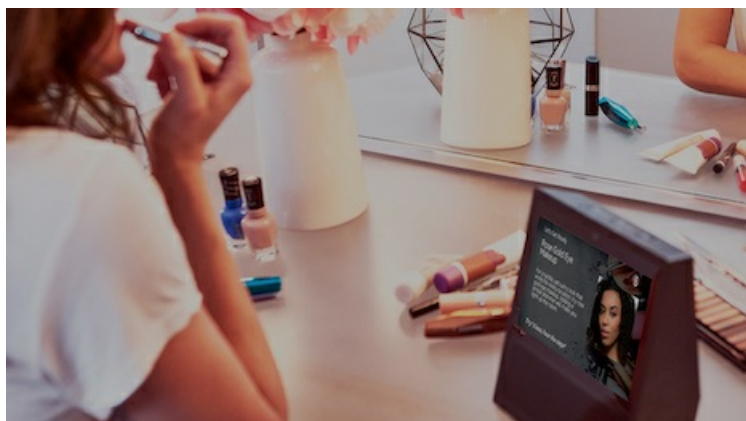


FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

## Augmented reality can be bridge between digital, physical retail

April 24, 2018



*Coty's AR mirror is a perfect example of blending digital and physical retail. Image credit: Coty*

By DANNY PARISI

Beauty brands are leading the charge in leveraging augmented reality to make physical shopping more digital.

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A new project from beauty group Coty in the form of an AR-powered mirror that interacts with physical products highlights how beauty has embraced augmented reality's potential to a large degree. Luxury brands and retailers that focus on beauty have much to learn from their competitors for whom AR is a versatile and powerful tool for increasing customer satisfaction.

"AR gives the consumers the opportunity to try products that they otherwise might overlook," said Maureen O'Boyle, producer at **TAG Creative**, New York. "Whether its because they don't feel comfortable with the current sampling method of drug stores, or because they've been wearing the same color lipstick for 10 years - AR gives the consumer the opportunity to play with cosmetics in a new way.

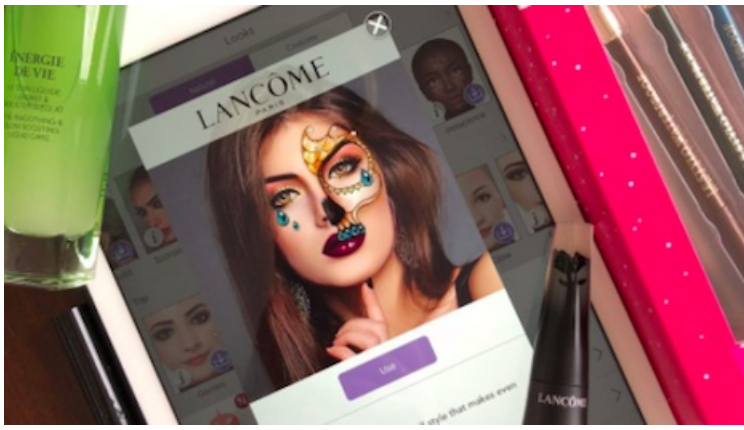
"Maybe you never thought you could participate in the holographic lipstick trend and would never pick up the bottle, but playing within the AR experience, you might discover it's your next best look!"

### AR potential

Augmented reality has many uses. This fact has been recognized by the biggest purveyors of mobile devices in the world, as exemplified by Apple's heavy integration and promotion of AR for its latest iPhone models.

The beauty sector has embraced this fact more than any other with numerous examples throughout the luxury business of cosmetic brands embracing the possibilities of augmented reality.

For example, Coty is testing a new augmented reality mirror into one of its stores.



*Lancme hosted a Halloween makeup tutorial on YouCam Makeup. Image credit: Perfect Corp.*

With this mirror, customers can grab products off the shelves and bring them to their reflection. There, the augmented reality technology of the mirror will automatically project the color onto their lips so they can see what it will look like once purchased.

The feature is unique in that it combines the tactile, physical experience of looking at a product and holding it in one's hands with the digital experience of projecting different products onto one's face through AR.

Augmented reality is particularly helpful for brands that want to integrate digital and physical experiences. Coty cites a survey that found that 72 percent of customers want their physical retail experiences to incorporate more digital elements.

With AR, combining those elements is easier than ever, particularly given that most customers already have an AR-capable device in their pockets in the form of a smartphone.

Blending physical and digital

Sephora and Esté Lauder are among the beauty marketers leveraging facial tracking technology to lift conversions.

ModiFace, which creates augmented reality solutions including real-time virtual makeup application, has launched a software development kit for iOS and Android devices, enabling marketers to use the technology in their own apps. In the beauty world, face tracking has become a way to spur more confident purchase decisions away from the beauty counter, but ModiFace also sees the potential of face tracking to guide consumers along a relevant purchase path ([see story](#)).

Beauty marketer Lancme is also making its beauty products more accessible through a mobile device via a partnership with augmented reality application YouCam Makeup.



*Sephora Virtual Artist Looks. Image courtesy of Sephora*

Giving users of the app the ability to test out products in a virtual environment, Lancme will be offering trials of individual products and full looks that can be applied via AR. As part of this partnership, Lancme co-hosted a live-streamed show with a Halloween beauty tutorial on Oct. 30 ([see story](#)).

Coty has also embraced other new technologies. The beauty group is predicting a shift in the luxury market and opening a door for beauty brands to enter the untapped potential of artificial intelligence and voice control.

The company has undergone an about face with Amazon, embracing a partnership with the recent foe in hopes to

bring beauty tutorials into the future. Many experts believe that AI assistants such as Amazon's Alexa will be vital going forward, which Coty is anticipating with its new skill ([see story](#)).

"AR is a trend that isn't going anywhere," said Terry Rieser, COO and partner at TAG Creative. "Major talent agencies are now picking up directors and photographers that specialize in the AR experience.

"Beauty brands should be pushing themselves to tie AR in with the rest of their marketing and digital initiatives, and the sooner brands embrace it, the more the technology will do for them and their relationship to consumers."

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