

MARKETING

Is Snapchat the answer to bridging AR with ecommerce?

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Dior and Snapchat introduced an AR filter for the B27 sneakers. Image credit: Dior/Snapchat

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Social media platform Snapchat may hold the key to showing luxury brands how augmented reality can transform traditional window shopping into digital trial experiences.

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During the [Technology in Luxury Conference](#) on March 31, speakers from Snapchat discussed how the platform helps consumers interact with aspirational brands to build relationships before a purchase. AR filters have become an essential component of brand features, particularly as the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a reliance on digital experiences.

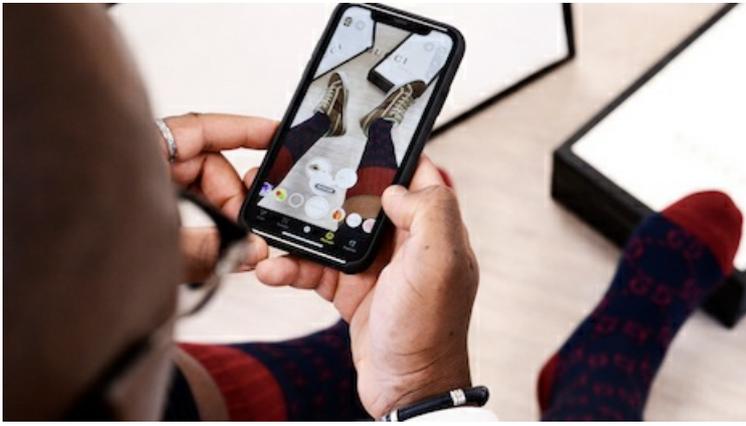
"In a COVID world, it's extremely challenging for luxury brands to launch a new product, and for customers to really feel and discover it," said Geoffrey Perez, global head of luxury at Snapchat. "Augmented reality plays a major role if you're looking for organic promotion and success on a world-class platform."

The event was hosted by Luxury Briefing. Tim Jackson, director of the British School of Fashion, moderated the panel.

Virtual trials

Augmented reality has benefitted retail businesses more than other sectors, argued Carolina Arguelles Navas, global product marketing lead of AR and platforms at Snapchat.

Both luxury and mass market brands have launched AR lenses on Snapchat to create virtual try-on experiences.



Snapchat users can now use AR tech to virtually try on Gucci footwear to see if they like the merchandise and then have the option to buy it directly from that location. Image courtesy of Gucci

In October 2020, French fashion label Dior introduced an AR lenses for the launch of its new B27 sneakers. The brand, which was among the first luxury labels to have a business profile on Snapchat, encouraged users to virtually try on the sneakers without needing to visit a store in person.

Dior promoted the AR lenses on its other social media channels, while Snapchat promoted the feature to users interested in luxury shopping and fashion resulting in millions of plays within days. Users interested in buying the sneakers were able to click a button and be taken to the Dior ecommerce site, completing the virtual trial experience.

Italian fashion label Gucci has also used Snapchat's Shoppable AR technology for virtual try-on experiences ([see story](#)).

Snapchat also has the ability to make these types of experiences live on brand sites, directing shoppers to the mobile app to virtually try on footwear, accessories or makeup.

L'Oral worked with Snapchat to launch Signature Faces, a virtual makeup collection meant for video calls

The app is available in more than 70 markets and averages 200 million daily users giving Snapchat an advantage over brand-owned apps by making AR more accessible and scalable. Users are also able to more easily share fun filters or lenses with friends, driving word-of-mouth marketing which can be more effective than traditional or influencer marketing.

"Clearly, augmented reality brings another level of interaction with your friends, and Snap has never been built with what we call the vanity metrics: the likes, the comments and the shares," Mr. Perez said. "We have tried to help people speak to each other with less pressure."

Growth opportunities

Beyond footwear and accessories, AR can also be helpful for beauty shoppers.

Ms. Navas cited an example from cosmetics brand L'Oral, which developed a digital-only makeup line that was accessible using the AR lenses from the Snapchat desktop app. This allowed users to "apply" makeup looks directly from their desktop computers before joining video meetings while they work remotely during COVID-19.

"The power of the camera to fuel a future ecosystem of virtual goods will enable creators, artists and brands to reimagine the way we buy and sell products, fill our virtual closets and add digital layers to our physical lives," Ms. Navas said.

In a move indicative of the prevalence of augmented reality, Google rolled out a feature in December 2020 that allows consumers to digitally try on cosmetic products through the search function on mobile devices. By using the front-facing camera on their phones, users will be able to visualize products on themselves as well as on models with similar skin tones ([see story](#)).

While user and brand adoption of AR has increased, the technology is not without its drawbacks or room for improvement.

AR lenses or filters still cannot fully replicate the try-on experience, meaning shoppers are still at risk of purchasing items like sneakers that may not have the right fit. Both brands and consumers want to avoid returns, making product sizing and fitting crucial.

To that end, Snap Inc. recently acquired German machine learning platform Fit Analytics in a push towards ecommerce.

Fit Analytics' flagship product is Fit Finder, a tool that helps online shoppers select clothing that will fit properly using machine learning and customer-provided information. The acquisition comes as Snap is looking to diversify its revenue streams with ecommerce features and in-app purchases on Snapchat ([see story](#)).

"Clearly there's a challenge in the in the sizing and the fitting of our products," Snapchat's Mr. Perez said. "So that's what we are trying to solve with that type of analytics position."

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