

Incorporating Augmented Reality (A.R.) Into Your Digital Marketing Mix

WHITE PAPER



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Introduction

Marketing, as far as it is possible to tell, is not a new concept. It has always existed in some form or another. Marketing practices have been around for thousands of years and will continue to exist because it's the way business sustains itself. Although we live in a continuously changing world - with many amazing inventions - it's interesting to think about how much had stayed the same when considering how marketing was conducted before we had digital technology at our fingertips. Consumers still need incentives (e.g., downloadable freebies), and companies still need to know how to market themselves.

Marketing is more than just advertising. In fact, advertising drives marketing. To work as an effective marketing strategy, it's essential to understand the current distribution channel, the target audience, and their needs and expectations. Marketing is a complicated process that is not easy to understand. It is common for businesses to make mistakes when they don't understand the steps involved in a marketing campaign.

There is a lot of information that is available to the public about digital marketing. But in recent times, brands have shown a renewed interest in more personalized marketing methods, reaching out through tangible means such as face-to-face interactions with target audiences. There has been a rising interest in the world of audience development, which can be described as the process by which brands engage potential customers online to develop long-term relationships with them.

Now that we have the world at our fingertips, it's easier for us to access information about products and more manageable for companies to interact with consumers. Without a doubt, consumers and companies are more connected than ever before. What was once a slow trickle of information is now a constant stream of business messages, updates, images, and videos.

Social media, for instance, allows companies to connect with consumers like never before. It will enable companies to build a network of loyal customers who are interested in the brand and its products. It essentially involves building an engaged and committed following on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok.

This constant exchange between consumers and companies is what makes up digital marketing today. Therefore, companies must adapt their marketing strategies in order to make sure they are keeping up with the constant changes.

With the constant growing media content, it is no wonder that a site that includes interactive content receives 40% more views than one without. The thing to remember, however, is that having interactive media on your website is only effective if it's used to its full potential.

And what's next in the digital marketing space? Many technological developments are currently being mooted and even implemented in the marketing arena, furthering engagement between businesses and customers. One of them is augmented reality.

Augmented reality has been around all this while and has gained popularity in recent times. It's a term that is now familiar and can be simply described as a blend of artificial and real-world technology. This white paper will focus on augmented reality and its applications from the perspective of digital marketing and how you can benefit from it.

What Is Augmented Reality (AR)?

Augmented reality is the stimulation of our perceptions of reality by means of technology. In other words, it is a technology that combines physical and digital elements, providing users with a simulated experience on top of their current view. Furthermore, it involves integrating computer-generated information with the real world, which means that such information can change in real-time and appears to be part of the real world.

The process of creating an augmented reality is done by utilizing specific devices, which were developed to apply AR technologies. These usually include mobile phones or tablets with an embedded camera, GPS, and sometimes even 3D sensors. Any devices or software being used for the purpose of AR can track the user's position and his or her eye movements, providing us with a new layer of information that can be superimposed on the world around us.

When we talk about augmented reality, it is common for people to think of movies such as "The Matrix" or "Terminator," as well as cyberpunk and science fiction literature. However, it is important to note that the technology behind AR has been around for many years and is constantly evolving, even now.

Augmented reality's inception is still not widespread yet, but it is expected to reach maturity and become a standard everyday tool in the future. To be honest, many companies are already implementing AR in one way or another. So it's not alien anymore as it used to be.

Why Is Now the Right Time for Embracing Augmented Reality (AR)?

Augmented reality is a new and growing technology that has enormous potential to change the marketing landscape. This could happen in many ways, including improvements in the way we interact with technology. In addition, we can use it to extend our sense of the real world, which means that it could make us feel more connected and more engaged with the world around us.

Without a doubt, the AR market will continue to grow even further. By 2023, the AR market could be worth [\\$61.4 billion](#). A huge figure, isn't it?

The possibilities that augmented reality technology will provide in terms of customer engagement are endless, just by using the power of smartphones or tablets. Plus, not many companies are implementing AR into their marketing arsenal yet, which means that the market share is quite open for any company eager to take action.

Last year (2020), [32% of users](#) had already utilized AR to shop. Also, [61% of consumers](#) said they would choose to shop at a store that uses augmented reality. With AR being part of the mobile marketing mix, users are twice as likely to shop online when connected through the use of AR.

The timely implementation of augmented reality is the best way to reach potential customers in a realistic and meaningful manner. By implementing AR, the user can immerse themselves in a brand experience that will lead them to want more. And more engagement automatically leads to higher conversion rates and retention of customers.

With AR technology, customers can interact with a company and its products in ways they could have never imagined before.

How Can AR Enhance Your Digital Marketing Strategy?

Did you know that [augmented reality](#) can keep people hooked for over 85 seconds, boost conversion rates by 33%, and increase interaction rates by 20%?

AR has been proven to improve marketing, but how exactly can it benefit businesses? There are ways that AR can be integrated into your digital marketing strategy.

P.S. in each video screenshot below, you can click to view the video.

Let Users Experience The Products Right In Their Hands

In the age of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data analytics, marketing campaigns are only getting more and more sophisticated. The use of augmented reality for marketing, in particular, can draw in customers to sample products that they might not ever have noticed before.

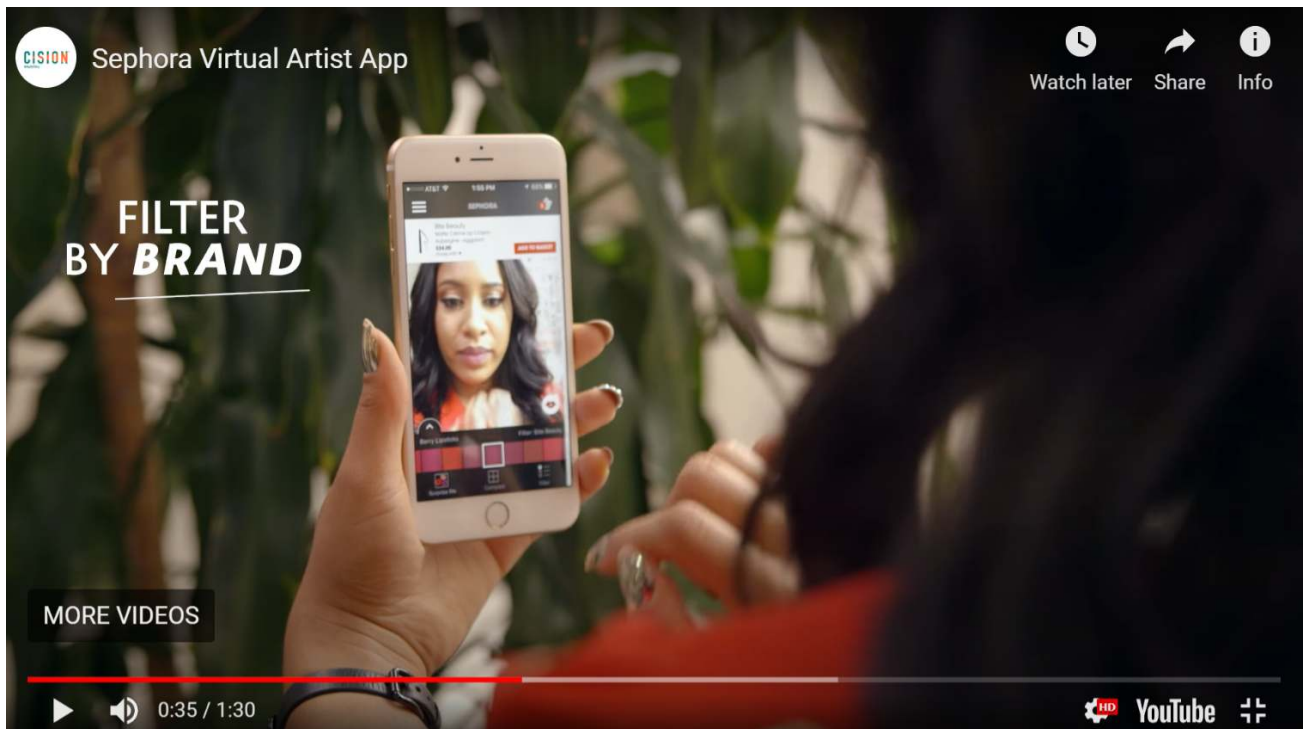
It can produce a 3D environment that you are placed into when using a product. It provides an immersive experience that allows consumers to interact and get more involved with your products. This also allows for in-depth product information and demonstrations to be shown with ease, as well as improved user experiences in regards to how they can shave and maintain their hygiene.

Augmented product catalogs enable clients to view products virtually on their smartphones, get information about the products from them and even make inquiries and engage in a dialogue with your company. It also creates an opportunity for customers to test how products look in real life and actually feel like they are using them.

Take IKEA as an example:



Or Sephora with their virtual artist app:



Advertising That Features Interactive Features

In the advertising space, many companies are becoming aware of how effective it can be to deliver the message they want to provide. It is a great way to make their advertisements stand out from the rest because viewers have to actually use their phones to see the ad.

This keeps them engaged with the ad and makes them want to learn more about the product or service it is trying to advertise.

Timberland did great on this:



Engage Your Audience Through Gamification

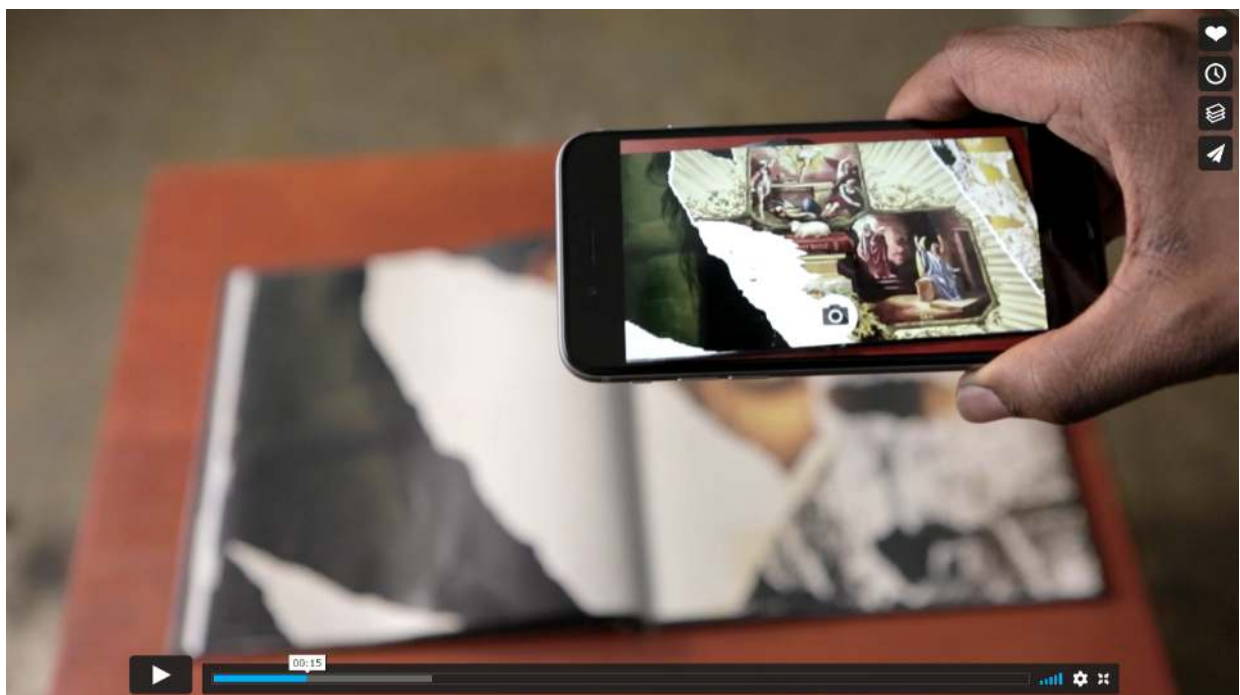
Augmented reality can be used to deliver "gamification" in multiple ways. It allows for target audiences to be challenged and provides ongoing rewards through the use of a digital interface. In this way, they are provided with an opportunity to participate in different games created or structured for the virtual environment instead of having it done on-site or in person. This also means customers can experience it even in the comfort of their homes.

It is also possible to implement gamification into your marketing strategy by having users engage with your marketing initiatives through various parts of the app. This type of strategy is usually seen when organizations want their customers to do some sort of work for them, such as engaging with ads or reviewing products.

Buying one new product doesn't yield the same type of rewards that people would get in mobile games. This is because mobile games are more interactive, and people have to work through the experience. In augmented reality, it can be an even more engaging experience and allow people to show off their lifestyles on their own terms, whether that's outside or inside. Either way, it engages through a real-life setting and creates a way for people to interact with the digital environment.

The ability to use gamification to enhance your marketing campaigns is valuable, and once implemented correctly, it can be very effective. It can create an entertaining user experience that keeps the user engaged with the product.

Though not the closest example like explained above, Dig Decoder App did well with incorporating gamification as part of the AR experience for their murder mystery television series, Dig, back in 2015.

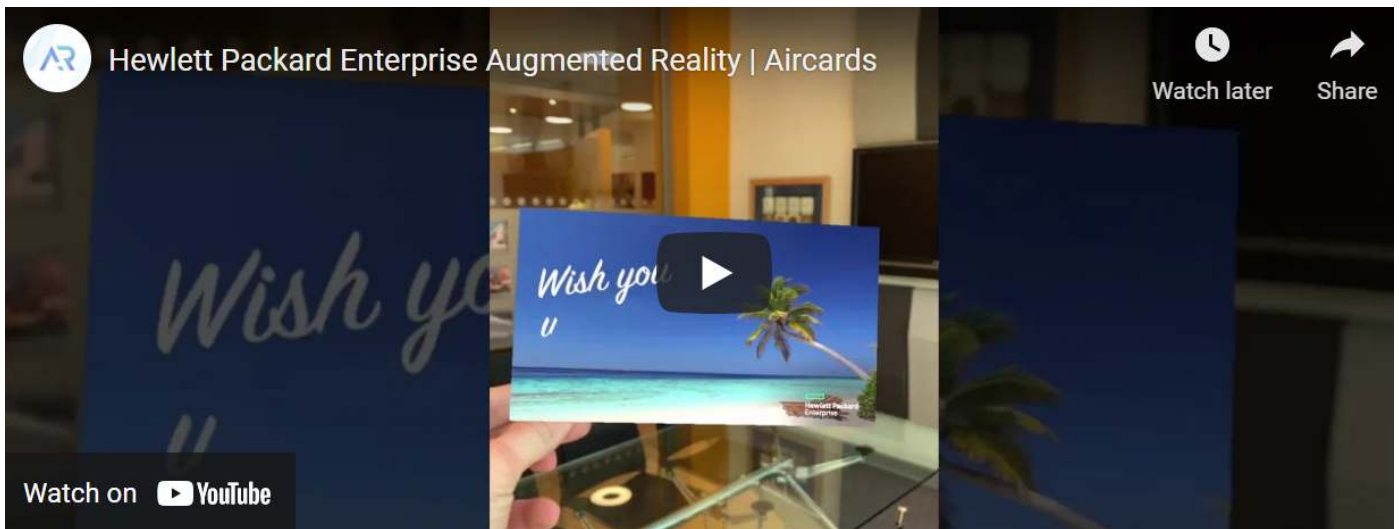


Entice Users With Exciting AR Videos

AR helps people understand what products they are looking at before they buy them. For example, your customers may want to know how your product works or want to grasp better what the product looks like. With AR, you are able to have an idea of how the product looks and what features it has before you decide on purchasing it.

This can be integrated into this process by displaying a video on a brochure or catalog page. Then, when users scan the QR code displayed on the page and hover over it, the video will be played on the page or brochure, bringing the printed materials to life. There are many ways to use QR codes, from using them in magazines to replace static text with a video to use them in product packaging.

Check out this Hewlett Packard's example:



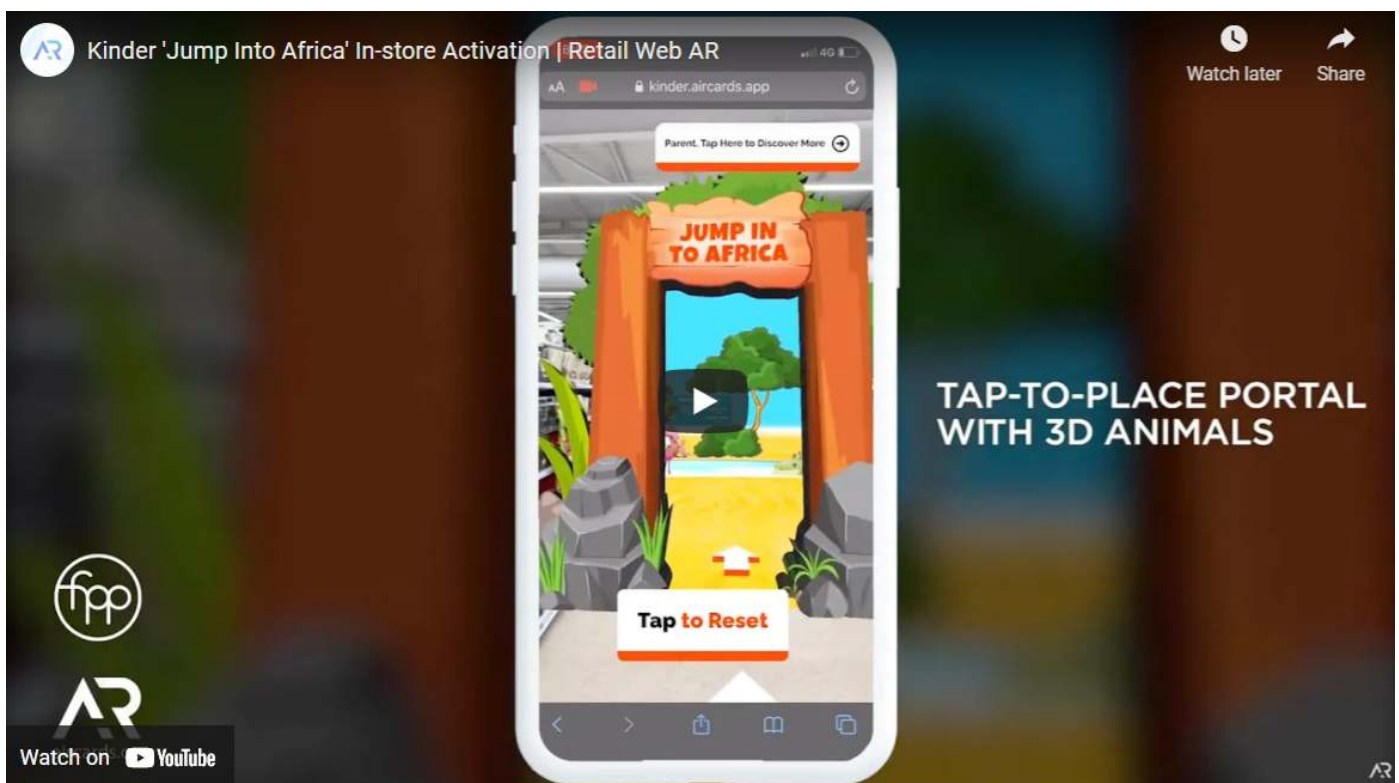
Providing a Better and Memorable Experience for Your Customers

Customer experience involves a relationship that creates value for each side. This allows the customer to view the product in more detail without having to go back and forth between a photo and a website for information about the product and allows them instead for other features of the product that they might be considering buying.

The AR does not only augment the customer experience for customers that have access to the device. It also enhances the customer experience for all customers in the store, as they can see and interact with what is currently being displayed on the screen.

This, in turn, provides a much more memorable and unique experience for the customer, as they can interact with the product and have a more accurate view of the product without having to explain to someone else what it is.

[Kinder](#) (the chocolate brand) nailed this pretty well.



Problems With the Current AR Implementation

The current AR implementation is not without hiccups. There are two significant issues discovered which may hinder businesses from harnessing the beauty of augmented reality.

Special Development Kits (SDKs) Are Not for the Non-Techies

First, developing AR from scratch requires a special development kit or SDK. Although many companies are offering SDKs, businesses that don't have the knowledge of programming or coding skills may find it hard to develop an AR prototype. The lack of easy-to-use tools for AR prototyping is one of the major obstacles to executing a better customer experience through AR.

This also applies to developing a dedicated mobile app for the purpose of implementing AR, which is also not without its challenges. While mobile apps may be used in AR, it's not a good idea to develop a mobile app for the sole use of AR. Instead, developers should focus on developing mobile apps that can also function as standalone software in the case of an AR implementation.

For many businesses, they may not have in-house developers to develop the AR environment and mobile apps. Like, why would they if their main focus isn't on web development or coding? Plus, it may cost them a lot if they have to outsource the development of their AR project. The current state of technology, especially the sophisticated ones like AR, is that businesses have limited resources at hand and are likely in need of tech-savvy developers. If they can find them, it would mean an outlay of capital which they may not be willing to do.

Customers Need to Find and Install a Mobile App From the App Store/Play Store

Once the AR app has been made available on the app store or Play Store, customers need to find and install that app on their phones, which is not as intuitive as searching for an already installed app on their devices.

Doing so takes time, especially for customers who are not tech-savvy. Plus, since each app only serves specific AR settings, the customer may need to install multiple apps to have an AR experience that includes all the locations and scenarios they want. As a result, users may not want to engage and prefer not to utilize AR apps at all.

While developing an AR application is time-consuming, implementing it for the customers can be even more complicated, especially when it comes to encouraging potential users to interact with AR through the app. As mentioned earlier, if users find it too cumbersome to install many apps to try out certain AR experiences, they may not want to pursue it again.

Well, given the problems with the current AR implementation, how can this be fixed? The answer is by making practical AR usage easy and more accessible for companies that don't have coding skills and easily accessible to the average user.

What if, instead of having to develop the AR scene through the SDK and going through the process of having the mobile apps available on the app stores, businesses can create their AR from an easy-to-use platform without the blows and whistles of coding complexity? Also, customers don't have to install a dedicated app, and they can simply experience AR right through their web browsers.

This is where web-based AR or WebAR comes in.

What Is WebAR?

Web-based augmented reality or WebAR is a technology that involves the use of a web browser instead of a dedicated mobile app to access augmented reality.

Web-based augmented reality platforms enable users to interact with the real world by superimposing relevant digital information onto it without the need to download a separate app. Rather, users can experience AR directly from their web browsers on their phones.

Why Is WebAR So Exciting & How It Can Boost More Customer Engagement?

Web-based augmented reality (AR) is an exciting innovation that has the potential to allow for enhanced customer engagement. In addition, with WebAR, implementation in today's applications would be much more seamless and more effortless.

Users Don't Have to Download an App to Experience AR

Unlike the usual AR setup, it allows users to interact with the products they are browsing directly through a web browser. This means that users do not need to download a smartphone app to experience augmented reality.

WebAR is readily available across all platforms, whether you use mobile and desktop. This allows easy engagement with users regardless of where they are located. This would translate to greater user engagement with a long-lasting experience.

Businesses Don't Need to Develop a Mobile App

Eliminate the need to develop a mobile application by using a web-based app or responsive website. Using an SDK isn't easy. If you are not from a tech background, this won't bode well at all. Hiring someone or outsourcing to a company to develop a mobile app from scratch does not come cheap too.

By using a dedicated WebAR platform without many blows and whistles, businesses can save time and money by providing a fast way to improve their AR's usability and user experience in the hands of customers on the spot.

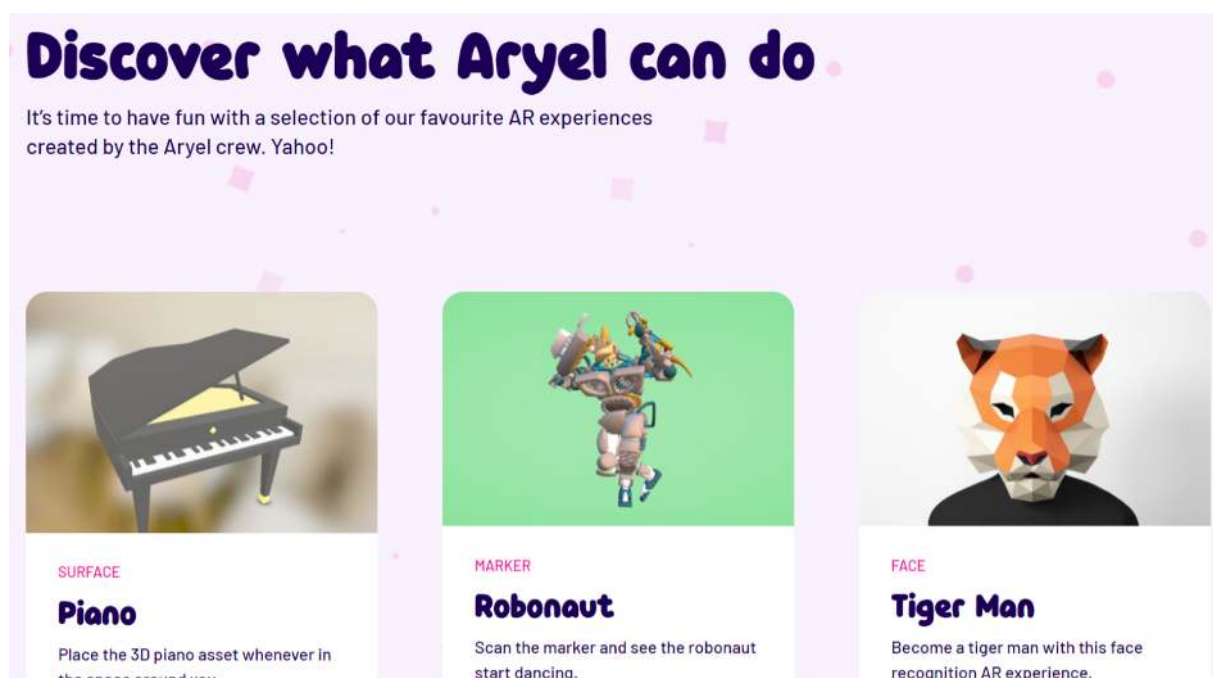
Every smartphone or tablet has a web browser. So why not take advantage of it?

Real-Life Demo of WebAR

If you checked out the examples in the previous section (How Can AR Enhance Your Digital Marketing Strategy?), you might have noticed that some of them used WebAR. You can check them out again and see the brands that utilized WebAR in action.

Plus, there are several companies out there that are currently working on WebAR development and presenting real-life use-cases for the technology. One example is Aryel.io.

[Aryel.io](#), a Milan-based WebAR platform, provides several use-cases that you can test out on the "Playground" page. Click on the image below to try the WebAR yourself.



Discover what Aryel can do

It's time to have fun with a selection of our favourite AR experiences created by the Aryel crew. Yahoo!

- SURFACE**
Piano
Place the 3D piano asset whenever in the space around you.
- MARKER**
Robonaut
Scan the marker and see the robonaut start dancing.
- FACE**
Tiger Man
Become a tiger man with this face recognition AR experience.

Source: [Aryel.io Playground](#)

Conclusion

All in all, the usage of AR as part of your digital marketing strategy could help you increase your customer's engagement and optimize the conversion rates. The world is constantly evolving, and AR allows brands to meet & exceed the expectations of their customers by bringing them a more personalized experience.

This is possible because AR can help businesses show off their products/services in real-time, at scale, without having to build the physical objects themselves. It may also help you stand out from competitors and optimize sales by giving customers excellent services and experiences.

This can be done through developing a mobile app or WebAR but either way, augmented reality offers customers a more immersive way to interact with your company.

A web-based AR experience, in particular, also helps with today's increasingly digitalized culture, where people are heavily reliant on their mobile devices for almost everything they do daily. As a result, WebAR is a valuable tool in modern application development. It can help businesses get their products and services to market faster than ever before.

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