

MARKETING

Hook consumers with emotion, not with technology: Meta CEO

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NEW YORK - During Havas Luxe's NEXT Conference, the founder and CEO of experience production company Meta exemplified the importance of putting the story first before the technology.

The opportunity for retailers to connect with consumers through innovative forms of technology such as AR and VR is vastly growing. However, it is imperative that the story and emotional experience of these initiatives be held in higher regard than the technology.

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"What is so exciting for us about AR and VR, isn't necessarily that you can go to some other world," said Justin Bolognino, founder and CEO of Meta. "It is that we are not able to capture what we see in our minds eye.

"In other words we are able to visual subjectivity," he said.

Shopping the runway

Meta was recently responsible for a production during a fashion show that combined augmented reality, retail and physical performance together. The experience worked out very well for both the production company and brand because it gave the audience something useful while also being unique and interesting.

Each member of the audience had a different experience than the others based on where they were located.



Meta's use of AR during the fashion show

When the models arrived on stage, augmented reality content would appear on users' phones through the camera, providing retail information. Attendees were instructed where to purchase the items through innovative popups that seemed to appear in real life.

Experiences like this that bring consumers into the brand and provide them a service while also solidifying an emotional connection is how these platforms should be used.



If retailers and brands, or any content creator for that matter, are leveraging augmented and virtual reality just for the technology, the experience will get boring.

Mr. Bologino explained that the driver should be the story and that the vehicle and manner in which to get there is the technology.

It is also important as a marketer to know why you are using this technology. Just because the technology is popular, does not mean it is relevant.

Also, virtual and augmented reality are two completely different platforms. This means they should be treated as such.

Brands should not be leveraging VR in the same manner as AR, reflective of how brands should not be using Facebook the same way they use Snapchat.

It needs to be a special experience that works for that specific platform.

Brand examples

In another example of a brand tapping augmented reality for retail, Ferrari Australasia changed its consumers' showroom visits with an augmented reality application that allowed immediate customization and an in-depth look at the vehicles.

Consumers were able to see the car in a specific color, with certain rims and more options that complete the new showroom walkaround. Integrating digital into a showroom allowed frontline sales people from Ferrari to provide more detailed information and connect with consumers through more mediums ([see more](#)).

French department store chain Galeries Lafayette also leveraged its foot traffic and added attention around the holiday season to promote an environmental cause.

The retailer's "Amazing Arctic Christmas" told the story of a family of polar bears who must venture away from the North Pole due to melting ice caps, with the bears finally finding respite in Galeries Lafayette's flagship store on Boulevard Haussmann in Paris. Bringing the story to life in front of shoppers' eyes, the retailer launched a mobile experience accessible in-store that uses augmented reality to create an arctic environment indoors ([see more](#)).

"We create experiences, physically and virtually," Mr. Bolognio said. "My five-year old daughter went through all the installations we had and said 'dada it was like bring in virtual reality but in real life.

"And she articulated what we do as a company better than I can myself," he said.

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