

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Sephora accelerates AR, AI sales tactics with new products, features

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Sephora's Virtual Artist adds false lashes

By CHANTAL TODE

LVMH-owned beauty retailer Sephora is doubling down on augmented reality and artificial intelligence sales tactics by enabling shoppers to virtually try on false lashes, watch tutorials using their own image and engage via a chatbot to trial and purchase lip color.

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With Sephora's customers virtually trying on more than 70 million lip shades using the Virtual Artist in-app functionality that was introduced earlier this year, false lashes are being added to expand the program. Users of the Sephora application can also now experience live step-by-step makeup application tutorials using their own uploaded images and augmented reality technology.

"This is a significant expansion because we are adding elements that we know will help empower and educate our clients' purchase making decisions, and they're done in a way that is fun and engaging," said Bridget Dolan, vice president of **Sephora** Innovation Lab.

"The new Live Tutorials especially are a game changer for our users," she said. "Our clients now have a revolutionary new way to learn new application techniques and trends, on their own face, one step at a time.

"For the first time, our exclusive augmented reality technology is able to mirror our Sephora store makeover experience on her own device."

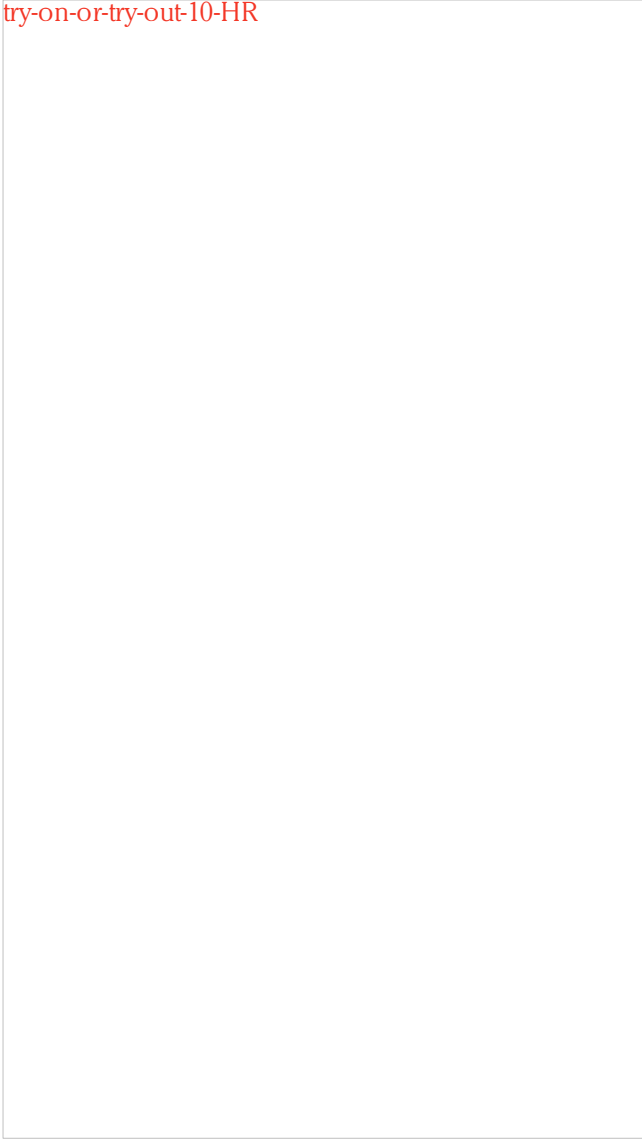
Virtual trial

The enhanced Sephora Virtual Artist Lip & Lash Try On enables shoppers to try on more than 90 false lash styles by brand and style.

Users can instantly see how each item looks on their own face and can mix and match lash styles and lip colors.

The previously available Compare Me enables users to see up to four different looks on one screen in a pop art style, while Shake it Up selects four new looks at random each time users shake their phones.

try-on-or-try-out-10-HR



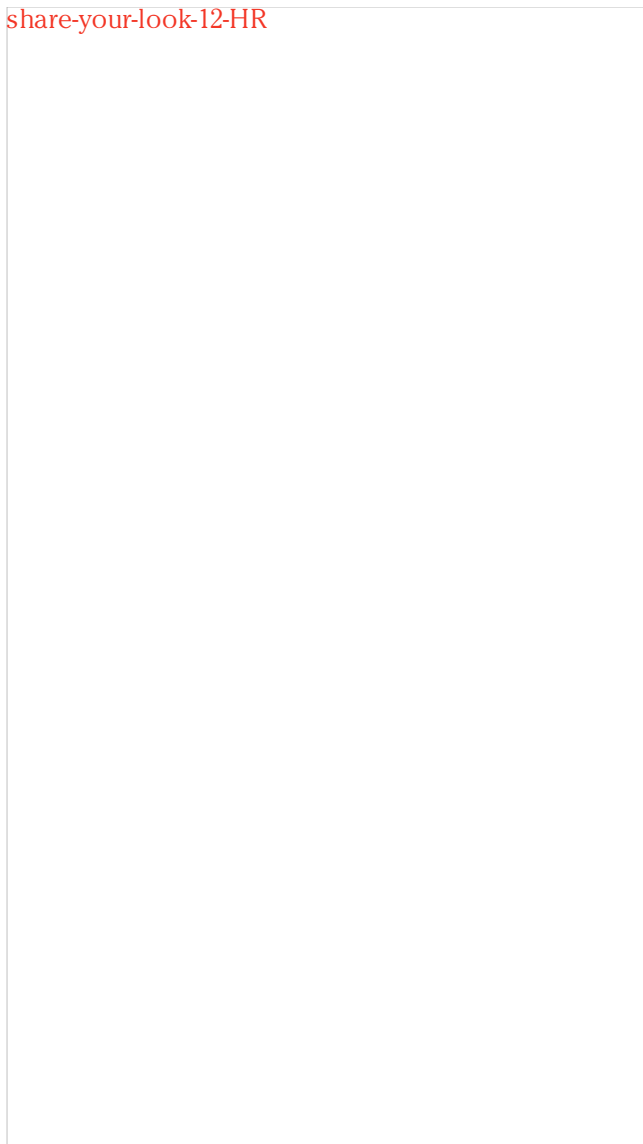
The lip and lash try-on experience has also been extended to desktop for the first time.

Before and after

Live tutorials are a new way to teach shoppers application techniques and trends. Users can upload a photo, pick a tutorial, such as Nighttime Smokey Eye or Essential Eyeliner, and see step-by-step instructions using a digital interactive overlay to depict where makeup should be applied on their own face and the final result.

Each tutorial offers a Split Screen view that slides back and forth to see the before and after, tappable Pro tips at the bottom of the screen and a pop-up list to shop the look.

Sephora Virtual Artist uses a smartphone's camera to map the location and shape of facial features using technology developed by ModiFace.



Looks can be captured with photos and video and then shared with friends or emailed with product links for future reference. Products can also be saved to a user's My Favorites list or instantly added to a shopping basket for purchase.

Lip service

Sephora has also launched Sephora Virtual Artist on Messenger, a chatbot-powered version of the original Virtual Artist that allows users to send any lip shade, brand, color, or format to the bot for immediate product recommendations. Shoppers can then instantly try a recommended product on their uploaded photo or click through to purchase it on Sephora's mobile site without having to leave the Messenger app experience.

Sephora's new augmented reality and chatbot experiences were developed by the chain's Innovation Lab.

"A good chatbot makes something much easier than if you were doing it in an app or on the Web, so we created our Virtual Artist chatbot on Messenger to complement the app experience by offering our user the fastest, most seamless way to try on and buy that great new color she just heard about just by messaging the shade or brand name to our bot," Ms. Dolan said.

"We designed it so it understands product names, brands, colors and formats. It's entirely focused on lip so it creates an experience that is both fun and easy to engage with," she said.