

MOBILE

## Sephora's Virtual Artist brings augmented reality to large beauty audience

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*Sephora's augmented reality feature allows users to virtually test lipsticks in its app*

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In a reflection of augmented reality's growing role in beauty, LVMH's Sephora is bringing the technology to a wide audience via a new application feature that enables users to virtually try on different lip shades.

The latest app update launched the new Sephora Virtual Artist feature, specifically designed using facial recognition software to allow users to test lip products and purchase directly in the app. While there has been a slew of beauty brands and startups innovating in the augmented reality space, Sephora's recent integration may bring the strategy further into the mainstream makeup world.

"With 13+ million likes on Facebook alone, Sephora has an impressive following that can help promote the addition of augmented reality on their app," said Marci Troutman, CEO of SiteMinis. "With the right mix of followers and a solution to that ever elusive search for the right shade of lipstick, it seems this virtual reality addition could indeed be a driver of sales for the brand.

"Ensuring they promote the new addition through planned campaigns using front and center banner placement on the app for easy access, email, text, social media and traditional marketing will help give them the boost in sales they are anticipating," she said.

### Augmenting mobile reality

With mobile users becoming more and more comfortable with facial recognition features and the technology growing in quality, many retailers are adopting the strategy for themselves. Sephora has played with augmented reality quite a bit in the past, and its latest update is an ideal method to drive sales by letting users see what products of interests will look like on their on face.

sephora virtual artist



Underneath the Inspire Me umbrella within Sephora's app, users can click on the Virtual Artist tab. Upon opening, the mobile device's forward facing camera will automatically configure a virtual lipstick shade on their user's face.

Lipstick fans can move around and the digital lipstick will stay on their lips. Shoppers can select a bevy of products from Sephora's industry to try on, through shade categories such as Berries and Nudes.

When a specific item is selected, it appears on the users lips and a bar across the top of the app will display the product information such as the product name, brand and price. To purchase users can click on the tab to be brought to its product page.

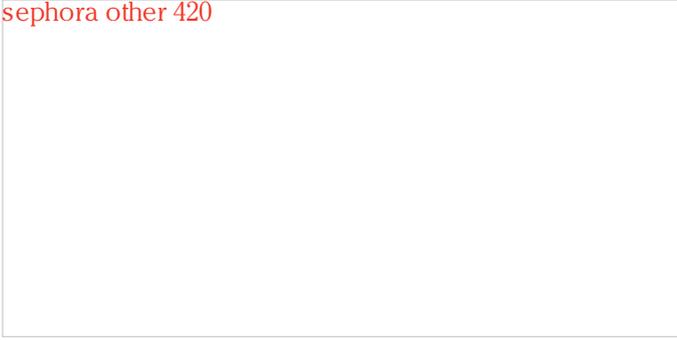
Shoppers can also save products of interest by clicking add to favorites, a button within the Virtual Artist tab.

Sephora shops mobile

While the beauty industry as a whole is further integrating with augmented reality it is likely that Sephora's latest launch will bring it closer to a wider range of consumers, due to its large name and customer base.

Beauty brands have brought augmented reality from an interesting idea to an effective marketing tool on mobile in 2015 by tapping into its ability to drive trial, a strategy that others could benefit from following ([see more](#)).

sephora other 420



The Virtual Artist is not Sephora's only foray into augmented reality. Last March the retailer freshened up its commitment to being a leader in digital beauty retail with mobile tactics playing a key role, including the introduction of in-store beacons to send birthday alerts and loyalty program updates as well as an augmented reality for learning how to contour ([see more](#)).

"Augmented reality is no longer the newest, shiniest toy on the block when it comes to marketing, but like any other marketing effort if deployed thoughtfully and with planned momentum could give any brand a great lift in sales no matter what the competition is doing," Ms. Troutman said. "If other beauty brands aren't already deploying consumer friendly additions that help their customers shop better and easier, then they should take note at successes surrounding those who do and consider a change."

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