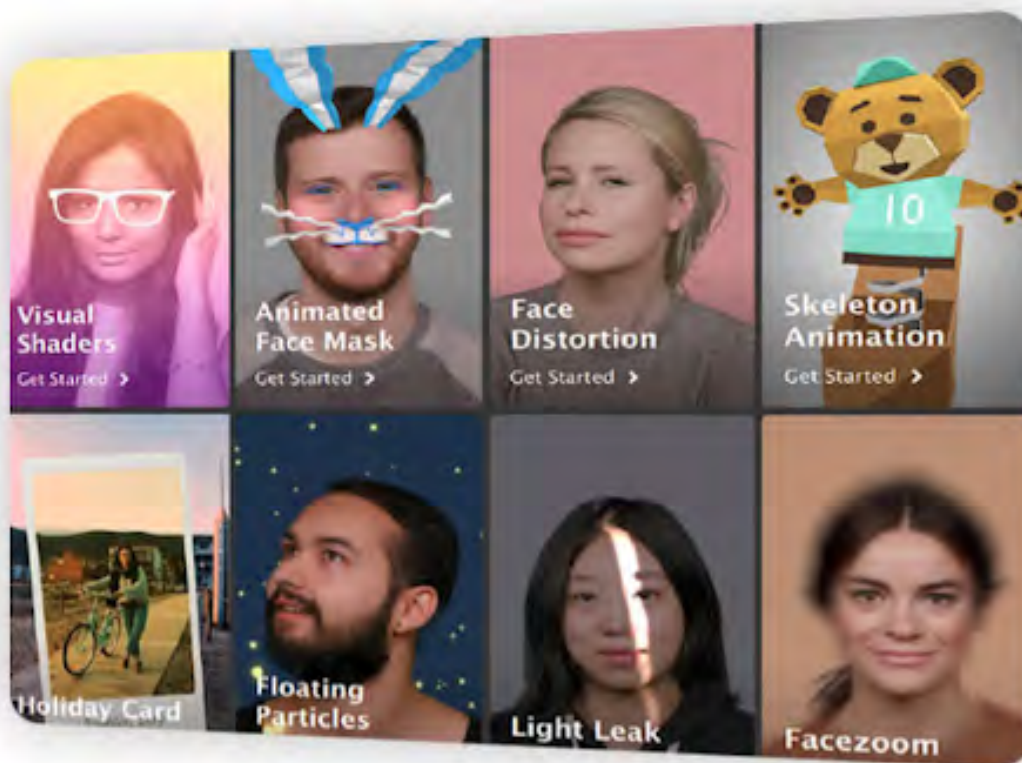
Until recently, the ability to publish AR effects on Instagram was limited to independent AR creators, but this update means that brands are now able to publish effects too, reaching Instagram's monthly user base of 1 billion through Stories.



The new Effect Gallery feature

Facebook also announced the arrival of a new Instagram feature: the Effect Gallery. This can be accessed from “Your Story” by tapping on “Browse effects” at the end of your effects carousel.

The Effect Gallery offers a quick way to browse and discover AR effects. Previously, effects could only be accessed from your camera carousel, and only those of users you already followed would appear. The Effect Gallery feature allows you to cut through the noise and discover effects that you like, regardless of whether you follow those profiles or not. Creators will also find that the Effect Gallery now appears as a special tab on their profiles, enabling visitors to easily browse their portfolio of effects.



Facebook's Spark AR platform

Like with Facebook, Instagram AR effects can be built using the Spark AR platform, so those creators and brands already familiar with Spark AR will find it easy to transition to Instagram. In a nutshell, over the next few months you can expect your Stories to explode with AR effects from friends, influencers, celebrities and, of course, brands.

WHY SHOULD BRANDS CARE?

You might have heard Augmented Reality heralded as the future of social media and advertising, and it's no joke. According to Facebook, **over one billion people have used AR experiences powered by Spark AR since last year's F8 conference.** With the launch of Instagram AR effects, we can expect this number to increase dramatically.

There are many reasons why Instagram is particularly well-suited to branded content. **80% of users follow a business on Instagram**, which shows that Instagram users in general are quite eager to follow brands they care about. Moreover, Instagram Stories specifically have proven to be highly effective ways for brands to promote themselves, **with branded stories accounting for 1 out of 3 of the most viewed Stories.**

But it's not just about the platform, it's also about the content. Augmented Reality is a very effective form of social engagement and advertising because it's inherently highly shareable content. As long as you build a compelling effect, you are likely to get shares, simply because users like it. **AR content also has average dwell times of 75 seconds**, four times longer than video, making it an incredibly engaging form of content.

From an advertising standpoint, the global ad spend from social lenses is predicted at \$2.4 billion by 2022, with projections of \$15 billion in revenue from AR ads. These figures speak for themselves, but it's evident that the potential for brands to engage with audiences through AR is immense.



WHAT CAN BRANDS EXPECT TO GAIN FROM INSTAGRAM EFFECTS?

There are plenty of reasons for brands to get involved with AR, particularly on Instagram. AR is a constantly changing industry, so we can expect plenty of interesting use cases to emerge over the coming months, but here are some of the top level benefits any brand can expect to gain from dipping their toe into AR.

MORE FOLLOWERS

Even with the introduction of the brand new Effect Gallery, the quickest way to access AR effects is still through the camera carousel. And the easiest way to access a user's effects is by following them. As long as you create a compelling AR effect, you can expect to increase your social following considerably.

WORD OF MOUTH MARKETING

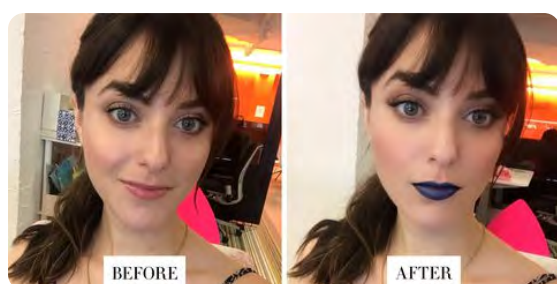
AR effects are by nature shareable forms of content. This makes AR an incredibly powerful form of word-of-mouth marketing, even without media spend behind it. As long as it's good AR content, it will be shared, creating a snowball effect.

As an example, one of the AR effects we built for Big Shaq gained more than 20 million impressions, with 0 ad spend behind the effect. All of this traffic was driven purely by word-of-mouth sharing.

MORE SALES

As mentioned earlier, the projections for revenues from social lenses are more than considerable. The engaging nature of AR content plays a crucial role in these projections too.

You may already have seen a few examples of how AR is helping increase sales. [Kylie Jenner recently launched an AR effect that allowed fans to virtually try on her lipsticks on Instagram](#). This proved a really effective way to bring her product range to the attention of Instagram users, and not just her website visitors. By allowing users to 'try on' these lipsticks directly from their mobile phone, many of these users probably ended up making a purchase, regardless of whether they had any previous intent. This really demonstrates the unique power of AR's 'show, not tell' nature.



Over the coming months, we will no doubt see many creative uses of Instagram AR effects, which will help us gain a better understanding of just how effective a tool it is for brands. However, from where we're standing, the engaging nature and versatility of AR content

makes it uniquely equipped to dramatically improve brand engagement, and this is probably just the beginning.

POPLAR

AR experiences on demand

We're on a mission to help brands produce powerful AR experiences. Submit a brief within minutes to start your AR journey.



Augmented World



AR Portals



Face Filters



Virtual Try-On



Product Visualisation



Mini-Game

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info@poplar.studio

BRANDS THAT LOVES US

