



HOW AUGMENTED REALITY IS DISRUPTING HEALTHCARE

Augmented reality (AR) gained widespread attention in the summer of 2016 with the addictive game, Pokémon Go. But these days, AR is not just for fun. This disruptive technology is expected to drive significant changes to businesses across many industries because of its ability to combine the virtual and physical worlds. Specifically, AR transmits a live view of a real-world environment that is augmented by computer-generated, 3D images. A digital object can be scaled to fit neatly into a physical environment using an AR application and camera on a mobile device.

In 2018, AR is moving beyond early experimentation into more viable business applications - especially in the life science industry. Innovative companies are developing compelling ways to use AR as it becomes more accessible, thanks in part to new software such as Apple's ARKit, which is making it easier to develop applications. There are more than 2,000 AR applications available today, with more coming, according to a report by research firm, Forrester Research. "Virtual reality (VR) and AR solutions are revolutionising the way large and complex B2B products are marketed and sold," noted Forrester.

As AR continues to gain traction in the life science industry, it will be built into core enterprise platforms, such as CRM, EMR and content management systems. By integrating it into daily workflows, AR will transform commercial strategy - here's how.

1. Enhance personalised customer engagement

AR will enhance customer engagement by creating highly engaging experiences for HCPs and patients. Specifically, AR will enable life science companies to innovate how they tell and deliver their value stories, as well as demonstrate the outcomes that products will deliver. These demonstrations are extremely powerful, particularly when unpacking complex medical

concepts, to help customers visualise the product in their actual environments. HCPs gain a clearer understanding of how a treatment works in the body, even in a particular patient's body. The contextualised image allows HCPs to more fully appreciate the defining treatment benefits, which also makes the information more memorable.

Customer engagement often hinges on creating an emotional connection. Using AR to spur emotive reactions such as wonder or surprise can ensure HCPs are fully engaged with the experience, which also improves comprehension and information retention. AR enables a more lifelike experience with educational content, emotionally connecting HCPs with the material and the company behind it.

2. Improve understanding of complex treatments

Unprecedented scientific discovery has led to an increased focus on developing specialised treatments that are highly complex - both in action and in delivery. With every new discovery, effectively communicating complicated breakthrough therapies just with words becomes more challenging. AR technology offers a multi-dimensional way to communicate complex concepts for greater comprehension and retention. In fact, researchers agree that AR is more effective in demonstrating spatial and temporal concepts, allowing people to engage in the learning process with multiple senses for better results.

For example, AR can be used to teach medical practitioners complex medical procedures, allowing them to virtually touch and manipulate objects to see the effect or practise the procedure. AR can also provide 3D on-body visualisations of how medicines or medical devices work. Think of the value of virtually demonstrating a unique delivery mechanism for a new drug to HCPs - instilling product familiarity and averting any potential apprehension. Combining situational and sensorial

learning via AR is an exciting way to improve information retention, deepen understanding of benefits and even pre-market complicated products to key opinion leaders.

3. Create powerful brand differentiation

In an increasingly competitive landscape, AR can provide an important point of differentiation for life science companies. Marketers will be able to use AR to stand out in a world saturated with content with a new avenue to engage in storytelling for their brand and communicate product benefits.

A powerful visual experience can showcase important attributes that are different from those of competitors' products. Differentiation with AR could highlight better efficacy, address new uses or dosing, or build awareness by leveraging an emotional aspect of the product. Life science companies using AR can illustrate these distinctions in a fresh new way. Being first to market with an attention-grabbing AR experience can also strengthen brand awareness in customers' minds.

Industry analysts expect to see an increase in AR spending and a dramatic climb in adoption over the next several years. Early applications demonstrate the tremendous potential for AR in the life science industry. Forward-thinking companies will lead the way and provide the industry with key learnings while creating broader acceptance of AR as a 'killer app' with endless possibilities.



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