

COMMERCE

Lessons from eBags: How brands can use AR and 3D to improve ecommerce

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Using 3D and AR shopping experiences can help consumers zoom in when shopping for luggage online. Image courtesy of eBags

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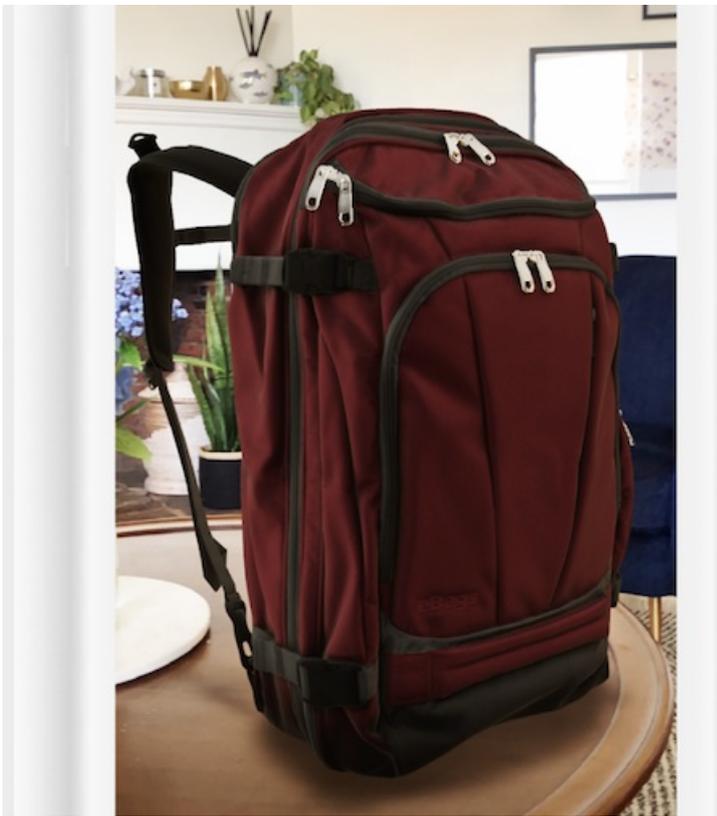
As ecommerce transactions have escalated during the pandemic and looks to be the new normal, luxury brands should consider how they can improve the online and mobile shopping experience.

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Augmented reality (AR) and 3D technology can help brands turn their online stores into destinations with more of an in-store experience. eBags, a subsidiary of Samsonite, for instance, has increased sales and engagement by adopting an AR 3D shopping experience for its own popular private-label line of packing cubes, backpacks and travel bags.

"Our 3D and AR experiences empower shoppers to access detailed, true-to-scale virtual renderings without the disruption of an app download," said Chris Seahorn, vice president of marketing and merchandising at eBags, Greenwood Village, CO.

"With 3D zoom, shoppers can examine details like materials, buckles and zips, while AR placement of bags in real-life context gives shoppers accurate size and scale reference," he said.



eBags' 3D and AR experience lets shoppers see the products in the context of a real space. Image courtesy of eBags

Making it a reality

One of the challenges facing brands that sell luggage, backpacks and travel accessories online is the inability to get a sense of the texture of the product and see sizes in scale. eBags wanted to overcome these issues to help customers understand what they were buying.

The ecommerce site had already created videos about its products, but the retailer wanted to create a way for shoppers to interact with the merchandise in a way that was more like having a physical experience of shopping in the store.

So eBags tapped 3D and AR commerce services firm Vertebrae to help. The tech firm has worked with clients including Adidas, Toyota, Crate & Barrel, Facebook and Coach.

Using Vertebrae, eBags enhanced how it sold private-label backpacks, organizers and carry-on luggage with 3D imagery that allowed shoppers to spin and flip virtual products to get a close-up feel of the straps, zippers and pockets.

The AR experience is also designed to show virtual products in real-life environments to give a better sense of size.

"We opted to focus on our private-label products, which have been prime drivers of customer engagement and sales growth for the company, and embedded assets within product detail pages directly on the ecommerce site for both mobile and desktop," Mr. Seahorn said.

Since launch in January, the site has seen substantial results.

Conversion rates have increased 112 percent on mobile devices and 81 percent on desktop browsers for shoppers interacting with 3D and AR assets, as compared with those who do not.

In addition, the revenue per visit increased by 87 percent among those consumers engaging with 3D and AR, the company claimed, without disclosing actual numbers.

"For shoppers accustomed to viewing and trying products in stores, we had to rethink the experience and clear the friction points and hurdles that come from not being there in person," Mr. Seahorn said.

"As an online-only retailer, we had an advantage in that we've always focused on giving shoppers an exceptional online experience that helps them overcome reservations about whether products would arrive on their doorsteps looking just as they were pictured online," he said.



eBags has enhanced the shopping experience allowing shoppers to zoom in on bags. Image courtesy of eBags

Shopping for luggage online

Consumers shopping for luggage online are curious about the textures of the products and the size. They are often asking themselves if the bag will fit in an overhead cabin or how many bags can fit in the trunk of a car.

3D and AR can help consumers zoom in on the details of a product in a virtual environment and allows shoppers to see the products to scale.

"In luggage and accessories, shoppers sometimes prefer to visit stores to touch, try and examine items in person before buying," Mr. Seahorn said.

"As a result, we've always strived to boost shoppers' confidence in purchasing via the Web with experiences like interactive buying guides and video packing tutorials, which we invested in heavily to showcase products more dynamically than in static flat images," he said.

This comes as ecommerce has been ramping up for brands and retailers worldwide.

Over the past 25 years, online sales rose by about one or two percentage points annually, reaching 16 percent in 2019 for all retail. In 2020, that percentage has jumped to 25 percent.

As consumers continue to be wary of in-store shopping, ecommerce is expected to account for 25 percent of total U.S. retail sales this year, a jump of 10 percent from last year.

Digital channels will continue to play a more important role to a brand's business and luxury brands that adopt the latest tech will likely attract and convert more buyers.

"Consumers care about answering questions they have while shopping, and 3D and AR represent efficient tools to do just that," said Vince Cacace, CEO of [Vertebrae](#), Los Angeles.

"Being able to see an actual product versus a photo of a product represents a real-life product experience that is had in a digital environment," he said. "3D and AR answer questions like, how big is this?', how does this look on me or in my space?', what are the details?'"