

MOBILE

Does in-app augmented reality work for luxury brands?

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Mobile applications with augmented reality features are becoming increasingly popular among luxury brands, whose consumers have come to expect a certain amount of engagement, quality and innovation.

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Augmented reality lets brands highlight products in a way that seems more immersive and intriguing than commercial. Brands such as Audi, BMW and Zenith watches are already using augmented reality to engage mobile consumers.

“Augmented reality is a unique opportunity to engage users in a personalized way by adding content to their environment wherever they are,” said Deborah Hall, managing director at [web2mobile](#), Toronto.

“For luxury brand customers, there is an opportunity to create a magical experience,” she said. “It creates that ‘as if’ in the minds of the consumer, nudging them to imagine for themselves a different reality.

“This takes luxury brand marketing to a new and mobile level.”

Try it on

Many luxury brands have used augmented reality to introduce new product lines and promote events.

Augmented reality can also be promoted through social media when brands include a Facebook or Twitter icon tag.

For example, the Zenith Watches app lets users browse the selection of luxury watches and see how a branded timepiece would look on their wrists ([see story](#)).

The app incorporates images of the watches and the “share with friends” functionality using the iPhone’s built-in camera.

In addition, BMW introduced its latest X3 model with an augmented reality mobile app that let consumers see the ins and outs of the car ([see story](#)).



Also, the Audi 24H iPhone, iPad and Android apps feature an augmented reality game that allows consumers to test-drive multiple Audis that have previously won the Le Mans race ([see story](#)).

The augmented reality feature extends the app’s reach, engaging Audi fans who are not attending the event.

The ability of augmented reality to engage consumers and provide extraordinary experiences for mobile users makes it a huge benefit to luxury brands.

“Mobile devices – including tablets – provide an unparalleled opportunity for creativity,” Ms. Hall said. “Luxury brands can know where their customers are and engage them with content based on their environment.

“By combining creativity, the tools themselves do not make the campaign, the idea and beautiful designs are the key to compelling luxury campaigns,” she said.

Get real

Augmented reality is a great way for a brand to increase the amount of time a consumer spends with a branded mobile app.

This is even more effective for luxury brands since most affluent consumers will have a smartphone that can support the augmented reality feature.

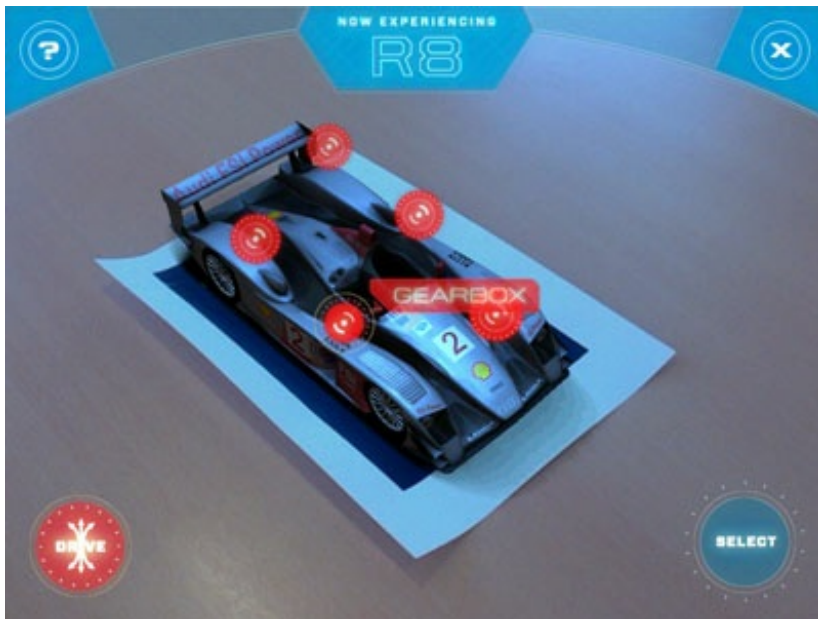
“We believe that luxury brands have the opportunity to stand on the cutting edge in the minds of consumers leveraging augmented reality,” Ms. Hall said.

Used correctly, augmented reality can add both convenience and value for consumers by allowing them try on clothes and accessories without stepping into a change room or to get behind the wheel from the comfort of their own home.

The most important things brands need to remember when considering augmented reality is to use it for a meaningful experience, not just for the sake of using new technology.

For example, hotels can use the technology to allow people to virtually see what they would like on the resort’s beach.

In addition, editorial content should accompany the augmented reality feature, per Ms. Hall.



Audi uses augmented reality for driving game

A call-to-action, such as “How would you look in these glasses?” is a good way to entice consumers to download a mobile app.

“[With augmented reality], brands have the ability to construct that reality and allow their audience to virtually see how their brand fits within their own world,” Ms. Hall said.

Final Take

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