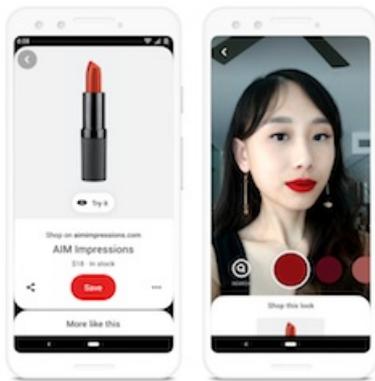


SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

Pinterest brings beauty counter to social media with AR trials

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Pinterest's Try On experience is powered by its visual search function Lens. Image courtesy of Pinterest

By SARAH JONES

Social media platform Pinterest is augmenting its visual beauty search and purchase path by giving consumers a tool to virtually try-on products.

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Try On, powered by Lens, uses augmented reality to "apply" lipstick to a consumer's face, allowing her to see what a specific shade looks like on her. Pinterest is already a powerful force in product discovery, but its latest launch seeks to make cosmetic exploration more seamless and interactive.

"Try On, powered by Lens, is integrated within an app millions already use for makeup and beauty inspiration," said Jeff Harris, head of visual search at [Pinterest](#).

"We heard from pinners who wanted a way to try on new looks for happier purchases they won't want to return while shopping on mobile," he said. "So instead of needing to install or pay for a new app, we wanted to give pinners the ability to try products before buying them in a way they're already used to doing."

Cosmetic discovery

Pinterest's Try On experience, launched on Jan. 28 in the social network's mobile application for U.S. users, includes brands such as Estée Lauder, Lancôme, YSL Beauty and Sephora.

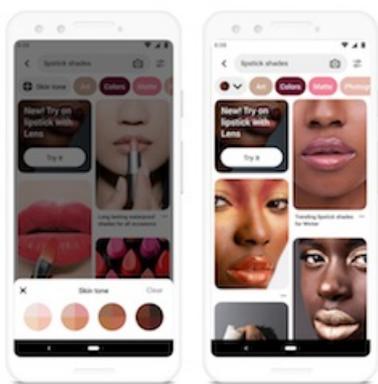
Consumers can trigger the trials by launching the camera in the search bar to bring up the Lens visual search function and clicking Try On. Try on capabilities will also be available on select product pins, as well as via searches on makeup terms, such as "matte lipstick."

Consumers can take a photo of themselves "wearing" a particular lipstick shade, and then pin it for later.

Pinterest is also simplifying the search for a particular beauty look by allowing consumers to browse similar shades of lip products to the ones they tried on. If a consumer gets inspired by someone else's pin, they can also choose to "see similar looks" to launch a Try On experience.

Looking to differentiate its AR experience, Pinterest has sought to make the tool inclusive and authentic. The social

media company decided to forgo airbrushing features so that consumers can see themselves in a more true-to-life form.



Pinterest's lipstick Try On includes skin tone personalization. Image courtesy of Pinterest

Following the launch of skin tone-specific beauty searches in 2018, the Try On experience includes the ability to filter by coloring. This push was to ensure that search results did not default to white models and imagery, creating a more inclusive experience for users of all ethnicities ([see story](#)).

"Pinterest is the positive corner of the Internet, and in working to maintain a safe place where people can explore new looks and ideas, it's important that any new feature we introduce also reflects our position as a responsible and positive service," Mr. Harris said.

"As most of our features are, this decision was in response to pinner feedback and our company mission to help everyone discover inspirational ideas," he said. "With Try On, you won't find skin smoothing or image altering features because at our core, we want to help you feel confident exactly who you are.

"We've also integrated Try On with products specific to Pinterest including skin tone ranges so you can filter products by what works best for your skin tone, saving ideas for shopping later, shoppable pins and a more like this' section with related looks and inspiration."

Following lipstick, Pinterest says it will be launching more categories in its Try On experience.

Beauty buying

As more shopping migrates online, the beauty category has looked to offer consumers a more confident digital purchase experience through tools that replicate the in-store beauty experience.

For instance, Google's YouTube added a tech-forward touch to its popular beauty tutorials with the introduction of an augmented reality feature.

Initially launching as a partnership with M.A.C Cosmetics and vlogger Roxette Arisa, YouTube's Beauty Try-On feature allows viewers to virtually test and shop lipsticks straight from a video tutorial. More platforms and luxury brands have been incorporating AR features, but YouTube's implementation blends sponsored content with technology while having billions of viewers within reach ([see story](#)).

This beauty AR move from Pinterest is the latest shopping-focused effort from the social platform. Last fall, the company introduced new shopping tools for brands, as it continues to position itself as an advertising alternative to Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

New offerings including "Shop the Look" ads and Shop tabs for business profiles are consistent with Pinterest's identity as a discovery platform. Social commerce is a priority for Pinterest, and the platform steadily continues to unveil new features for advertisers to drive consumers down the purchase funnel ([see story](#)).

"People around the globe already come to Pinterest for beauty inspiration early in their shopping journey many times before they know exactly what it is they want," Mr. Harris said. "This provides an opportunity for brands of all sizes to be discovered.

"With Try On, we're making it even easier to try the looks you like before you buy," he said. "This is our latest feature to help pinners explore their style and shop on Pinterest.

"According to a study by Cowen and Company, Pinterest outpaces social media companies when it comes to

finding and shopping for products, with 48 percent of U.S. respondents citing Pinterest as the shopping platform of choice three times more than the next."

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